

# The Mercy of God

“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”

Psalm 145:8-9

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Luke 18:13

## **Introduction:**

1. We recently found a negative answer from the Bible for the question, “Does God Love Everybody?” The love of God is particular and special and for His children only. But if this causes any anxiety, consider His mercy!
2. Therefore, it behooves us to understand His merciful character toward His creation and specially His children.
3. I am an expert on this subject, for the Lord has been abundantly merciful with lovingkindnesses toward me.

## **The DEFINITION**

- A. **Mercy.** Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
  1. Mercy is very closely connected to grace; but we want to focus on mercy in this study, not grace.
  2. Grace is demerited favor, and mercy is demerited forgiveness. These are close, but not identical.
  3. The Holy Spirit chose to use forms of “mercy” over forms of “grace” in a ratio of about 2 to 1.
- B. His mercies are tender mercies (Ps 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; 77:9; 79:8; 103:4; 119:77,156; 145:9).
  1. **Tender.** Characterized by, exhibiting, or expressing delicacy of feeling or susceptibility to the gentle emotions; kind, loving, gentle, mild, affectionate.
  2. Such an adjective modifying the mercy of the dreadful and terrible Jehovah is glorious indeed!
- C. Compassionate forgiveness, kindness, and longsuffering describe God’s mercy to rebellious sinners.
  1. He repented of doing evil to Israel (Ex 32:14) and deferred His judgment of them (II Kgs 13:23).
  2. Consider the careful description David gives of God’s mercy to Israel many times (Ps 78:36-39).
  3. There is value to consider the other terms used in conjunction with His mercy (Ps 86:15; 103:8).
  4. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities His saints – He shows mercy (Psalm 103:13).

## **The IMPORTANCE**

- A. If the great God were only holiness, justice, and judgment, we would not have a chance (Ps 130:3-8).
  1. If you or I were God, we would not have a chance: we do not have the degree of mercy He has.
  2. We are a profanely rebellious race: it is unbelievable mercy that He has not incinerated us all.
  3. His ways and thoughts are far above our ways and thoughts – in mercy and pardon (Is 55:6-9).
  4. Because He is merciful, it behooves us to seek His mercy with all our beings for our whole lives.
- B. It is a great aspect of God’s character, so we should glory in it with Him (Jer 9:24 cp Micah 7:18).
  1. The focal point of tabernacle and temple worship was the mercy seat between the cherubim!
  2. The glorious works of God we should seek out and remember include His mercy (Ps 111:1-4).
  3. If His tender mercies are great, then they are worthy of great praise from us (Psalm 119:156).
  4. Isaiah put so well what should be our desire to mention God’s merciful kindnesses (Isaiah 63:7).
  5. Jehoshaphat’s great military victory came by praising the mercies of the Lord (II Chron 20:21).
- C. Since God is merciful and commands us to be merciful, we must learn of this trait (Luke 6:35-38).
  1. He will show mercy to us to the extent we show it to others (Ps 18:25; James 2:13). Beware!
  2. If we prefer criticism, bitterness, and judgment; then that is what He will happily show us!
- D. It is the foundation for a life of comfort and security, knowing He is ever merciful (Ps 21:7; 94:18).
- E. Consider Jacob’s wonderful prayer of not being worthy of the least of God’s mercies (Gen 32:10).

## **The NATURE**

- A. God is absolutely sovereign in dispensing His mercy to whomever He will (Exodus 33:19; Rom 9:15-18).
  - 1. There is nothing in God that forces Him to show mercy to rebel enemies, but His free sovereign choice!
  - 2. Therefore, the devil has none but a deferral of judgment, and the wicked have none but sunshine and rain!
  - 3. There is nothing in man to elicit mercy from Him: we are always and only profanely rebellious sinners!
  - 4. The LORD is not a man like us that feels obligation to show mercy due to similar faults and problems!
  - 5. And His mercy is only obtainable by His terms – such as the strict Day of Atonement in Israel (Lev 16).
- B. God may withdraw His mercy from His children to chasten them and/or quicken our appreciation for it.
  - 1. We should not be surprised when He withdraws mercy, but we should remember His mercy (Ps 77:1-10).
  - 2. When He withdraws His mercy, it is for a short time before He returns it forever (Is 30:18-21; 54:7-10).
- C. God is the Judge of all the earth, and it is His place alone to give mercy (Psalm 62:12; 85:10; Hab 3:2).
- D. Much practical mercy in our lives is conditional on our own obedience and faithfulness before the Lord.
  - 1. Keeping His commandments is essential (Ex 20:6; Neh 1:5; Psalm 25:10; Proverbs 14:22; Daniel 9:4).
  - 2. Humility is a requirement for God to grant His gracious mercy (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).
  - 3. Showing mercy is necessary to receive mercy (Ps 18:25; Jas 2:13). What goes around comes around!
  - 4. Practical mercy also requires judgment and separation from sinners (Deut 13:12-18), faith and trust in God (Ps 32:10), fearing God (Ps 33:18; Luke 1:50), proper confession (Pr 28:13), and prayer (Ps 86:5).
- E. God shows mercy to the wicked in this life – He lets them have sun, rain, and fruitful seasons (Matt 5:44-45).
- F. That natural mercy, which should bring repentance, comes to an end, and they wake up in hell (Luke 16:24).
- G. His mercies endure forever – He is not subject to change as we are (Ps 136:1-26; 118:1,29 cp James 1:17).
- H. God's mercy is great unto the heavens (Ps 57:10), a multitude (Ps 69:13), high as the heaven (Ps 103:11), from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 103:17), great above the heavens (Ps 108:4), and everywhere (Ps 119:64).
- I. It is superior to any mercy you can expect from men, so David chose it over that of man (II Samuel 24:14).
- J. His thoughts and ways being infinitely higher than our thoughts and ways pertain to His mercy (Is 55:6-9)!

## **The EVIDENCE**

- A. The natural creation and daily providence proves God's tender mercies over all (Job 37:11-13).
- B. God's law contained many provisions to protect the helpless with mercy (Ex 22:22-27; Deut 22:6-7).
- C. When God revealed His glory to Moses, he heard plainly of God's great mercy (Exodus 34:6-7).
- D. Jonah was so convinced of God's mercy that he knew God would forgive Nineveh (Jonah 4:2).
- E. There are many, many practical examples throughout the Bible of God's mercy to men and women.
  - 1. There are examples of natural mercy and kindness shown toward those in desperate need.
  - 2. They include Adam (Gen 2:18), Noah (Gen 6:8), Hagar (Gen 16:1-16), Lot (Gen 19:16), Isaac (Gen 24:67), Jacob (Gen 45:26-28), Joseph (Gen 39:1-4,21), Ruth (Ruth 2:3), Hannah (I Sam 1:19; 2:21), Esther (Esth 2:5-18), Daniel (Dan 2:9), Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-17), the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-15), Bartimaeus (Luke 18:35-43), a Canaanite woman (Matt 15:22-28), and others.
  - 3. There are examples of spiritual forgiveness and mercy given to great sinners.
  - 4. Some of these are Ahab (I Kgs 21:29), David (II Sam 12:1-13), Manasseh (II Chron 33:13), a sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50), Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11), and Paul (I Tim 1:12-16), among many others.
- F. The sending of Jesus Christ to die for our sins was great mercy of our God (Luke 1:78; Jude 1:21).
  - 1. The sure mercies of David are God's merciful promises to Him of a glorious Son (Acts 13:34).
  - 2. Eternal salvation is so much of God's mercy that we are called the vessels of mercy (Rom 9:23).
  - 3. We are born again by the abundant mercy of our glorious God (Eph 2:4; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3).
  - 4. The conversion of Gentiles involves the mercy of God in Christ Jesus as well (Romans 15:9).

## **The APPLICATION**

- A. We want to beg God for mercy in our prayers (Num 14:17-19; Psalm 4:1; 6:2,4; 25:16; 31:16; 40:11; 123:1-4; Is 63:15; Dan 9:18; II Tim 1:16,18; etc.).
- B. When confessing sins, we should appeal to His great mercy (Ps 51:1; Is 55:6-9; Luk 18:13; I Jn 1:9).
- C. The mercies of God should motivate our service to Him (Philippians 2:1; I Peter 2:1-3).

- D. God's great mercies should cause our faithful perseverance under multiplied adversities (Jas 5:11).
- E. God's great mercies should not promote wickedness (Romans 2:4; 6:1; 12:1; Titus 2:11; Jude 1:4).
- F. God's great mercies should provoke trust in God for help (Psalm 130:7; 147:11; Hebrews 4:16).
- G. God's great mercies should promote joyful and thankful worship in His temple (Psalm 5:7; 23:6).
- H. God's great mercies should be a cause for joy in our lives (Psalm 31:7-8; 90:14).
- I. God's great mercies should greatly provoke our own efforts at showing mercy to others.
  - 1. We want to be merciful, because our God is merciful (Luke 6:35-38).
  - 2. Mercy is a command for us to please God (Micah 6:8; Zech 7:9-10; Luke 10:37; Col 3:12).
  - 3. Mercy on the poor is a way in which we can honor God by our lives and actions (Prov 14:31).
  - 4. The wisdom of God that is from above is full of mercy and good fruits (James 3:17).
  - 5. A righteous man shows mercy (Ps 37:26) to beasts (Pr 12:10) and to himself (Pr 11:17).
  - 6. Since God is glorious in overlooking our faults, we should miss the faults of others (Pr 19:11).
  - 7. Showing mercy will bring happiness (Prov 14:21; preservation (Ps 41:1-3; Pr 20:28; 21:21), and forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15; Luke 6:36-38).
  - 8. Proper use of mercy respects sinners (Matt 9:13), determines ethics (Matt 12:7), and assumes a priority over matters (Is 58:6-7; Hos 4:1; 6:6; Matt 23:23).
  - 9. Daniel exhorted King Nebuchadnezzar to show mercy to preserve his tranquility (Daniel 4:27).

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Are you an expert on this subject? Do you know the Lord has been exceeding merciful to you in your life?
- 2. You should be able to compose your own version of Psalm 136 and praise the mercy of the Lord in your life.
- 3. You should be able to sing with great fervency and thanksgiving the first verse of Psalm 89!