

# The Mercy of God

## Part 2 Lesson 1

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We have some wonderful examples of God's mercy, both in the Old and New Testaments. We will read a verse or two about Manasseh, King of Judah, and consider his case and the great mercy of God.

A sister once said that Satan could never make her doubt the forgiveness of her sin, the genuineness of her pardon and God's willingness to hear and answer prayer after she read the story of Manasseh.

This story is recorded both in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, but we will read from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Book of Chronicles, chapter 33 beginning with verse 1: *"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them."*

He worshipped the sun, moon, and stars.

*"Also he built altars in the house of the Lord: —idolatrous altars—whereof the Lord had said, in Jerusalem shall My name be for ever. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit and with wizards:"*

This was real devil worship.

If you read about this case in the Book of Kings, you will find that he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; he murdered and destroyed the

lives of people until the streets of Jerusalem were filled with blood.

*"And the Lord spake unto Manasseh, and his people: but they would not hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto Him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God."* (Verses 10-13)

Just consider that Manasseh was just as wicked as it was possible for him to be; he did not follow in the steps of Hezekiah his father. There was no excuse for his wickedness as he had known better, through the attitude of his father; but he upset everything and served Satan to the fullest extent of his ability; he pleased Satan and murdered people on the right hand and the left; but the very moment he called on God for mercy He forgave him and took him right back into his kingdom.

Should that not encourage every human being to not allow Satan to make doubt of the character of God or to make us believe that He is any different from what He says He is?

Someone may say we can go on sinning. Beloved, the longer we sin, or the longer we continue sinning, the more the devil will hold us down and hinder God's mercy in our behalf. We cannot sin with impunity or exemption from punishment. The very mercy of God will lead us to repentance.

Paul tells us in Romans 2:5. *"But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."*

The destruction of ungodly people. We should remember that the goodness of God is to lead us to repentance. It is the greatest incentive we have to repent; we are sure of being heard and answered, of being forgiven and being cleansed, of being pardoned, the evil desires and power of sin rebuked at once.

People get stiff-necked and stubborn of heart and say: "I do not want anything to do with Christianity; I will not repent of my sins, as it is of no use."

If they realize the full and complete pardon which God has for us, the great mercy which is waiting; yes, has been knocking at our door continually, the full cleansing and power of God offered to us, even as to those murderers we have been speaking of, it would be a great incentive to them to be through with their sinful life and to turn whole-heartedly to God in repentance, knowing assuredly that they shall be accepted of Him.

If a person is sure of being successful, they do not mind trying. When we turn from our evil ways and seek God's mercy, we may be sure we will be successful; that is seeking God in confession of our sins—not seeking His mercy only—we are sure to receive it and to be heard and answered, because of that great mercy.

Anyone who ever called on God for mercy was always heard and answered; that is one of the best forms of repentance.

Daniel prayed: *"O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him."* (Daniel 9:8-9)

He realized that to God belonged loving kindness and tender mercies and long suffering; hence, he could pray: *"O my GOD, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies."*

He asked God to forgive the people of his nation and to have great mercy upon them; and while he was praying in this way, God sent an angel to tell him that he would hear and answer that prayer at once. God sent a messenger from heaven to prove to Daniel His mercy which He was extending to Israel, and that He was just waiting to help them.

This is also brought out in the case of the lepers in Luke 17. God always answers when we

appeal to His mercy. They said to Jesus Christ: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." He immediately answered by saying: 'Go show yourselves unto the priests.' As they accepted that spoken Word and started out to present themselves to the priests, they were cleansed and healed.

Do you remember the last appeal of the woman of Canaan? In her first appeal she pleaded for mercy; and it only brought what seemed to be a discouraging answer. Finally, He told her plainly that he was not sent to heal the daughters of Canaanite women, and that it would not be meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.

She said: *"Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, 'O woman great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."* (Matthew 15:27-28)

Take the demoniac of Gadara, he had no power to pray for himself; all the prayer he made was that Jesus Christ should go away from him and not torment him by His presence. Jesus cast the demons out and told him to go home and let his folks see what great things the Lord had done for him. (Mark 5:1-19)

He was to tell his loved ones that God had had compassion on him, which means that He had mercy upon him; it was purely mercy, multiplied and magnified mercy! God is always delighted to do this.

Then Paul tells us why he was saved. We often wonder why God came right down to Paul on his way to Damascus, when he was persecuting the disciples and assisting in the murder of Stephen, that Holy Spirit-filled man, by holding the clothes of those committing the murder.

On his way to Damascus, he was in possession of papers which consented to the death of the Christians. He was a blasphemer and persecutor, and yet God's mercy was extended to him. God asked him a question, the same as he did the demoniac of Gadara.

To the latter He said: *"What is your name?" To Paul He said: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He did not say: "You are a*

very mean person, you deserve to go straight to the Lake of Fire for your evil doings.”

“And he said, *“Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”*”

Saul of Tarsus was a wicked, devil-controlled person, a real opposer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a persecutor of all his followers, unto death; he would not give them a chance to serve God.

Paul confirms this in his writing to Timothy in the first epistle, 1st chapter, verse 15. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*

Paul means to say that he accepted to the fullest extent, one hundred percent the falsehoods of Satan; he considered himself the chiefest among sinners. *“Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering.”*

That God might show how far his mercy extended— *“From everlasting to everlasting.”*

*“For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”*

Paul fully understood the meaning of his salvation; it was through God’s mercy alone.

Now he breaks out in another note of praise. *“Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

He uses God’s mercy in another appeal in Romans 12:1, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.”*

Paul means to imply that as we consider the great mercy of God, it should drive us to consecration or dedication; cause us to surrender our lives fully to Him.

*“That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

How rebellious, blind, ignorant, and foolish we have been, spiritually speaking. If we

will only surrender our lives to God, He is delighted to take full possession of them, in His great mercy.

Everyone who presents their life a living sacrifice, He takes possession of and begins to do a great work for, and we will be transformed by His power alone; there will be a renewal of our entire spiritual nature—there will be a new life in Christ Jesus; old things will have passed away and all things will be new, and we will prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

We have another very important truth about this great mercy of God, and that is we are to extend the same mercy to each other that God extends to us.

Of course, we cannot do that if we are continually holding a grudge against someone, if we have hard feelings toward people, if we resent wrongs which are done to us.

If we have given our lives to God; if we are willing for Him to make us just as merciful as He is—which the Bible declares we should be—which is just opposite to our worldly inclination; no matter how hard people are judging, how quickly they will accuse us of wrong; we will excuse anything they say or do, instead of criticizing them; we will say: “Well now, Lord we desire to be as merciful as Thou art.”

*“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.”* (Matthew 5:7) He also says we shall receive the same mercy from Him that we extend to each other, and takes us over to that passage of Scripture in Matthew—the story of the servant who owed his lord a vast amount of money and could not pay it, and he asked him to have mercy upon him.

As a result of this, his lord forgave him the debt. Then this same servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a small debt, and he said: *“Pay me what thou owest.”* However, he would not have mercy but cast him into prison.

*“So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredest me: Shouldest not thou*

*also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.” (Matthew 18:31-35)*

In Luke 6:35 we read: *“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.”*

We are to do good to our enemies no matter how mean and contemptible they are; no matter what dreadful things they may do. *“For He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.”*

Did you catch that? What a confidence that will give any one to realize that God is even delighted to have mercy on the unthankful and evil; HOW MUCH MORE would He extend His loving kindness and tender mercy unto His children?

*“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”*

That is the bond of perfection; that is the evidence of God’s Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ.

The real, practical benefit is not only our repentance and surrender of these lives as a living sacrifice unto God, but a positive assurance that every prayer which is an appeal to His mercy, will receive the same answer as Daniel’s and those ten lepers.

Anyone who appealed to God’s mercy was always heard and answered immediately. That is a sign of repentance, when we ask God for mercy; it makes no difference what we have done, or how evil our life has been; when we take our place in His sight and appeal to His mercy, He immediately takes His place and begins to work in our behalf. God desires to show mercy unto us—not for His sake—but for our benefit and blessing.

*“O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of facers as at this day—To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.”*

God’s mercy brought a messenger from heaven to help Daniel; and such an appeal will bring deliverance to us today from any oppression of the devil.

If we will turn to God and appeal to His mercy—allow that mercy to lead us to repentance, and we surrender our lives to God a living sacrifice, every prayer will be answered, and God’s great mercy will bring an immediate deliverance.



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