



❖ Introduction

Ever cried out to God for mercy?

9 years ago - sick with bad virus or possibly conch poisoning.

What was I crying out to God for? . . . Relief! Relief from my physical suffering.

I cried out loud enough that the rest of the family had a hard time sleeping! Why? Because the pain was so severe!

The greatness and glory of mercy is seen most clearly in the face of the greatest need.

Mercy . . . what is it exactly? – Hard to define.

❖ The Meaning of Mercy

- The meaning of mercy is very rich and far reaching. Mercy has many meanings or perhaps, many applications of a basic meaning.
 - It involves compassion, caring, making someone else's problem your problem. It includes being ready to help those in need. Mercy is the expression of justice on behalf of those who cannot help themselves.

*Mercy is identifying with the weaknesses, failures, hurts, and basic needs of others and being moved to action to provide **RELIEF**.*

- The greatness and glory of mercy is seen most clearly in the face of the greatest need. The greatness of God's mercy is also seen in the broad expressions and acts of His mercy.

● General Mercy

Psalm 145:9

The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

- The general mercy of God is His compassion and tender care toward all of **Creation**. God's mercy extends over all creation. It moves Him to care for the bird's of the air, the lilies and grass of the field (Mat. 6:26-30). God carefully cares for His creation to accomplish His set purpose.

● Special Mercy

Matthew 5:45

He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Acts 17:25

He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things

- The most common use of mercy in scripture:

- To show compassion and concern for someone in difficulty, despite that person's having committed a moral offence. -- Greek-English Lexicon
- Mercy is an expression of compassion for the miserable. The object or mercy is misery. -- Easton's Bible Dictionary

- The special mercy of God is His compassion and goodness directed toward all **HUMAN** need and suffering. In scripture, it is God's mercy that moves Him to relieve the pain and suffering of the oppressed, the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the hurting. And so, mercy is an expression of justice.
- Jesus took on flesh and blood and identified with the limitations, weaknesses, and temptations of humanity and is therefore a sympathetic or **MERCIFUL** high priest.

- Saving Mercy

- Where do we see the greatness and glory of mercy? We see the greatness and glory of mercy in the cross!
- God's ***Saving Mercy*** frees man from the penalty of his **SIN**. It is that which frees man from condemnation for sin. It frees us from facing the wrath of God for eternity. Mercy is God's withholding from man the judgement his wickedness ***deserves***. It is deserving eternal damnation in the lake of fire, yet being saved through the blood of Christ.
- The greatness and glory of mercy is seen most clearly in the face of the greatest need.

ILLUS:

Take yourself back . . . September 11, 2001 . . . New York City. You survey the destruction, the devastation of the fallen World Trade Center towers. You see unimaginable debris scattered everywhere and tons of twisted metal and concrete. You see people covered in ash and dust wondering aimlessly, dazed and confused, some screaming, some weeping. You lift your eyes to the heavens and you say, "*Lord, your unfailing love and your expressions of mercy never end. They are new and fresh everyday. You are so faithful!*"

Sound strange? Who would say such a thing at a time like that.

Let's Go back further . . . July 18, 586 B.C. . . Jerusalem. Jeremiah surveys the destruction of his and the nation's beloved and precious city and the temple laying in ruins. Completely destroyed. As he laments the staggering loss, the loss of life, the loss of the national treasure, brought by the hand of God, He lifts his eyes to heaven and says, "*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*"

Why would Jeremiah say such a thing in the face of such horror, such tragedy? Because Jeremiah recognized the great mercy in the fact that he and his countrymen were still living and breathing. Jeremiah realized that except for God's great mercy, he would be dead. All of Judah would be dead! Why? That's what they deserved!

Lamentations 1:8-9

Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns her face away. 9 Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her future; therefore her fall is terrible; she has no comforter.

Lamentations 1:18

"The LORD is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word;

Their sin was great. Their guilt was great. They deserved all the punishment God would choose to throw at them. In the face of this great guilt, Jeremiah sees great mercy.

The greatness and glory of mercy is seen most clearly in the face of the greatest need.

But God's sparing the lives of the Jews and tater restoring them in spite of their sins is not the greatest demonstration of God's mercy.

Where do we see the true magnitude of God's mercy?

❖ **The Magnitude of Mercy**

1 Peter 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ***according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again*** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

Peter is overwhelmed by the mercy of God in salvation. Contemplating the mercy of God in salvation propelled Peter to a spontaneous and joyous outburst of praise, "Blessed be God!"

- Where do we see the greatness and glory of mercy? We see the greatness and glory of mercy in the cross! In redemption! In **SALVATION!**

What did it produce when Peter saw the glory of mercy in salvation? Humble worship. What will happen when we really see it? Humble worship! I wonder, Do we see it?????

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest

● Who am I *without* Christ?

- I am withering **GRASS**, fading flowers, grasshoppers (Isaiah 40:22)
- I am a **WORM** (Job 25:6)
- I am a **MAGGOT** (Job 25:6)
- I am **UNGODLY** (Rom. 5:6)
- I am **DEAD** in sin. (Ephesians 2:1)
- I am **POWERLESS** (Rom. 5:6)
- I am **ALIENATED** from God (Colossians 1:21)
- I am **HOSTILE** to God (Romans 8:7)
- I am an **ENEMY** of God (Romans 5:10)
- I am destined to face the **WRATH** of God (Ephesians 2:3)

One word sums it all up when it comes to my desperate need for God's mercy:

DEAD!

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. 2 And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." 4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' 12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

One word sums it all up when it comes to my desperate need for God's mercy: **DEAD!**

One word sums it all up when it comes to God's glorious provision for my desperate need: **LIFE!!!**

Ephesians 2:4-5

BUT GOD! . . . *being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).*

- God specializes in **HOPELESS** cases!
- God specializes in helping the **HELPLESS!**
- God specializes in cleaning up the dirtiest, ugliest, most sin scared lives creating something **BEAUTIFUL** for His glory.
- God specializes in rasing the **DEAD!**
- God is rich in **MERCY!**

Charles Spurgeon Quote on God's Mercy:

"The Lord's mercy is a sea which cannot be filled, though mountains of sin be cast into its midst. It is like Noah's flood, which covers all and drowns even the mountaintops of heaven-defying sins."

It was while we were in the state of rejection and rebellion that God showed mercy. He sought me out to give me the gift of life. He changed my heart (Eze. 36:26, Eph. 2:5). He did the work in me to produce a repentant heart. I didn't repent and then He showed mercy. No, He produced the repentance in my heart. Repentance is the gracious *gift* of God working in an individual (Acts 5:30-31, 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25) producing an acknowledgment of sin, sorrow and regret, and a determination to turn from sin. In fact, he also implanted the faith to believe (Rom. 12:3). **God did it all.** For me. For you. Let *that* sink in!

What does all this mean? That while I was deserving eternal damnation in the lake of fire, while I was rebelling and running away from God, He did all that was needed to provide for my salvation by first paying the penalty for my sins, and then changing my heart, placing in it saving repentance and faith! He changed my rebellious heart that was bent on running according to my way and then I repented and believed. He took the initiative, He took the first step, He did everything.

He did it all! For me! Not for someone who was deserving. Not for someone who had something to offer Him. Not for someone who came looking for help. For me! For You! Be amazed! Be overwhelmed!

My brothers and sisters, do you see it? Do you see the incredible magnitude of God's mercy? Do you realize where you would be without Him? Do you realize that He forgave all your sins, past, present and future? Do you realize that He did this knowing you would turn your back on Him again and again in sin against Him? Do you realize that the sins you commit daily are the ones that He suffered and died to pay for? Do you realize that these sins you commit daily are against the one who sought you out to show you mercy? Do you really see what is happening when you sin?

Romans 2:4 (NLT)

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

God's mercy should move me to REPENTANCE.

1 Peter 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

God's mercy should move me to WORSHIP.