

“GOD’S NEVER-ENDING MERCY”

(IS ALWAYS EXTENDED TO US)

The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

S40R/ S156R/ S222R

WED/9/01/2021

(#86RDG)

There are encouraging Scripture verses for everyone to consider, and so, comprehend their full meaning and reality, and which will enable us all to understand how far-reaching God’s mercy really is (and can be) in the life of a repentant believer in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. When we consider that God’s Word says, that He delights in mercy, and that God has already shown His greatest manifestation of mercy (inspired by the nature of the love in His heart for helpless mankind), then it should become a humbling and encouraging realization to take place in our mind and heart. It should inspire true believers to repent, and to seek God’s mercy in every circumstance or situation we may face. (Micah 7:18) re-assures a repentant person that God does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.

We can be inspired to praise God and repeat the words of (Psalm 107:1-3) “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south.” (Romans 5:6 says), “For already, while we were still helpless, Christ at the right moment died for the ungodly.” (That is the true definition of the extent of God’s divine mercy toward us!)

So, we want to have a real understanding of what Jesus Christ’s Atonement sacrifice on Calvary’s Cross has accomplished for us. It is not only that, by the Mercy of God the repentant believer has received pardon and cleansing and forgiveness from sins previously committed in their life, but that His shed Blood is the power that supports every other promise of God’s mercy to be shown, in behalf of those who will place their trust on His promises to show His mercy.

The Bible says that God’s Mercy is Everlasting, and it is a standing offer of mercy that has never been removed (and is always extended to those who will seek and believe to receive it. So, the sooner we would confess our sins and mistakes to God and seek His mercy in a true spirit of repentance, the better it will be for us spiritually. It will enable us to benefit from God’s mercy, as we have benefitted, even while still living in sin.

We can remind ourselves that every breath we have ever breathed in our body has been through God’s mercy. Can we even imagine how merciful God will be to us, if we would seek Him with a repentant heart?... when we know that He is waiting to show mercy, because He delights in showing His mercy!

2 Cor.1:3 reminds us that God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, (and God’s Promises and His Word about Himself are

always true and faithful). So, we must remember who the Father of mercies is,... (that, He is God, Himself), and that He will hear our call for mercy if we will turn to Him with a truly repentant heart. God's divine order and plan is to be followed by everyone which is, repent, be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, believe that you are forgiven, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (as Peter explained to the disciples of the early Church (Acts 2:38). With the free gift of the Holy Spirit given to inspire a repentant believer, one should be willing to repent and seek God's never-ending mercy.

Many past sermon messages have given examples of how God's mercy was extended to King David as soon as he repented and called for God's mercy,... also King Manasseh, who did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations, (2 Chron. 33:). King Manasseh showed no mercy, and he murdered people for no reason, deliberately rejecting the Lord's way and totally serving the devil. But the moment he sincerely repented and called on God for His mercy, God's mercy was given him.

That extent of God's never-ending mercy toward a repentant sinner, is also shown by the example of King David, who was guilty of a couple most serious sins (which would have taken him to the Lake of Fire if he had not genuinely repented).

However, King David was of a truly contrite and repentant spirit, as he confessed and then pleaded with God (Psalm 51:1-3) "Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving-kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me."

That is the path of sincere repentance for everyone else to take, since we have Aall sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

In that prayer of repentance King David openly confessed his sins before God. He acknowledged his transgressions, and then pleaded with God (vs.10-11), "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. He pleaded (vs 14) Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation."

His salvation depended on getting back to God right with a repentant spirit, and King David knew that. He realized that he had to sincerely forsake the sins previously committed in his life. He said (Psalm 51:17) "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise."

And God did not despise King David because of his terrible sins, nor did he revoke His offer to show mercy to the repentant, ...rather, God was waiting to extend His mercy (because He is a loving God). So, just as with King Manasseh, God's mercy was shown to King David the moment he sincerely repented and called on God for His mercy.

Apostle Paul admitted that he had been the worst of sinners, and that he had persecuted true believers of his time, before God extended His 'offer of mercy', and brought Saul to repentance (when he was willing to repent). The Bible says of 'Saul' (Paul's name before his true repentance), that his every breath was a threat of destruction for the disciples of the Lord. And if he found any believers (either men or women), he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem. However, God did not despise Saul because of his terrible sins, instead, in His great mercy He gave Saul an opportunity to repent. After his willingness to repent and receive God's mercy, and he had learned by experience in a life of trust, who the Father of mercies is, ... Paul proclaimed in his letter to the Corinthians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies."

Paul realized that he (the worst of sinners as he said), had been spared by God from condemnation to the Lake of Fire. He now understood that God is constantly trying to deal with human beings to bring conviction in them. Also, that God does not despise them because of their sins (even though the majority rejected and crucified His Son when He was sent to this earth with God's Message of Salvation). Paul realized that God has continually tried to advise mankind from the Truth of His Word, but that people will not repent (and many do not want anything to do with God). "Yet, while we were still helpless, Christ at the right moment died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5-6). That was God's greatest gift to mankind, as a manifestation of His mercy for us.

God's mercy extends further, even though most people on earth have rejected Him and His Son. (Rom.8:31-32) "What then shall we say to this? If God is on our side, who is there to appear against us? He who did not withhold even His own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

That should be a real inspiration for faith on our part, that we can place our needs and requests before the one and only God, who gave His Son to die for us, while we were still sinful. When Paul realized this about God, he exulted in praise to Him (vs.36) "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

He explained for the sake of others (Rom.11:29-32) (and speaking of God's never-ending mercy), "For God does not revoke (nor recall) His free gifts, nor of His call; but just as you (Gentiles) were formerly disobedient to Him, but now have received mercy at a time when they (Jews) are disobedient, so now they also have been disobedient at a time when you are receiving mercy; so that to them too there may now be mercy. For God has locked up all in the prison of unbelief, that upon all alike, He may have mercy." It is our freewill choice to believe in real faith on the Son of God, and seek

His mercy, or to reject Him (our Lord and Savior) Who is the only way to Heaven.

"Yet it was their unbelief that cut them off" (Rom.11:20 explains), "and you only stand through your faith." (Vs. 23) "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief" (trusting in man and his plans instead of God, they also) "will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." (The repentant soul will be grafted in again, because it is the nature of God's love and His desire to show His mercy to every repentant soul). (Matt. 12:20), "A crushed reed He will not utterly break, nor will He quench the still smoldering wick, until He has led on Justice to victory."

Having been a recipient of God's mercy, Paul exulted with praise for God, and he concluded (Rom.11:36) "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

What he meant was, that God has done everything for His people, even those who hate Him, people who are against Him, even when they spurn His mercy and throw it to the winds. Even toward those who crucified His Son, does His mercy still extend, and He has waited almost two thousand years for them to repent, so that He can receive them back again, as His chosen people. God is still waiting for Israel to come to the place where they will say, "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:).

God is waiting for those who crucified His Son, to receive the mercy that He still extends, for them to repent and return to His mercy, because He wants not one soul to perish. (2 Pet. 3:9).

Under human law, the cold-blooded rejection and murder of the Son of God (an innocent person), there would be no mercy shown, rather, the penalty of death would await the murderers. But, in the second chapter of Acts, God inspired Peter to address those who had mocked, falsely accused, and put to death God's only Son, by nailing Him to a Cross, by saying to them (vs.22) "Ye men of Israel, hear these words".

God had inspired Peter to address them as 'Israelites' and give them 'words of Truth' that could bring them to repentance if they would only use their power of choice to accept it. God did not despise the very people who had killed His Son.

(Wording from Weymouth translation says (vs.22-23) "Listen, 'Israelites', to what I say. Jesus, the Nazarene, a man accredited to you from God by miracles and marvels and signs which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know, Him (delivered up through God's settled purpose and foreknowledge), you by the hands of Gentiles have nailed to a cross and have put to death."

God still addressed them as Israelites (His own people), and they were admonished instead of being despised. He reminded them (vs36) "Therefore let the whole House of Israel know beyond all doubt that God has made Him both LORD and CHRIST, this Jesus whom you crucified."

God inspired Peter to tell them in clear language, that you are those people, who falsely accused the Son of God, and you chose to set a murderer free instead of Jesus (the innocent One), and you then killed Him. It was you who did this terrible crime (he admonished them). Yet, we want to take note that to those who did accept that admonishment, and who were willing to repent, he immediately extended His offer of mercy through His plan for their salvation.

Many of the listeners realized that Peter was telling them the truth about themselves, (vs.37) Astung to the heart by these words, they said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Brethren what are we to do?" "Repent," replied Peter, "and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view to the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). (God's mercy is never-ending, and everlasting, for those who will humble themselves to repent and seek His mercy).

That is all the punishment those people were to receive for their terrible crime of murdering the Son of God, an admonishment, and a plea for them to repent (for they like us, were created as free-moral agents, and given the power of choice to make right decisions to turn to God in faith). God's merciful plan to help them, was to invite them to repent. However, if they (and others) will only truly repent and turn to God in faith), He promised (and God does not recall promises), that they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 11:29 says), "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

Those people (just like ourselves) were given the opportunity to use their power of choice, to receive God's mercy, as well as to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is given to true believers. The world is full of two kinds of people, believers in Christ, and unbelievers,... and the Holy Spirit is only given to believers in Christ. (John 14:17) "That Spirit the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He remains by your side and is in you."

It is that Holy Spirit who sanctifies and prepares each believer to be ready (the living and the dead-in-Christ), (ready) to meet God's Son (who was the first to rise from the dead). The Holy Spirit will inspire faith in the true believer which will enable them to obey God's Word, because they have true love for God and believe on His Word. (John 14:14-16 says), "If you make any request of me in my Name, I will do it. If you love me, you will obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be for ever with you—the Spirit of Truth." (which unbelievers cannot receive).

So, our merciful God is still waiting for the rest of Israel (and all of mankind), to use their power of choice right, and to choose to truly repent and seek His mercy, (which is still extended to each one

who will turn away from sin and unbelief), which (Paul explained) is idolatry). It is the same mercy that God extended to King Manasseh, King David, Saul of Tarsus, and to many others. The testimonies of these repentant people, and of how God (in trueness of His merciful character) received them back into His arms with rejoicing, ... should be an encouragement to every human being, and we should not allow Satan to ever make us doubt the mercy of God.

Some people may like to suggest that we could go on sinning, however, the longer we would go on sinning, the longer the devil will have a hold on us, and we will hinder God's mercy from being shown on our behalf. We cannot 'sin with immunity'. We would indeed be forsaking the mercy of God, that is always extended for a repentant soul who will turn from sin and unbelief, and so, come to believe in Christ, Jesus. That very mercy of God will lead us to repentance, if we have sincerely surrendered the actions of the self life, rather, to believe on the power of the Atonement work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. (Acts 10:43) assures the believer, "To Him (the Christ, Jesus), all the Prophets bear witness, and testify that through His Name all who believe in Him receive the forgiveness of their sins." [That means Salvation for everyone who endures in the faith, ... and what could be of more importance to anyone than that.]

God will rejoice to receive each truly repentant sinner who will seek His everlasting mercy, and the free gift of the Holy Spirit will be given them, for God does not take back His free gifts. Then the truly repentant soul will proclaim with joy (as in Psalm 118:23-24) "This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."

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SOME MAIN POINTS EMPHASIZE THAT:

1. In God's supreme love for us, He delights in showing His mercy to us, that is why it is always extended for those who seek His mercy.
2. God rejoices to receive truly repentant sinners, who will seek the never-ending mercy that He extends to everyone who will follow His divine order and plan repent and believe,...and, the free gift of the Holy Spirit will be given them, for God does not revoke His free gifts, (it must be our choice to receive them).
3. (Most importantly), "God already displayed a greatest manifestation of mercy, when He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, Who at the 'right moment' died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6).