

‘I Feel Your Pain’

In 1992, presidential candidate Bill Clinton famously told an activist who was heckling him at a rally, “I feel your pain,” and that statement quickly entered the popular vernacular as a clichéd expression of sympathy.

Many of us have at one time or another found ourselves telling someone who is complaining to us about something that we, like Clinton, “feel” his or her pain.

Clinton probably didn’t know he was giving a clear definition of the Hebrew word for mercy.

While the Greek word for *mercy* used here means full of pity or merciful, the Hebrew word *chesed* (חסד) literally means the ability to feel another person’s pain – to get inside his skin, to see the way he sees, to think his thoughts, to feel his feelings.

Chesed is often translated as “loving kindness,” “kindness,” or “love.” *Chesed* is central to Jewish ethics and Jewish theology, and is a common term in the Bible for describing God’s love for humankind and God’s special relationship with His children.

Merciful people show kindness to others without regard for who they are. They meet needs without asking questions. Merciful people care.

And as they spray the perfume of mercy on those around them, they are a likeness of God, who has shown us more mercy than we’ll ever be called to give.

Matthew Chapter 5 is a part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. It is a picture of what will happen when a person allows Jesus to replace human nature with His nature. The merciful believer has a Holy Spirit heart, eyes and ears. He sees people as Jesus sees them and shows mercy.



Chesed, then, is a descriptor of the work of the associates of Life Care and Century Park, who sacrifice their time, talents, and energy for the sake of others. All because they “feel their pain.”

There is reward for those who extend mercy. Jesus told an audience: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy* (Matthew 5:7 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter