

GOD'S MERCY

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Mercy is the part of God's character that is one of the most encouraging and beautiful attributes of God. The word mercy would mean to help someone who does not deserve help. That is the way it is with God; all He has done in sending His own Son to a sinful people is in mercy to help people, who deserve only justice and sentence passed upon them. God's mercy means that He will do everything He can to clear us; to get His way in order to help us.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ has brought God and all that He is, or can be, on our side and at our disposal. Here we have a plan which puts us under the Blood and God has obligated Himself to deliver us from sin, from sorrow, and from disease and trouble. There are three great charter rights in the Atonement of Christ, conditions upon which we receive that righteousness, peace, and health.

God's mercy will reach over the line to help people even when they do not meet conditions. His mercy does everything possible to help people who should not be helped, naturally speaking. Mercy goes beyond justice. It is written— "Mercy shall triumph over judgment." Mercy shadows judgment, hinders judgment, when people are found in a place where judgment ought to come.

Psalms 89:1, "*I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.*" This is David speaking and the subject of his song is the mercy of God. How he realized that mercy, how he proved it, that it was an important attribute, and he always had the thought of God's mercy before him, because it had meant so much to him.

Psalms 103:8, "*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*" Our natural make-up, owing to our fallen condition, is to delight in justice. God, on the other hand, is different; He delights in mercy. Micah 7:18, "*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy.*"

When He can be merciful to someone, help someone who does not deserve help, who has treated Him shamefully, then He delights to treat them good, and show mercy toward them. God has a large stock of mercy, and that stock cannot be overdrawn; we cannot reach the end of it. When we realize the practical value of this mercy, we will be glad to know that God has plenty of it. I am thankful to say God will never run out of mercy; He always has it on hand ready to use.

Just notice how much mercy God has, Psalms 103:11, "*For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*"

Scientists tell us it is 93 million miles from earth to the sun; now that is a great distance; but how much further away Heaven is no one knows. However, it is written, God's mercy is just as great as that distance—from earth to Heaven.

In Psalms 103:17, He tells us how long this mercy lasts. It has no beginning, and it has no end. It is like God Himself, it is eternal; it never changes, it never ceases working, but God always has a great stock on hand. "*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.*"

From this we learn that God's mercy will reach our children and their children to bless them, even though they are not meeting conditions, which means if a parent is serving God right and letting His mercy have the right of way; it will put a righteousness in them which will enable this mercy of God to reach unto their children's children. In other words, if we as parents, are righteous, and we have sons and daughters, the blessings which we receive will reach unto them, and even unto our grandchildren.

God will throw His arms of mercy around our children and grandchildren. It is very important to know that the righteousness of parents reaches unto their children and grandchildren.

You remember Abraham and Lot; when God was about to destroy the Sodomites, Genesis 18th chapter, His mercy reached down to Lot, Abraham's nephew. He did not deserve to be saved from that calamity; he had not surrendered to God fully. He was not walking as he should have walked before the Lord; he had made a

choice in the flesh and lived among those wicked, idolatrous people in that wicked place, even sat in the gate of the city among the worst of them. God made known to Abraham His plans concerning the destruction of that city, and Abraham in turn prayed for Him to have mercy upon Lot.

When the time came for that city to be destroyed, the angel said to Lot, "We cannot do a thing until you get out." God would have taken even his daughter and sons-in-law, those wicked people, had they been willing to go, but they refused. The angels, however, had to pull Lot out; as the sun began to break forth on that day of destruction, they came and took Lot by the hand and forced him to leave the city; saying, "We cannot do a thing until you get out of this city."

That was the mercy of God in delivering that man, his wife, and daughters, who deserved nothing better than that which befell the Sodomites. He was not much better than some of those people; but, God's great mercy, which had fallen upon Abraham, worked in Abraham and came down unto Lot, because of the righteousness of Abraham, his uncle.

Psalms 107:1, "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.*"

In James 5:11, we have a very significant statement concerning the mercy of God, in the way of an example. "*Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*" This gives us a little idea of how we can get the benefit of God's mercy.

God's mercy is not always apparent at the beginning of a Christian life, because the temptations and trials are so great, that we are so taken up with them, that we cannot see anything beyond them and ourselves; but, if we hold steady and give God a little time to get us to the end of ourselves, God's mercy will come into view.

Now in Job's case it did not appear that God had any mercy at all. Satan had been permitted to rob him of all he possessed, all that was dear to his heart, and allowed to cover him with sores from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet; he could not lie down or stand up. While in this dreadful condition, he found that God's mercy was still present, that God had not failed him, but that He was just as merciful as He had proven

to be previously. When Job got to the end of himself, God's mercy came into view. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Some people may ask, "If God was so merciful, why was Job so much oppressed? Why did He allow all this trouble to befall Job?" It was the mercy of God that brought about the whole situation. Here is an illustration.

It is the parent's very mercy which makes their children go to school and study English, math, and all other lessons, because you know it will be of value to them later in life. The love and mercy of the parent insisting upon the children doing what they do not like to do is exactly the same principle used by God in Job's case; to save them from the almshouse, to save them from the pick and shovel, that they might earn their living in a respectable way; it is for their special benefit, and so it was for Job's benefit.

How much more should God's mercy cause us to learn lessons which will aid us to spend eternity with Him, which is infinitely more valuable than any benefit any school could be to us. God knows there are but two places for us to spend eternity; either in a lake of fire, or in Heaven where God's presence makes happiness supreme.

His great mercy is manifested in teaching and training us, not only for blessings here, but for the life hereafter. We often forget that this life is only a school; it is not a permanent abiding place; we are only pilgrims and sojourners here, we are away to boarding-school, as it were; we should never lose sight of that.

If our lives are not proving to be in a training school, where God is the Teacher, we are in a dangerous place, and should seek to get into the precious will of God, where He will use every circumstance and detail of life to teach us some great, important lesson; everything which happens in the home, everything that is said or done to us will be used to teach and train us, so that we will be enabled to stand true to God, even as the three Hebrew children, in the face of death itself.

How short-sighted we are; if somebody passes us by on the street and accidentally does not speak to us, we sometimes cherish a resentment in our hearts toward

that person, because Satan whispers that they did it deliberately.

Resentment has no place in Christianity, but it delights in meeting people right. A real Christian should not mind these things. because of the faith, love, mercy, and power which God puts into their hearts. It is one of the grandest opportunities of proving God, to have someone do or say some mean thing to us. God desires that our sight should be improved and perfected because He offers us spiritual eye salve, free of charge.

Revelation 3:18, *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."*

When we have obtained this eye salve and applied it, we will not mind what people say or do to us; our only thought will be, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

You remember it is written in God's Word that we are not to avenge ourselves. The reason God took this matter of avenging out of our hands is because He knew we would deal with people wrongfully because of our fallen nature, even as Christians; we would not be as merciful unto them as God desires us to be. He desires to deal with them in great mercy, hence, He has taken the avenging of wrongs out of our hands entirely.

Romans 12:19, *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves,"* because you will not have mercy in dealing with people, *"but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

You get out of the way, because God's wrath is tempered with mercy and He will bring them to repentance if they are willing. "Vengeance is mine;" God has taken another plan to make us merciful.

Matthew 5:7, *"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."* Blessed are people who have mercy on other people. That means we will never talk about them unless it is absolutely in their favor; never dwell on their bad side; never complain about anybody. It also means we are to endeavor to be kind and considerate to people who do not deserve it; always to see their best side, even though they do not deserve to have anything good said about them.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Just as sure as we live today, the mercy we have toward people will be dealt out to us; if we are not merciful, resentful, complain, and talk about people and pick flaws in them, God will quickly begin to pick flaws in us.

It does not matter what the experience is, what profession you make, what works of grace you have undergone, you must forgive everything that is said or done against you. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."

To really forgive means to forget also, and that all the coolness between you and the person concerned is done away with. God's forgiveness is to have mercy blended with it; we are to be kinder than ever before and mean it from the heart.

If we have a grievance in our heart, we better let God get it out. Jesus told Peter, in answer to his question how often he was to forgive his brother, seventy times seven, that means infinite; because all manner of sin and blasphemy against the Father and Son is going to be forgiven unto man, and God desires us to be merciful, even as our Father in Heaven. In Luke 6:35, Jesus states that our sonship with God depends upon our having mercy.

"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

These are the kind of people God is merciful to, the unthankful and the evil, and if we are willing to do that, it will be more far reaching than we have any idea of; it will not only bring the mercy of God, but will bring a crucifixion of self and an enthronement of Jesus Christ, which will make us the true children of God-- "Children of the Highest:" true sons and daughters of God and then we will not hold anything against anyone.

That is God's mercy and that is why we should deal in great mercy and tender love with every human being. We cannot do less than God does, and He delights in mercy.



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