

Focus on Mercy

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Instead of having to follow the letter of the law of God, Christians are living under an amazing New Covenant. God has written His law on our hearts and minds, and we walk before Him as His children.

As Christians, we have the privilege to make godly decisions daily, purposing to become what Christ wants us to be for that day. Every morning, noon, and night, we reaffirm those decisions.

Do we fail at times? Yes. But we continue to grow because we serve the God of all mercies. He loves it when we draw near to Him in full assurance. It is a worthy goal to develop a lifestyle that is focused on mercy.

As we will see in this booklet, we can go as far with God as we will receive His mercy to grow. We will grow in spiritual dimensions just as much as we understand that grace is for us. God's unconditional love is unchanging. Sooner

or later, it will change men and women who have God living inside of them.

Chapter One
PREPARED VESSELS

“And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart” (Deuteronomy 20:8).

The children of Israel had the Promised Land before them. But God knew that many would fret and be fainthearted, affecting others with their negativity.

So, God told Moses—in so many words—“I want those fainthearted folks to go home. I have given Israel this victory, but there will always be battles. They will have enemies to conquer in Canaan, houses to build, land to cultivate, and agriculture to develop. Everyone must be willing to fight and to work. The fainthearted shouldn’t be there.”

What caused the people to faint—to be discouraged, disheartened, despondent? They had

already survived years of cruel slavery in Egypt, escaped Pharaoh's army, and crossed the desert. They partook of God's miraculous provisions all along the way. So why would they give up now? The problem had to do with their vision. They were looking at the task instead of God's mercy.

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

“And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory” (Romans 9:23).

We were ordained to be vessels of mercy for the glory of God. An entire generation of God's people perished, except for Joshua and Caleb, because they rejected the mercy of God. Instead of accepting mercy (God withholding the judgment they deserved) which would have prepared them to receive His grace (God giving what they didn't deserve at all), they began to evaluate their own ability to take on the task—and they fainted.

As God leads, begin to get in the habit of saying, “Lord, I want to do everything to let Your mercy and Your grace make me what I can be and what I should be when I face You.”

The Word of God has made it very clear that because of the mercy of our God on high, our

foot shall not be moved (see Psalm 21:7). Practically speaking, our foot shall not be moved because of the high and holy place of God's mercy.

Mercy Is Above

"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

"For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens" (Psalm 89:1-2).

God has established His mercies in the heavens. His mercy is higher than anything in this life, greater than any power. He has established His mercy beyond principalities and powers, beyond the strength of the old sin nature of men, women, and young people. God has established mercy forever.

Chapter Two

THE GREAT MEETING OF MERCY AND TRUTH

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

“Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven” (Psalm 85:10-11).

God wants us to understand the great possibilities that we have because of His mercy. It all began when mercy and truth met together. This truth is the truth about God’s holiness, God’s justice, God’s sinlessness—the truth about God’s perfection. It is the truth that God cannot look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13), the truth that God hates unrighteousness and iniquity (Psalm 45:7).

So, in eternity past, Mercy said, “God, I want a meeting with You about Your holiness.” And during a meeting known as the determinate counsel of the Trinity (Acts 2:23), Jesus Christ appealed to the Father and said,

“Father, you are the Father of mercies (2 Corinthians 1:3). If I become a man and die after living a perfect life in a hypostatic union (absolutely God and yet completely human), will You meet everyone who believes and receives Me, and give them Our righteousness?”

The Father said, “Yes, I will do it, Son, if You will die on the Cross of Calvary and become sin for the world. Then, as the Father of all mercies, I will meet the truth of holiness and perfect righteousness with mercy. My peace will come through that Cross and kiss My righteousness.”

Because of that agreement in eternity past, sinners today can have peace and righteousness just by believing. Truth springs up from the earth, righteousness looks down from heaven, and we receive the truth about our new identity in Christ. We became brand-new the moment we were saved because of mercy.

We Obtain Mercy for Others

The Mercy Seat, in Exodus 25:22, was above the tables of stone—the written law we call the Ten Commandments. Because of this amazing mercy, we can say to God every morning: “You have given me mercy. It endures forever (Psalm 136), and it shall follow me all the days of my

life. Mercy rejoices against judgment (James 2:13), and because You have given me mercy through the riches of Your glory, You want to make me a vessel of mercy.”

What does God want to accomplish in His Church, in a family, in a husband, in a wife, in a teenager or child? He wants to start in, through the riches of His mercy, by making us vessels of mercy. Each of us has been foreordained unto that reflection of God’s nature.

The first thing the Word of God says about this is that He delivers us according to His mercy (Psalm 109:26). It is so important that we understand this: God delivers according to His mercy, not according to His Law, not according to His precious holiness, and not according to our frailties. Deliverance is always accompanied by mercy.

“Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore” (Psalm 18:50).

Christ is glorified when I can trust Him. My way is established by believing (2 Chronicles 20:20). I do not become established by worrying and fearing but by accepting what God has given. The issue is not what I do wrong but what Jesus Christ did right.

The whole key to our lives with Christ is found in Psalm 89, where David wrote, “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

“For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.”

Then, God declared: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

“Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.” (Psalm 89:1-4).

King David—of all people—has a throne that is established in heaven; he will be on that throne during the Millennial Reign. As sinners saved by grace, we have received mercy not only for the future resurrection of our mortal bodies, but also to enjoy the sure mercies of David right now (Acts 13:34). And by that same mercy, we obtain mercy for others (Romans 11:31).

Mercy's Justification

Someone called me recently, crying because he is sick and he thinks he is going to die. I

prayed about what to say, and God gave me Philippians 2:27, concerning Epaphroditus: “For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

Epaphroditus was saved from physical death by mercy. The Bible doesn’t mention why he was sick. It only says that mercy healed him.

In Psalm 6:2, Psalm 27:7, Psalm 51:1, David prayed, “Have mercy on me.” Twice in Psalm 59, he referred to God as “the God of my mercy” (v. 10, 17).

In Luke 18:10-14, two men went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee boasted to God that he wasn’t an adulterer and that he paid tithes and fasted. But the publican stood afar off, beating his breast, and prayed, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” He was saying, “God, I can’t go near You—I can’t even look up to heaven. Be merciful to me. I am a sinner.” That is all he said. Jesus said the publican went home justified, but the Pharisee did not.

A New and Living Way

God wants us to understand that we have been given a fantastic new and living way. The Holy Spirit is a witness, in Hebrews 10:15. He

confirms that our sins and iniquities are remembered no more (Hebrews 10:17). Furthermore, he says that where there is remission of sins, there is no need for an offering (Hebrews 10:18). Instead, we have boldness to enter into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19), “by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Hebrews 10:20).

The veil in the holy place was torn from top to bottom, so the priests could look in. There was no longer a wall—no barriers to keep us from fellowship with God at the Mercy Seat. We have Jesus Christ, who is our High Priest, always pleading our case before the Father in heaven (Hebrews 9:24). God the Father will hear our every prayer because mercy met with truth, and mercy rejoices against judgment. Mercy is always waiting for us to receive its value, its capacity, its motivation, its presence of manifestation, its purity, and its integrity, because of His death for us which purchased our redemption.

Chapter Three

DRAW NEAR TO THE MERCY SEAT

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

“Let us hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised;

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:22-25).

God never leaves out a single promise that grace and mercy ask Him to fulfill. And as the day of His return approaches, we should be fellowshiping around this mercy more and more.

We are saved by mercy through grace and

by faith. Mercy delivers us. In Psalm 90:14, mercy satisfies. It satisfied the publican who could only cry out, "Be merciful to me, a sinner." He went home justified, and he was satisfied with God's provision. For those who were living in adultery or in deceitfulness, when we ask for mercy in true repentance, just as David did, we will go away with amazing mercy.

Someone asked, "Do you think there is any hope for me? I went so far away from God, and I have done so much that has hurt my body."

God will deliver people from death, as He did Epaphroditus, because of mercy. Don't look for something else. Look for mercy, which is built up forever and established in heaven.

Mercy's Motivation

The psalmist said he would sing about the Lord's mercy (Psalm 59:16-17). Throughout all generations, the story of God's mercy is recorded in His Word, and it is there for us to read about today.

The Bible teaches us that grace has never at any time failed a sinner. And when a sinner understands grace, he doesn't want to continue in sin (Titus 2:11-12). He doesn't want to be faint-hearted or fearful. A sinner who understands

grace and mercy desires to go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world with this message.

Grace and mercy motivate us to establish outreaches in our cities and to do all that we can to reach the lost, to help the poor, to bring joy and peace to the brokenhearted and to those who have failed. God wants to inspire prayers for the sick, and He wants to help the weak with His strength.

Exodus 15:13 tells us that God led Israel, whom He redeemed, with mercy. They went on in God's strength to His habitation because He guided them.

In Genesis 19:19, after he had failed miserably in Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot could say, "Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast [shown] unto me in saving my life...."

The angels pulled Lot and his family out of Sodom and told him, "Get out, and don't look back." Lot found grace and mercy in the sight of God.

There is no limit to what God can do in our hearts, in our minds, and in our emotions. Through this process of grace and mercy, we

become great vessels of mercy. Instead of following legalism and the letter of the law, desire to become vessels of mercy and children of grace who trust God. Receive His nature. He not only died for us but also died as us.

Mercy Says, 'Come'

Recently I heard on the news about a wealthy couple who lost everything. The wife had spent millions, and when her husband found out, he planned to take his life. He had left a suicide note, but his wife found him before he could take his life. Then she had a nervous breakdown. Oh, if these people would just taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8)! If only they would taste the love of God and the forgiveness of Christ and start over again. Oh, if they would just begin to understand and focus on the mercy of God.

No child of God has to be a second-rate citizen. A child of God doesn't have to be a casualty, even in failure. A child of God can run to the Holy of Holies. We can enter in boldly through the blood of Christ, through a way that was consecrated for us. It is a new way.

This new way doesn't say, "Stay out, sinner." It doesn't say, "You are bad—stay away." This

new way says, “Come boldly to the throne of grace and find mercy and grace to help in your time of need” (see Hebrews 4:16).

Don't withdraw. Don't withdraw when your marriage is going badly. Don't withdraw when things in your business or in your family are not going well. Draw near, and focus on God's mercy.

CONCLUSION

God writes His Word in the hearts and minds of believers (Hebrews 10:16). As a result, we have a great privilege to draw near. This is the new way. It is the key to victory, to power, to fellowship, to overcoming, to joy, and to prayer.

No matter how terrible you feel, draw near with a true heart and a true understanding of this new way with Jesus Christ. He will sprinkle your heart from evil and wash your body with the pure water of the living Word. How does God do this? He does it by the new and living way of mercy that rejoices against judgment.

God has already won the victory over sin and over death. He has already judged everything that we could be judged for. We are now candidates for faith, for grace, and for love. We have no reason to withdraw. God is for us, and He always will be for us. And when God is for us, who can be against us? (See Romans 8:31-39).

Dear Father, thank You for Your provision of

mercy. Teach us to stay focused on mercy and not on ourselves. Remind us to draw near instead of withdrawing. We are so glad for this new and living way. In Jesus' name, Amen.