

THE ABUNDANT MERCIES OF OUR GOD

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TEXT

1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to **His abundant mercy** has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

INTRODUCTION

Mercy is a term that almost every human is familiar with. We find various people in the face of a punishment saying “Temper Justice with Mercy”. What they mean by this is that “instead of Justice, pardon me or let me go or, in your enforcement of justice, be a bit lenient”. It is interesting to know that the Mercy of man cannot be compared to the mercy of God. While the Mercy of man can be separated from the justice of Man, the Justice of our God is to be merciful. That is to say the mercy of our God is His Justice. Oh yes, this is difficult for the mind to comprehend but that is why the Bible describes the mercy of our God to be abundant and God to be rich in mercy.

In this teaching we would be examining the Mercy of our God as seen in our salvation. In short, Salvation is as a result of the mercies of God. Its inspiration is the love of God and it is by Grace not of works, it is received by faith in the message of Christ, that is His death and resurrection.

WHAT IS MERCY?

The Greek word for mercy is **ELEEO** and it means to be compassionate. When used to describe an action from God, it means the divine providence and clemency of God in providing and offering men salvation in Christ. That is God not dealing with sinful humanity as it deserves but rather showering it with love and grace.

WHO IS IN NEED OF MERCY?

The whole world is in need of mercy and the reason is because we have all sinned and were all doomed to die eternally as the punishment for our sins (Romans 6:23)

Romans 3:19 *“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, AND ALL THE WORLD MAY BECOME GUILTY BEFORE GOD.”*

Romans 3:23 *“FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God;”*

Romans 6:23 *“FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

In fact, the Bible describes the man that is unsaved as a dead man. This shows his helplessness and inability to save himself. Mankind needed a pardon for their sins that is, a payment for the debt they owed. God in His mercy provided that payment free of charge. If a man would believe in Jesus he would obtain the mercy of God thus a payment for his sins.

Ephesians 2:1-5 *“And you He made alive, WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. BUT GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, because of His great love with which He loved us, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES, MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST (BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED), ”*

MERCY & GRACE

Mercy and Grace are interrelated. Someone may ask what the difference is. Mercy is that you deserved something but you did not get it whilst Grace is unmerited Favour, that is you got something you didn't work for. That is, you did not ask or merit it but you were given. Mercy is that you deserved punishment but you were not dealt with according to the measure that you deserved.

In **John 8**, Jesus didn't give the woman caught in the act of adultery what she deserved that is, to be stoned to death. Hence, Jesus' justice was Him being merciful to her. Now, Jesus was also gracious to her in that she didn't ask or merit such kindness but He gave her nonetheless and spared her life.

(Teachers should go over **John 8:1-11** with the brethren and glean some truths about the mercies and grace of God towards the woman caught in the act of adultery)

MERCY & FORGIVENESS

In the Justice of our God, that is Him giving His Son as a ransom for sin or Him punishing His Son for our sins, we see the mercy of our God. There would be no salvation without the mercy of God. In talking about the mercy of God we definitely have to touch the forgiveness of Sins. This is because mercy is inactive and non-existent if there is no forgiveness. Mercy

inspires forgiveness and in the place of forgiveness we see Mercy. So, when we say that the person that has been wronged should be merciful, we are actually saying he should forgive and let go of the offence or sin committed against him. Hence, when a person has been forgiven we would say he has received mercy.

Let' s see some scriptures that show this relationship between forgiveness and mercy

Jonah 4:1-2 *“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the LORD, and said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore, I fled previously to Tarshish; FOR I KNOW THAT YOU ARE A GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL GOD, SLOW TO ANGER AND ABUNDANT IN LOVINGKINDNESS, one who relents from doing harm. ”*

- Jonah expected and desired that God would destroy Nineveh for its sins but God didn' t destroy them. instead, He was merciful to them and forgave them as they were receptive to the prophet' s message. The above scripture was Jonah' s observation of what happened. He described what happened as God being merciful.

Psalms 86:5 *“For You, LORD, ARE GOOD, AND READY TO FORGIVE, AND ABUNDANT IN MERCY to all those who call upon You. ”*

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. ”*

Psalms 103:10 -12 *“HE HAS NOT DEALT WITH US ACCORDING TO OUR SINS, NOR PUNISHED US ACCORDING TO OUR INIQUITIES. FOR AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH, SO GREAT IS HIS MERCY TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM; As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. ”*

- Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, a truth is established. These scriptures go further to show us that in mercy we see forgiveness and in forgiveness we find mercy. They are interrelated. The person that has been forgiven is the one that has received mercy.
- Another truth we can distil from the above scripture is that God is not conservative with His mercy. He is extravagant with it. His willingness to forgive and show mercy outruns the magnitude and gravity of the sinner' s sins. Glory to God! All who have believed in Jesus have become recipients of this extravagant and lavish mercy of God.

