

THE FATHER OF MERCY

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When we get a real understanding of God's mercy, we will have greater confidence to go to Him and ask in faith for the deliverance we need; that is the real result of understanding the mercy of God and believing and accepting it as it is. In 2nd Corinthians 1st chapter, verse 3, Paul tells us:

"Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."

The "Father of all mercies" means that God is merciful under all conditions and circumstances and cannot do anything but be merciful to us. This is God's character, just as His mercy springs from His love; so much so is love His character.

It is written in the book of Micah that God delighteth 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."*

David had committed a grievous sin against Uriah; by causing him to be murdered and taking his wife. The 103rd Psalm is David's testimony after his pardon and cleansing and restoration to health. The mercy of God is also brought out very clearly. Psalm 103:2-4, *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."*

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction" relates to sickness and trouble—a serious spell of sickness had come upon David.

"Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies" —God just pours out His mercies upon us. David means to tell us that humanly speaking he would not have expected any deliverance; if he had been dealing with man, death would have resulted; but when he was willing to turn from that sin and honestly confess it before God, God met him with loving-kindness and tender mercy. That was the circumstance surrounding David's case, and it will help us to see how far that mercy extends.

(Verse 11) *"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."*

Then in the 17th verse— *"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;"* That is the extent of God's mercy; "from everlasting to everlasting."

The moment we are willing to go before God and honestly confess our true condition and ask Him for mercy, His mercy is always waiting for us; it has never been taken away; it is a standing mercy and will last as long as we need it. The sooner we take it the better, as it is for our benefit; through it we are existing, as there is never a breath in our body that mercy has not been extended for it.

We are to confess our sins and wrong-doings and forsake them, and God's forgiveness is always there waiting for us.

We have the same thought in Psalm 107:1. *"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."* The 136th Psalm has twenty-six verses and at the end of each verse are the words: *"for his mercy endureth for ever."*

God never ceases to be merciful to anyone at any time; He is always waiting to be merciful to us. We have another thought brought out in Roman's 11th chapter, beginning at

verse 29. Paul is speaking of Israel and how God had mercy upon them; finally, He sent His Son, and they rejected Him. Because of that sin, God was compelled to lay them aside. He is only waiting for them, and in the meantime, he turned to the Gentiles.

However, during these 2000 years, He has not changed in His attitude toward them. He is still waiting and extending mercy; waiting for the Israelites, or the Jewish people, to repent, that His mercy may be poured upon them; He is simply waiting to have great mercy upon them.

Romans 11:29-32, *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."*

That is how God is dealing with the human race; He is continually trying to advise them, but they will not repent; they will have nothing to do with Him, and still, He is continually extending His mercy toward them. God does everything in His power that He might be merciful unto us and that He might be kind unto us. His greatest manifestation of mercy is found in Romans 5:6— *"For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly."*

That was His greatest gift in manifestation of mercy inspired by His great heart of love. A God Who gave His best, His only Son, when we were without strength and ungodly, how would not such a loving One, such a merciful One not freely give us all things? That is a wonderful inspiration for faith.

The great manifestation of that mercy is also found in the 2nd chapter of Acts. Israel had mocked, harassed, and tormented the Son of God and ended by bringing false accusations against Him and finally putting Him to death by nailing Him to the cross.

Such acts, humanly speaking, would have called forth the greatest condemnation and withdrawn any hope of mercy, as it was cold-blooded, deliberate murder of the Son of God, an innocent person. Under any human law there could not have been one particle of mercy shown them; the penalty of death would have been given to them. Notice the message of love and mercy that God extended to these people, beginning with the 22nd verse of the 2nd chapter of Acts:

The message was addressed to *"Ye men of Israel."* Peter was directing his message to the very people who had murdered the Son of God. His message was inspired by the Spirit of God and given directly to those murderers— *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."*

You are the very people who slew the Son of God. Then he continues in the 36th verse— *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."*

You people ridiculed Him, made false accusation against Him, desired a murderer to be set free instead of Him, the innocent One; and finally killed Him. You are the people who did this terrible crime. Now notice the mercy extended to these murderers.

(Verse 37) *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart; and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

"Then Peter said unto them, REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

That is all the punishment those people were to receive for that terrible crime. God sent the message for them to repent and then promised them the gift of His Spirit to enable them to do so, as they were free moral agents; His only plan to help them was to invite them to repent.

(Verse 39) *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."*

The promise is unto you murderers, and to your children. Notice what a large and genuine work had been done by God already for their terrible crime; and He invites them to turn from their sins and be filled with His own peace and righteousness.

We have some very wonderful examples of God's mercy, both in the Old and New Testaments. We will consider Manasseh, King of Judah, and consider his case and the great mercy of God. This is recorded in 2 Chronicles 33:1-6.

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, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

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) he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

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.

(Verses 10-13) *"And the Lord spake to 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."*

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 and on the left; but the very moment he called on God for mercy, God forgave him and took him right back into his kingdom.

If anyone would realize the full and complete pardon which God has for us, the great mercy which is waiting and knocking at our door continually, the full cleansing and power of God offered to us, it would be a great inducement 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. Anyone who ever called on God for mercy was always heard and answered.

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 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 the 17th chapter of Luke, 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.

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.

Paul 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; 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.*"

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 and begins to do a great work, 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, or resent wrongs which are done to us.

If we have given our lives to God and are willing for Him to make us just as merciful as He is--which the Bible declares we should be--no matter how hard people are judging and accusing us of wrong; we will excuse anything they say or do, instead of criticizing them; we will say: "Lord, we desire to be as merciful as Thou art."

"Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

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.*"

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? God's mercy brought a messenger from heaven to help Daniel; and such an appeal will bring deliverance to us 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 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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