

Hesed

1) What Amazes Jesus?

***Hesed* is a Hebrew word which is untranslatable into English in a single word, as it means several things at once**

Often translated as:

- ✓ **Mercy, mercies, merciful, pity**
- ✓ **Kindness, lovingkindness, to deal kindly**
- ✓ **Favour**
- ✓ **It also means loyal love and relentless love; steadfast love, unfailing love, faithfulness**
- ✓ **It is unexpected kindness; undeserved mercy. When the person from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything**
- ✓ ***Hesed* happens within an existing relationship, i.e. between two humans, or God and us**
- ✓ **It is friendship taken to a covenantal level**

**It isn't the Hebrew word for grace, but it
demonstrates amazing grace**

Hebrew word for grace:

khen

Examples of *hesed*:

- ✓ Naomi had nothing to offer Ruth. But Ruth demonstrated *hesed* and returned to Israel with her because her love was not based on what Naomi had to give her but on Ruth's very character. She is a loyal, faithful person
- ✓ Then she chose her first husband's elderly kinsman to perpetuate his name
- ✓ **Boaz said:** *'Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich'* (Ruth 3:10)

- ✓ **David and Jonathan.** *'Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you... And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth'*
(1 Sam.20:8, 14-15)

- ***'David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"... So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually"' (2 Sam.9:1, 7)***

- ✓ **But of the approximately 250 times *hesed* appears in the OT, the great majority refer to God's relationship with His people**
- ✓ **When God made a covenant with Israel through Moses He described Himself as One who is filled with *hesed*, i.e. He will remain faithful, loyal and steadfast in His love to His people**

'And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation"'

(Ex.34:6-7)

Moses appealed to God's *hesed* when seeking their pardon for rebellion

'And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, "The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation." Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now'
(Num.14:17-19)

***hesed* includes chastening but this must never be mistaken for abandonment**

'With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,' says the LORD, your Redeemer... For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,' says the LORD, who has mercy on you'

(Isa.54:8, 10)

This is how He was known throughout their generations. For example...

- ✓ **Jacob, after 20 years of deception, etc. realized these have brought him nothing but pain. God's *hesed* has made him what he is:**

'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies' (Gen.32:10)

- ✓ **Even when His people sin against Him and face the consequences of their sin, they may still appeal to the Lord's *hesed*, as Jeremiah does in the midst of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Surrounded by the evidence of the Lord's faithfulness to judge wickedness, rebellion, and sin, he casts himself on the unchanging character of God, affirming, 'Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness' (Lam.3:22-23)**

***Hesed* is relentless**

***Hosea is called to not only marry a prostitute but to love her while she continues to be unfaithful. Though she has no right to expect anything from Hosea, he pours lovingkindness upon her to illustrate God's *hesed* to Israel, 'For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6)**

***Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai to another rabbi after destruction of temple in AD 70: 'My son, let this not sadden you. We have another form of atonement which is equal to this - *hesed* - "For I desire *hesed* and not sacrifice"'**

But God's *hesed* extends to the whole human race. The message of the gospel (Jn.3:16) is an outpouring of *hesed*

Through Jesus, God loved the world and fulfilled the promise to not leave the guilty unpunished by placing that punishment on Jesus, yet reached out to the human race with salvation

Jesus is the embodiment of *hesed* and came to reveal the truth about God

Because, like Moses, we don't know the truth about God unless He reveals Himself

'Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"

(Matt.9:10-13)

'But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless'

(Matt.12:7)

Jesus shows the Pharisees that there is something more binding than the Law, and that is the principle which underlies the Law, i.e. love

Their petty nit-picking showed they lacked the greatest thing

***'And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."
Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed"... When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"' (Lk.7:4-7, 9)***

**Jesus was amazed He had faith to ask
for something he knew he was not
worthy of**

That's *hesed*

'Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD'

(Jer.9:23-24)

We are shaped by our perspective of God

'For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'

(Eph.3:14-19)

'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen'

(Eph.3:20-21)