

“THE CHARACTER OF GOD” **(IS “NEVER-ENDING MERCY”)**

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The Mercy of God is a wonderful topic and an encouraging subject for anyone to take time to consider, even though thorough explanation is really beyond ever putting into words. As one would meditate on God's mercy, we may come to realize that it cannot be fully explained, but the Holy Spirit will help a person to understand and relate to God's Mercy in their own mind. We may try to express it our own way, by saying, that mercy is to help someone who does not deserve help (as God did for us by sending His Son to give His life for us, even though we were undeserving sinners at the time.)

Forgiveness, grace, and compassion are good synonyms of mercy, and each one truly illustrates some part of God's character.

"Wherever I show mercy, it shall be nothing but mercy, and wherever I show compassion it shall be simply compassion" (says Rom.9:15). And (Vs.18 reminds us), that wherever He chooses He shows mercy, and wherever he chooses He hardens the heart."

Therefore, it is not by our will and endeavor, for God is "all in all" (the Bible teaches). Instead, it is through His mercy that we receive mercy, when we meet the only condition that God placed on His will for us... that is, to "believe" on His Word (through His Son), and thus, seek Him in faith. (Rom.11:22 also reminds us), "Notice therefore God's kindness and God's severity. On those who have fallen His severity has descended, but upon you His kindness has come, provided that you do not cease to respond to that kindness. Otherwise, you will be cut off also." This is (vs.33), "in agreement with the statement of Scripture, "See, I am placing on Mount Zion a stone for people to stumble at, and a rock for them to trip over, ... and yet he whose faith rests upon it shall never have reason to feel ashamed."

As God enables us to understand how merciful He really is, it will inspire us with confidence to not only go to Him to receive our deliverance, but to go to Him in the first place and ask in faith for what we need. That is the real result of us coming to understand the Mercy of God (and of believing and accepting it as it is given). When we consider the real meaning of (2 Cor.1:3), "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Father of Mercies' and 'God of all Comfort'", we can start to realize how great His 'mercy' really is and begin to make practical applications of it toward needs and requests.

When Scripture says, 'the Father of mercies', that should mean to us that God cannot be anything other than merciful (under any condition and circumstance that we would seek mercy from Him) because His nature compels Him to show mercy toward us. It is the part of our Heavenly Father's character that is waiting for us to seek and find, if we will only turn to Him in faith through believing that God's Word

is true, and that He is faithful to fulfill it.

In contrast to the Father of Mercy and Truth who is always faithful, Jesus told us that Satan is the 'father of lies', which means he cannot do anything but tell lies, as it is impossible for him to tell the truth. That is important for us to remember, since the devil is constantly suggesting things to our mind, that 'seem' to be truthful, ... (but the 'father of lies' (the devil) cannot be truthful. If we are not careful and watchful (as Jesus warned us), we may find ourselves to be putting some credibility on what the devil is trying to have us believe and accept. However, there is no excuse or reason for us to believe that there is any truth to the devil's suggestions to our mind (when we know that God's Word has told us the opposite).

We must also remember that the 'Father of mercies' is "God", and so rely on His Word instead of the devil's suggestions). God's Promises and His Word about Himself, are always true and faithful. The mercy that we should seek from God, is just as much a part of His character as is 'love' (and we all know from 1 John 4:) God is Love).

God's mercy springs from His love and compels Him to show it on behalf of those who seek help from Him (our 'Father of Mercies'), (instead of turning to man and his devices which are designed by the sinful nature).

In human affairs, the worst criminal would still have the mercy of their parents' love for them. The parental love of the criminal's parents will always reveal their mercy, as they try to find excuse for him. They almost always believe that there must be a misunderstanding concerning the crime committed.

Parents who desire to have God convict their children (and be brought to repentance and salvation), will surely hope and pray for their children to repent (even if they are down to their last breath), because of the mercy that comes from a human love in their heart. Because of mercy, husbands and wives will plead with each other to repent, even if the other does not profess to be a Christian. God has placed that mercy in hearts of humans, although it is blemished because of the sinful nature and Satan's power over the unrepentant.

What is the Father of mercy actually like? Could we even imagine how kind and merciful He will be to us, if we would seek Him with a repentant heart, because we know that He is waiting to show mercy (and He delights in showing mercy?) (Micah 7:18) "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity, and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy."

If we will take that verse to heart and believe that God delights in mercy, then we should realize that He is waiting and longing to show mercy toward us (just as His Word tells us).

The late Pastor used an analogy about his delighting to do something, saying, "When I was a boy I would argue and coax my mother

to give me fifty cents for a ticket to attend a local event because I had a delight to go to that event (and it was also much better than washing dishes or running errands). So, I would not have appreciated it if someone would keep me from going somewhere I delighted to go."

That is what we want to realize about our merciful God, and that He delights and finds pleasure in showing His mercy toward a repentant person who will sincerely and openly confess their sins to Him in prayer and seek his mercy. It is surely a part of God's Scriptures that we should want to have a real understanding of, for it will encourage us to always 'seek mercy' from the 'Father of Mercy', Himself. God's never-ending mercy toward the repentant sinner is clearly expressed in the Bible example of King David, who had committed a terrible sin, by having a man murdered and then taking his wife (the sins of both murder and adultery), which would have taken King David to the Lake of Fire if he had not truly repented). (Rev.21:8), "But as for cowards and the unfaithful (unbelievers), and the polluted, and murderers, fornicators, and those who practice magic or worship idols, and all liars--the portion allotted to them shall be in the Lake which burns with fire and sulphur. This is the Second Death."

However, King David was of a truly contrite and repentant spirit, as he said in (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 pattern of sincere repentance for everyone to follow), in that we have "all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (as Rom.3:23 admonishes us).

A repentant spirit that is sincere (as was King David's), is what enables us to obtain God's merciful forgiveness and His righteousness, through faith in the cleansing power of the Atonement Blood of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3:21 says), "But now a righteousness coming from God has been brought to light apart from any Law," (vs.22) "a righteousness coming from God, which depends on faith in Jesus Christ (and, that His Atonement Blood has cleansed us), "and extends to all who believe."

We are to (and must) truly believe (as King David did), that because of God's great mercy, He is compelled to (and will) pardon those who sincerely confess and repent before God of their mistakes. That is what Jesus Christ's Atonement Blood accomplished for each of us. (Vs.25) "He it is whom God put forward as a Mercy-seat", (that is) "rendered efficacious through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness because of the passing over, in God's forbearance of the sins 'previously' committed,". It is (vs.26 says), "with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus."

King David openly confessed his sins before God in his prayer of repentance. He acknowledged his transgressions, and he pleaded with God (Psalm 51:10-11), to "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 "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation."

King David knew that his 'Salvation' depended on getting back to God right, with a 'repentant spirit' which had sincerely forsaken the sins previously committed in his life, especially the sin of bloodshed for which he pleaded for deliverance from that guilt. (His plea to God continued (vs.16-17), "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart These, O God, You will not despise."

King David was made right with God through 'repentance', for God did not despise him for his terrible sins, rather, God was waiting to show mercy, because He delights in showing mercy. (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."

God will give us all the opportunity to repent, before we are cut from the Vine, because Mercy is the character of God. Each day we are given opportunity to sincerely repent and forsake our mistakes and sins, renew our commitment and consecration to God, and renew our 'life of faith', as we kneel in prayer by faith at the feet of Jesus Christ and place all circumstances in our life before Him in faith. (Rom.11: 20-23 explains), "yet it was their unbelief that cut them off, and you only stand through your faith. Do not be puffed up with pride. Tremble rather--for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Notice therefore God's kindness, and God's severity. On those who have fallen His severity has descended, but upon you His kindness has come, provided that you do not cease to respond to that kindness. Otherwise, you will be cut off also. Moreover, if they turn from their unbelief, they too will be grafted in. For God is powerful enough to graft them in again."

King David poured his heart out to God in private devotions to Him, and he was given the opportunity to repent, confess, and forsake his sins, and he was grafted in again (because God delights to show mercy). He gave his testimony of thanksgiving to God, after he was pardoned, cleansed, and restored to health. As King David sincerely repented, God delighted to show His mercy to him. (Psalm 103:1-4 is his testimony), "Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

King David was referring to deliverance from sickness and troubles of every kind, by saying "Who heals all your diseases, Who

redeems your life from destruction", (because he had been afflicted by a very serious sickness that had threatened to take his life). He praised our merciful God for pouring out His Mercy on him, when he said, "Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies." (Because God delights in showing mercy).

If King David had been dealing with men instead of dealing with God, he would not have received any deliverance. Instead, he would have been put to death because no mercy would have been shown to an adulterer and murderer. It is important that we understand, that when he was willing to turn from those sins and openly and sincerely confess them, God showed His loving kindness and tender mercy toward a repentant soul. Those circumstances (regarding King David's situation) should help us to understand how far God's mercy extends, and how long-lasting it can be, for anyone who is willing to repent before the Lord (because they fear God). (Psalm 103:11 says) "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him" (and obey Him by doing His will). (Vs.17-18) "But the mercy of the Lord [is] from everlasting to everlasting, on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, too such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them."

We should also take note that God's Word says, His mercy is "from everlasting to everlasting", because the devil would like to make us believe that God's mercy will not last. The devil does not want us to understand that God's mercy is infinitely and eternally on those who will fear Him. However, God's Word tells us, that no matter what our sinful condition has been (nor what our present condition is),...if we are willing (there is our freewill choice), are willing to go to God in an honest prayer of repentance, and sincerely confess our true sinful condition to Him and ask for His mercy, (the moment that we do), His mercy is always waiting to be extended to us.

The only exception to God's offer of everlasting mercy, is if one were to blaspheme (curse) the Holy Spirit of God. (Matt.12:31 Jesus said), "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. (We are never to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by cursing about Him).

God's everlasting mercy is a standing offer of mercy that has never been removed, and it will last as long as we need 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, and it will enable us to benefit from God's mercy. It is through God's mercy that we continue to exist on earth, for we never breathed a breath in our body that was not extended by His mercy.

So, what must the Father of mercy be like? Could we even imagine how kind and merciful He will be to us, if we would seek Him with a repentant heart, when we understand that He is waiting to show mercy, because He delights in showing mercy?

Each of twenty-six verses in Psalm 136 end with the words "For His mercy endures forever." That is not just needless repetition, rather, it is to help us understand that God's mercy never ceases to be there for anyone at any time. God, in His great mercy (to save our soul from being condemned), will chastise us for our sins and mistakes to bring repentance (and for that we should be thankful). (1 Cor.11:32) "But when we are judged by the Lord, chastisement follows, to save us from being condemned along with the world."

We are to seek God's mercy and forgiveness for our known sins (and any other sins that God reveals), as we kneel before Christ in a prayer of sincere confession and repentance (just as King David did when he was chastised by God's mercy for terrible sins he committed).

God's forgiveness is always there for us. We just need to return to Him in a spirit of true repentance, because His mercy is always extended, and it is from everlasting to everlasting.

God has already showed us His greatest manifestation of mercy, and it was inspired by the nature of love in His heart. (Rom.5:6), "For already, while we were still helpless, Christ at the right moment died for the ungodly."

(That is the true definition of God's Divine Mercy).

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The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

MAIN POINTS:

MERCY: IS GOD'S CHARACTER, explains how willing God is to deliver us, and that we should be very confident of receiving the victory (when we go before Him in prayer), and truly believe that He will answer our request.

2. The example of God's mercy in answer to King David's plea for His mercy, is used, to help us realize how far God's mercy will extend in the life of a repentant person, who truly forsakes their sins and mistakes.