

# The Parchment

Volume 2, Issue 7  
Rev. Howard Chang  
February 28, 2010

## *Be Compassionate to One Another*

I have a close friend who takes the time to listen to me no matter what I'm going through. Recently, as I chatted with him, I found myself sharing my discontent about a person in my life. He looked at me squarely in the eye and said, "You don't have any compassion for them." At that moment I wanted to defend myself, but I had no credible comeback. He was right.

The word "pity" or "compassion" in the New Testament literally means "to be moved in the inward parts or organs." Having compassion is to identify with someone else to the point where we feel it in the pit of our stomach. When we're moved by someone's pain, loss, or struggle we experience compassion. However, when people displease or offend us, the feelings we have for them may be far from compassionate.

Paul teaches us to respond otherwise, "*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*" (Ephesians 4:32). We can find compassion at the heart of Jesus' ministry. As Jesus traveled the towns and villages, preaching the Gospel, he saw all the people and "*he had*

*compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*" (Matthew 9:35-38). Jesus felt in his gut the pain of the sick, hungry, and lost even though he could have easily found something wrong with them. Moreover, he called his disciples to pray for them so they too would feel the same compassion.

Is there a limit to showing compassion to others? Jesus, while dying on the Cross, prayed for those who persecuted him, pleading on their behalf, "*Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34). We can't always know what makes someone do something. But we can look at people from a compassionate point of view knowing that there is a reason behind everything. Even Jesus knew his crucifiers did not truly know what they were doing.

When the disciples began praying for those in the crowds they began to see people as Jesus saw them. Soon after Jesus sent those same disciples out to meet the needs of the hurting and lost. That's how Jesus can work in our lives too. If you don't have that feeling in the gut for others, then you can start by praying to God for them. When you do, something amazing happens — you'll start to also develop a heart for them. God will find a way for you to be a blessing in their life too.