

## The Attributes of God Mercy

**What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.**

Anyone ever heard this phrase?? Do you know the meaning??

“Kyrie eleison”

Dan didn't have a song with that in it for this morning, sorry.

“Lord have mercy”

A common refrain in classical choral music and a song by the group Mr. Mister

A common expression typical of rural folks in TV or movies

Today we will consider the Mercy of God.

TWO KEY WORDS in Hebrew that are translated “mercy/ compassion / lovingkindness”

Different bible versions use different English words.

(thanks to Glen Trundle- Hebrew prof at Covington Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe)

chêsêd From [H2616](#); *kindness*; (loving-) kindness, merciful (kindness), mercy, pity,

râcham A primitive root; to *fondle*; by implication to *love*, especially to *compassionate* = (*SUFFER TOGETHER*) - The root noun form means “womb”, so the idea is that of love felt when one sees a newborn baby. The verbal form simply means one who loves another...especially one who needs compassion such as a newborn baby. This is a beautiful picture of how God loved Israel and resultingly us who have been grafted in by faith

The description of God as merciful or compassionate is found throughout the OT and NT.

A passage in Exodus ties his Mercy to the very goodness of God Himself as He shows His glory to Moses

Ex 33:18ff; Rom 9

Ex: 34:6 racham & chesed, but often translated “mercy”.

We like mercy, especially when directed toward us:

EX: pulled over for speeding ticket, but only get a warning...

**The quality of mercy is not strained; (forced)**

**It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven**

**Upon the place beneath.** (Merchant of Venice / Barney Fife)

WHAT IS MERCY?

**AN outflow of God's goodness and manifestation of his love toward undeserving sinners.**

**Mercy is God's goodness confronting human guilt and suffering.**

Tozer, A. W.. The Attributes of God Volume 1: A Journey into the Father's Heart

**Mercy is an attribute of God, an infinite and inexhaustible energy within the divine nature which disposes God to be actively compassionate.** – Tozer Knowledge of the Holy

According to the Old Testament, mercy has certain meanings: to stoop in kindness to an inferior, to have pity upon and to be actively compassionate. It used to be a verb form of the word compassion, but we don't use it anymore—maybe because we don't have the concept anymore. God actively “compassionates” suffering men.... For God to feel compassion at a distance is one thing, but for God to be actively compassionate with people is something else. Tozer, A. W.. The Attributes of God Volume 1:

Exodus indicates how mercy is essential to the goodness of God, and 2 Cor 1:3 describes God as “the FATHER OF MERCIES and the God of all comfort”

Theologians such as AW Pink describe mercy in three aspects...

General

Specific

Sovereign

In endeavoring to study the mercy of God as it is set forth in Scripture, a threefold distinction needs to be made,

**First, there is a general mercy of God, which is extended not only to all men, believers and unbelievers alike, but also to the entire creation:** “His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psa 145:9); 15 The eyes of all look to You, And You give them their food in due time.

“He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25).

**Secondly, there is a special mercy of God, which is exercised toward the children of men, helping them notwithstanding their sins.** To them also He communicates all the necessities of life: “for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt 5:45).

**Thirdly, there is a sovereign mercy which is reserved for the heirs of salvation, which is communicated to them in a covenant way, through the Mediator.**

A clarification is needed between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> aspects of God’s Mercy:

The mercy bestowed on people in general, including those who reject God are during this life only. That serves as a sober warning for those who don’t know God through Jesus Christ. If you want to know God’s mercy beyond the grave, then embrace Christ now.

The offer of this amazing grace is time sensitive, and since we don’t know how much time we have, so why wait?

This is why Paul pleads with those hearing his letter to embrace the reconciliation with God through Jesus.

2 Cor 5 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Reconciliation with God must pass through the provision of Mercy.** You can’t negotiate or “make a deal” with God in order to be saved. The only way to come to him is as one who needs mercy.

I think it is a myth that people “reject God” because He is too demanding or too stern.

People reject God because they think they can be good enough on their own. They reject the reality that they need a Merciful God.

If we contribute anything to our salvation, it is our sin and neediness.

It’s not our love for sin that keeps us from God; it’s our love for our own “righteousness” that keeps us from the God of mercy. Luke 18: 9-14 “God I thank you that I’m not like... vs God have mercy on me a sinner”

We dare not presume upon God’s mercy as if it were something that we deserve – EX: speeding ticket – the officer may have shown mercy with a warning, but he/she was under NO obligation to do so.

God is free to sovereignly bestow mercy as He sees fit. It is not based on our merit. It is our lack of merit that makes his mercy so needed, but it does not obligate God to be merciful.

What we see in scripture is that God IS MERCIFUL. It is part of His essence, an attribute.

Both the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the mercy of God, but the Old has more than four times as much to say about it as the New. We should banish from our minds forever the common but erroneous notion that justice and judgment characterize the God of Israel, while mercy and grace belong to the Lord of the Church.

What I learned in seminary was eye opening. It changed the way that I read the OT. ONE of my OT professors explained that every page of the OT displays the mercy of God toward sinful rebellious creatures.

The mercy of God, like God himself, did not come into being. He is merciful in himself.

**God is not like Scrooge who had a change of heart and then “it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.”**

God has always known how to keep Christmas well, that’s why he sent Jesus.

God’s mercy never came to be and it will never come to an end. Nothing can happen to increase or diminish or alter the quality of the mercy of God.

If we wake up each day it is due to the mercy of God.

If we wake up in heaven, it is also the mercy of God.

No, mercy had been operating all the time. Lamentations 3:22 says, “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.”

**So remember that if you hadn’t had the mercy of God all the time, stooping in pity, withholding judgment, you’d have perished long ago. -Tozer, A. W.. The Attributes of God Volume 1:.**

Jerry Bridges paraphrase – “Everything this side of hell is Mercy”

Humans have and will continue to walk away from the mercy of God so that it becomes functionally inoperative for us, but that doesn’t change the reality of His mercy.

God can demonstrate his mercy, but it doesn’t mean that we’ll recognize it and thank Him for it.

**DO YOU RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE THE MERCY OF God IN YOUR LIFE?**

Believer?? Do you give him thanks – Psalm 136:1-4ff

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,

For His mercy is everlasting.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods,

For His mercy is everlasting.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

For His mercy is everlasting.

4 To Him who alone does great wonders,

For His mercy is everlasting;

Non-believer/ skeptic/ curious inquirer... Don’t walk away from the mercy of God. Where else will you find forgiveness? How else will you deal with your guilt? – and you know you have it; we all do.

No one attribute of God is greater than any other, and they are all infinite. But some are needed more at different times. Mercy is one of those.

While we may at times cry out for justice from God, what we really need is mercy.

We may cry for justice for “him / her/ them”, but we cry for mercy for ourselves.

**MERCY AS CALLING FOR A Christian AND FOR A PASTOR**

**While Mercy is not an essential attribute of humans, those with new heart are called to live under the call of mercy.**

How should we respond to God’s mercy??

Romans 12 1-2

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

EX: Remember being pulled over for speeding and you get a warning, not a ticket- you receive MERCY. How soon before you resumed speeding???

We don't live as though mercy has any obligations on us, even though we know it should – Renovation Church??

We ought to be shaped and impacted by the mercy that we receive. Our hearts tend to leak so we must be intentional about remembering God's mercy and grace. And we need community for that.

In that community, how are we to live?

Luke 6

35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.

36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

TRANSITION TO INSTALLATION OF BOB BORGER

In the church we seek to live this out, and hopefully our elders and pastors demonstrate this trait of Mercy. Today we install Bob Borger as an Associate Pastor of Highlands. He was elected to this role by the congregation.

I can attest to you that Bob Borger is a man of mercy. That might surprise some folks because Bob is a stickler for the Book of Church Order and proper procedure. Don't let that fool you.

If you are in need, Bob will be one of the first to take pity and show compassion.

Bob understands that mercy has obligations and to that end he seeks to present himself to God in the spiritual service of worship in every area of his life.

While we come to worship Christ, we also give thanks for his work of grace and mercy in the life and ministry of Bob Borger.

Prayer:

Charge to Borger: Travis Hutchinson

Charge to Congregation: Render Caines

Benediction: Bob Borger

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