

Adoring the Glory of God

December 10, 2023 Adult Equipping Center
The Mercy of God - Outline

Introduction

A. W. Tozer defines mercy as "...the goodness of God confronting human suffering and guilt." By contrast, we are talented as a society at casting guilt upon God when a bad thing happens. We say "Where was God?" when such and such a thing happened. Mercy is a stunning gem unappreciated until conviction of sin occurs.

The following English words are translated from the Hebrew for mercy:

To love or have compassion, kindness, loving kindness, goodness, to show favor, to be gracious and the word "ransom" which is related to the Mercy Seat in the tabernacle.

The Mercy of God

1. God's mercy is distinct from His grace and patience but works in tandem with these.

A simplified (incomplete) definition of each of these can give us some clarity as we explore mercy:

Mercy –God's goodness towards those in misery or distress. – Grudem.

Grace- God's Goodness toward those who deserve only punishment. – Grudem
(God's Riches At Christ's Expense)

Patience – withholding judgment over time

2. God is the origin of mercy. He prefers mercy over judgement.

Ezekiel 18:23

Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he would turn from his ways and live?

Joel 2:12-13

Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

2 Corinthians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

God went to great pains to show mercy rather than judgement in the cross of Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the

heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

3. Jesus demonstrated mercy in relation to His own law.

John 8:1-11 – The Adulterous Woman

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple area, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began teaching them. Now the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery, and after placing her in the center of the courtyard, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say? Now they were saying this to test Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. When they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Now when they heard this, they began leaving, one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman where she was, in the center of the courtyard. And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on do not sin any longer."

What were the Pharisees expecting him to say and what was their trap?

How did the Pharisees view mercy?

4. God's mercy is unmerited.

An historical example of the God's penchant for mercy is seen when God sends Jonah to the absolutely detestable Ninevites. They were known for their endless cruelty and pride. They pretty much were the antithesis to mercy. Mercy arrived in town prior to judgement and caused wholesale repentance. Listen to Jonah's response:

"Please LORD, was this not what I said when I was still in my own country? Therefore in anticipation of this I fled to Tarshish, since I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in mercy, and One who relents of disaster."

Jonah had a problem with the seemingly incompatible mercy and justice of God.

What are some ways that we have that same outrage?

How is God's mercy (getting what we don't deserve) compatible with His justice (always acting in accordance with what is right)?

His justice is ultimately satisfied at the cross for those who receive the gift. Mercy in the short term for those who don't believe is a benefit of God's character.

Matt. 5:45

For He causes His sun to rise on evil people as well as on those who are good, and His rain falls on both the righteous and the wicked.

This next example shows that God's mercy was enacted through faith:

Exodus 12:21-23

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; but when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to strike you.

What would have happened if an Israelite family hadn't applied the blood to their door?

What would have happened if an Egyptian family had applied blood to their door?

There is no moral difference between these people. The mixed multitude grumbled all the way out of town and did not stop until they had asked for a golden calf. God saved these people because of His promise to Abraham – not because they merited His favor.

5. God's mercy is not obligatory

Romans 9:14-24

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? Far from it! For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOMEVER I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL SHOW COMPASSION TO WHOMEVER I SHOW COMPASSION." So then, it does not depend on the person who wants it nor the one who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY REASON I RAISED YOU UP, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE EARTH." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

*You will say to me then, "**Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?**" On the contrary, who are you, you foolish person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "**Why did you make me like this,**" will it? Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with great patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, namely us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles...*

*Paul anticipates the negative responses from his readers. **Why do people have negative responses to these concepts that Paul is outlining?***

I like this quote from Nick Batzig (<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/mercy-triumphs-through-judgment>)

"Many have embraced the idea that God must be merciful to men. Accordingly, He is merciful, so He does not need to be just; or, because He is merciful, He can simply set aside His righteous judgments. After all, James 2:13 says, "Mercy triumphs over judgment." Mercy does triumph over judgment, but not by simply setting it aside; rather, mercy triumphs over judgment because judgment is fully executed and justice finally satisfied at the cross. The justice and mercy of God met together at Calvary (Ps. 85:10-11), securing God's rich and everlasting mercy for hell-deserving sinners who believe on the Son of God. Mercy triumphs over judgment because mercy comes through judgment."

6. God's mercy has a shelf life.

Hebrews 3:12-13

Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called "today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 4:1-2

Therefore, we must fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also did; but the word they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united with those who listened with faith.

Hebrews 4:7

He again sets a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,

"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."

**What is the common warning in these verses?
Why does time seem to play a role?**

7. God expects us to show mercy/forgiveness

Matt. 18:21-35 - The unmerciful servant

²³...." the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his master commanded that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' ²⁷ And the master of that slave felt compassion, and he released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe!' ²⁹ So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' ³⁰ But he was unwilling, and went and threw him in prison until he would pay back what was owed. ³¹ So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their master all that had happened. ³² Then summoning him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And his master, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

What are a few elements about mercy that we learn about this parable?

Why do you think the debts were so vastly different? 160,000+/- years wages vs. 100 days wages.

Why was mercy/forgiveness granted to the first slave? He was going to be sold.

How can we reconcile verses 34-35 and similar verses in Matthew and James with Romans 8:1?

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people for their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive other people, then your Father will not forgive your offenses.

James 2:13

For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This could be either broken fellowship or unbelief demonstrated by their antithetical approach to the working of the Spirit of God. Jesus was talking to Israelites whose mindset was that they deserved heaven as a result of their genealogy.

Luke 10:25-37 – The Good Samaritan

*The story of the Good Samaritan has many layers that we could explore but today let's just examine this one thing: **Everyone is your neighbor**. When wrapping up the story Jesus asks "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" The response by the lawyer was: "The one who showed compassion to him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."*

God's heart is clearly bent in scripture towards the widow, orphan and alien- all of which picture the needy or defenseless. There are many such people in our own lives.

Do you think that the first two (the priest and the Levite) felt merciful? Please elaborate.

How do we develop this mission of God of compassion in our hearts while not enabling others? **What** is the difference between mercy and enabling?

8. The mercy seat prefigures God's mercy in Christ.

The mercy seat (or atoning cover) was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant inside the Tabernacle. On the annual Day of Atonement, the High priest would sacrifice a bull for his sin and a goat for the sin offering for the people. He would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat. The High priest would place his hands on another goat called the Scapegoat. This one would be released into the wilderness to carry the sin of the people away. **Leviticus 16**

The Greek word for mercy seat "hilasterion" means "the place of propitiation" where the blood of a vicarious sacrifice appeased God's wrath.

The cross was such a place as well. Here Christ's blood was shed. He Himself is

our High Priest and did not need atone for his own sin. He was the sacrifice as well as the Scapegoat who bore the sin of the people and carried it away.

Application

1. Do you need to show mercy to someone –who? When/how will you do it?
2. How might your family dynamics change if you demonstrated more mercy?
3. Can you identify tangible ways that you have been shown mercy? How did it affect you?
4. What are ways that we see society acting without mercy? How can we engage those?
5. Are your social media posts lacking mercy even though they may be accurate?