

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

April 3, 2021

God's Compassion

The word “*mercy*,” as used by the New Testament writers, almost always comes from a Greek word which means “*compassion*,” whereas the Old Testament writers used a Hebrew word for mercy which means “*kindness*.” Because he is merciful, God is both compassionate and kind.

Some define mercy as “God not giving us what we deserve.” This may be true in many circumstances, but this definition comes short of explaining the true riches of God’s mercy. Consider the following examples of mercy in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus told the story of the “Good Samaritan” who helped the man who was left half dead by the roadside, he asked a lawyer, “*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*” Luke 10:36. The lawyer answered, “***He that shewed mercy on him.***” Luke 10:37. Mercy, in this setting, was the compassion of the Samaritan who reached down to help the man who had been beaten by thieves.

When blind Bartimaeus cried out, “*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*” Mark 10:47, or

when the woman of Canaan said, ***“Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil”*** Matthew 15:22, were they asking Jesus not to punish them for their situation? Of course not! They desperately needed Jesus to do what no one else could do. In both cases, Jesus was moved with compassion, and they were made whole.

Mercy in the Bible is almost always revealed when God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The Apostle Paul describes us all as being ***“dead in sins.”*** Ephesians 2:1. A dead person can do nothing for themselves. This is where the compassion of God reached down to us. Paul wrote, ***“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)...”*** Ephesians 2:4-5. Because God was moved with compassion, his grace lifted us out of sin and gave us life!

The Apostle Peter also gives insight into the mercy of God. He wrote, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*** 1 Peter 1:3. Our new birth is a direct result of God’s mercy. Before being born of God’s Spirit, we were Adamic, carnal, sinful, and damned. There was nothing we could do to bridge the gap from sin to righteousness, or from death to life. In God’s compassion for us, he sent Christ to do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

In David's great plea for God's mercy, he asked God to purge his iniquity and give him a clean heart and right spirit. *Psalms 51*. In God's great compassion, this is exactly what he does for those who come to Christ in repentance and faith. According to his promise, He cleanses them from all their "*filthiness*" and gives them "*a new heart and a new spirit.*" *Ezekiel 36:25-26*. God considered the helplessness of fallen humanity to change their own heart, so he sent Christ to do what we could never do for ourselves. O, what mercy!

When the apostle exhorts us to "*...come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*" *Hebrews 4:16*, he bases this upon the truth that Jesus Christ can "*be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*" *Hebrews 4:14*. Grace is often given to us as strength to walk victoriously through the fiery trial *II Corinthians 12:9*, but mercy comes when the heart of God is moved with compassion over our great need. That same mercy can flow from God in the hour of your greatest trial. Yes, He can be touched with the feeling of your infirmity. Reach up to touch him today!