

## GOD'S MERCIFUL FORGIVENESS

I recently came across a story that made me question what could possibly drive individuals to take seemingly irrational actions, even at the cost of their own safety. Imagine this: A massive fire consumes a building, so dangerous that it is difficult to even stand closeby. Yet, someone heads straight into it: climbing the building.

At first glance, it might seem like recklessness. Who, in their right mind, would willingly enter a death trap? The answer, it turns out, is someone motivated by an incredibly strong reason to do so. In this case, the need to rescue their trapped mother.

When faced with such intense emotional motivation, the climber's actions start to make sense. Yes, Love is a force that overrides fear and reason, compelling individuals to take extraordinary measures.

While pondering this story, I couldn't help but think of the book of Romans. In it, Paul urges the church members to offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God.

Meaning, to wholeheartedly surrender to God's will, and to consciously make every decision, and bring every thought into light so that it only brings glory to God, in essence the church is being asked to give away their whole lives as a singular act of worship,

While this requirement may seem extraordinary, Paul's argument is that the motivation for this request is compelling enough. And, that motivation is God's mercy.

Romans 12:1 in different translations-

"I urge you, brethren, in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God ..." (NIV)

"So, brothers and sisters, because of God's mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service." (Common English Bible)

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. (NLT)

Yes, when we remember God's mercy, we are reminded that he loves us and that he has already made the ultimate sacrifice for us. This gives us the strength and courage to offer our own lives to him.

God's mercy is genuinely extraordinary. Consider a situation: we offer assistance to someone, but instead of expressing gratitude, they misuse our help, causing us profound heartache. If we are kind, we may extend forgiveness. However, what if they request our aid once more? Would we provide it? And if we do help them again, only to be hurt once more, would we still find it in our hearts to forgive them?

In contrast, the God of the Bible is renowned for extending forgiveness even to the ungrateful and showing mercy to sinners.

This attribute of God is among the most majestic, and it is unique to Him alone. His prophets describe Him by asking, "Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of His special people? You will not remain angry with your people forever because You delight in showing unfailing love.", "His mercy extends to those who fear Him from generation to generation".

Indeed, this mercy is profound; it involves extending forgiveness even when it may appear undeserved, even when we have not provided God with any grounds for granting us forgiveness. In moments when we have fallen short of following His divine commands, our sinful actions could give rise to God's righteous anger, and it could even be within His power to bring about our destruction. However, rather than harboring resentment, God showers us with unconditional love and pardons our transgressions against Him.

A striking illustration of this divine mercy is found in Jesus Christ, He endured mockery from His own people and the indignity of having powerless humanity spit on His almighty face as a consequence of our sins. His boundless mercy shone brilliantly as He prayed to God for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.

This unfathomable act of love and sacrifice on the cross, where the perfect and sinless Son of God was brutally beaten and crucified in our place, was the price paid for God's mercy. It opened the path to our forgiveness and redemption.

God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, indeed taught humanity the importance of having mercy and forgiving those who offend us, regardless of how many times they may do so.

As He instructs us to be merciful and forgiving towards our fellow human beings, we can be confident that God will extend even greater mercy and forgiveness to us when we sincerely repent of our sins. His capacity for forgiveness is boundless, and He will readily forgive us countless times when we turn to Him in genuine repentance.

Experiencing God's boundless mercy is a transformative experience that has the power to profoundly impact one's life. It can shatter the core of a person's being and inspire them to turn to God, ultimately leading them to become more merciful themselves.

Also, it is our responsibility to honor and respect this incredible attribute of God. We should never misuse this mercy as an excuse to persist in sinful behavior. Instead, we should honor this incredible attribute and strive to live in a way that reflects that we have received from Him by extending mercy and love to others.

Behold, this is the essence of His mercy: it is God shouldering the unfathomable consequences of our sins which we commit due to our flawed desires, and extending forgiveness to us, regardless of the depth of our transgressions, if we genuinely repent and seek His pardon.

So, in those moments when hope seems distant, or when the thought of giving up on our relationship with God looms, Recall this fundamental truth: our salvation does not hinge solely on our own righteousness or our good deeds. Rather, it is exclusively through His mercy that He forgives us. His mercy is our sole beacon of hope.

The Bible provides profound wisdom on the nature of human reliance and the boundless mercy of the Lord. It says,

“A king is not saved by a large army;  
a warrior will not be rescued by great strength.  
The horse is a false hope for safety;  
It provides no escape by its great power.  
But look, the Lord keeps his eye on those who fear him—  
those who depend on his faithful love  
to rescue them from death and to keep them alive in famine.”

Therefore, let us always maintain a reverence for God, faithfully uphold His commandments, and never lose sight of His mercy.  
In humility, we find our path to a fulfilling and purposeful existence.

Take solace in this truth: His mercy is limitless, an eternal wellspring from which we can draw endlessly. Never forget the reassuring words of Deuteronomy 4:31, which affirm that the Lord our God is a merciful God, faithful to His covenant, a promise He will never abandon or forsake.

Deuteronomy 7:9 reinforces this, reminding us that the Lord is not only merciful but also faithful to His covenant and steadfast in His love for those who love Him and keep His commandments, extending His benevolence for generations.

And in Joel 2:13, we are encouraged to return to the Lord our God, recognizing His gracious and merciful nature, His patience in anger, and the abundance of His steadfast love.

Yes, this is His Wonderful mercy, that has a profound impact on our lives. It transforms us, offering us hope and inspiring us to become better versions of ourselves.

It is this divine mercy that serves as a compelling and sufficient motivation for us to undertake the extraordinary task of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices to God.

Much like the climber's willingness to risk everything for a loved one, we are driven by the desire to live as living sacrifices because God has shown mercy towards us, which has profoundly changed us.

Contemplating the love and forgiveness showered upon us through God's mercy, we are given the purpose to fully surrender to His divine will.

We not only acknowledge but also integrate this mercy into every aspect of our lives, even in the face of challenging decisions.

Through both the mercy we receive from God and the mercy we extend to others, we become a living reflection of the divine love that has been abundantly poured upon us.