



Volume 7, No. 11, November, 2019



**From Every Stormy Wind**

*From ev'ry stormy wind that blows,  
From ev'ry swelling tide of woes,  
There is a calm, a sure retreat;  
'Tis found beneath the mercy seat.*

*There is a place where Jesus shed  
The oil of gladness on our heads,  
A place than all besides more sweet;  
It is the blood bought mercy seat.*

*There is a scene where spirits blend,  
Where friend hold fellowship with friend;  
Tho' sundered far, by faith they meet  
Around one common mercy seat.*

*Ah! There on eagle's wings we soar,  
And sin and sense molest no more,  
And heav'n comes down our souls to greet,  
And glory crowns the mercy seat.*

**WORDS:** Hugh Stowell (w 1828)  
**MUSIC:** Thomas Hastings (w. 1842)



***But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Matthew 9:13***



**HAVE MERCY ON ME!**

What is mercy? Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says, "God shows compassion toward those who have broken His law," (Dan. 9:9; 1 Tim. 1:13, 16), although such mercy is selective, demonstrating that it is not deserved (Rom. 9:14-18). "God's mercy on the miserable extends beyond punishment that is withheld (Eph. 2:4-6). Withheld punishment keeps us from hell, but it does not get us into heaven. God's mercy is greater than this. God also shows mercy by actively helping those who are miserable due to circumstances beyond their control. We see this aspect of mercy especially in the life of our Lord Jesus. He healed blind men and lepers. These acts of healing grew out of his attitude of compassion and mercy.

In the Old Testament, the Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:17-22) was regarded as the resting place of God. It was the golden lid (covering) on the Ark of the Covenant. God said He would meet with Moses there (Exodus 25:22).

On an everyday level (in non-scholar language), it is when we are not held accountable, even when we deserve punishment. It is also showing mercy to someone who might not show mercy to you, i.e., the Good Samaritan showing mercy to the Jew who had been badly injured. If the circumstances had been reversed, such mercy might not have been shown to the Samaritan.

Have you ever been shown mercy? Perhaps a teacher showed mercy when overdue homework was handed in late. I did that—once. I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and handed in my homework a day late. I waited for the teacher to erupt in wrath at my irresponsibility, but she didn't. All she did was sentence me to missing a 15-minute recess. My grade was not penalized for my lateness; more importantly, my parents were not informed about my behavior. I breathed a huge sigh of relief because my parents would have been very disappointed in me. That would have hurt more than punishment.

There is a story about Abraham Lincoln. *As a young, struggling attorney, Abraham Lincoln felt honored to be employed on an important case. The other attorneys chosen to represent the case were well known for their legal and persuasive expertise. However, one attorney, upon seeing Lincoln, remarked, "What is that gawky ape doing here? I refuse to work with him. Get rid of him." Lincoln remained calm and pretended not to hear the deliberate insult.*

*As the trial proceeded, Lincoln was ostracized by the other lawyers. In fact, he was never recognized as one of the representing attorneys. He listened carefully to the court proceedings and observed his insulter's masterful handling of the case. He won the case hands-down. The next day, Lincoln was quoted as saying, "His brilliant argument was a revelation to me. He was expertly prepared, fluent in his presentation, and undoubtedly, the most professional questioning I have ever witnessed. I can't hold a candle to his abilities. I am going home to study law all over again."*

*Years later, Abraham Lincoln became president of the United States. That same attorney who had rudely insulted Lincoln became his most outspoken critic. However, Lincoln never forgot the brilliance of this man. When an appointment was needed for Secretary of War in 1862, Lincoln chose Edwin M. Stanton, the very man who had wounded and insulted him. Lincoln proved his character by offering a forgiving spirit rather than a lifetime grudge.*

*A few short years later, an assassin's bullet pierced Lincoln's body. Stanton, filled with sorrow and inconsolable grief, sobbed, "Now he belongs to the ages!" (from "The Speaker's Sourcebook")*

President Lincoln's forgiving attitude left an indelible imprint on Stanton who had treated him contemptuously as is illustrated by his quote, "Now he belongs to the ages."

Mercy is a theme threaded throughout the Bible. Time after time, mankind—created by God in His own image—turned away from Him. We might use the expression, "they thumbed their noses at Him." Numerous times during the wilderness wanderings, God had had enough. He was ready to destroy His people, yet He relented and showed mercy.

Examples of those who loved God but "slipped up" are scattered through the Bible. David's plaintive cry in Psalm 51:1 – *"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great*

*compassion blot out my transgressions"*—speaks of his anguish over his sin with Bathsheba. He loved God and expressed his gratitude for mercy shown him by God in Psalm 116:1: *"I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. God showed mercy on us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

During Jesus' ministry on earth, many came for healing—for themselves or family members—with the cry of, *"have mercy on me."* (Matthew 15:22; 17:15). All they were seeking was physical healing. Jesus gave His life on the cross for spiritual healing for our souls. For example, Paul was forever thankful to God for His mercy as he expressed in 1 Timothy 1:13: *"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy ...."*

God has shown great mercy to us, and we should likewise be merciful to others (Matthew 18:33). The scriptures repeatedly express mercy's importance to God as in Matthew 23:23, Luke 1:50, Micah 6:8b, and Hebrews 4:16: *"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* James 2:13 sums it up: *"...judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment."*

From the lips of Jesus Himself come these words in Matthew 5:7: *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* Thank you, God, for having mercy on me!

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO

†††††

## **Mercy**

Jesus' most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, is the greatest sermon ever preached. He said, *"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"* (Matthew 5:7). We are to reach out to others by doing something positive to express our concern and sympathy. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 is hardly forgotten.

Mercy is one of the eight character traits Christians should strive toward. If you have mercy, you are compelled to act unselfishly with genuine compassion, pity, and favor toward the suffering and needy. Mercy is shown and put into action, not just felt.

Jesus calls mercy one of the weightier matters of the law along with justice and faith (Matthew 23:23). The Bible often mentions the mercy God provides for sins that we commit if we are willing to repent and, like a soldier, make an about-face. No one is perfect. God knows we

all have fallen short of His glory; but He still, in His lovingkindness, has mercy on us.

*“The Lord is good to all; And His tender mercies are over all His works”* (Psalm 145:9). Our Father’s tender mercies do not cast away the weak and frail, those suffering, or those erring. Instead, He receives back those who have wandered away, pardons us, and gently wipes away our tears. He feels and acts.

Jesus showed mercy on many occasions by the deeds He did. He looked on people and was moved with pity and compassion, just as He showed His compassion for the sinful woman caught in adultery. Throughout Matthew He always showed compassion and love toward the people. Our culture today says, “If you don’t look out for yourself, no one else will.” “Don’t get mad, get even.” There is even the saying, “Show no mercy.” Today, mercy is weakness in the minds of most people.

As we read in the Gospels, mercy and forgiveness are often hand in hand. *“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness”* Daniel 9:9. As the spikes were driven through His outstretched hands, Jesus showed His mercy, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do”* (Luke 23:34). Forgiveness is truly an act of mercy. God’s forgiveness of our sins flows from His abundant mercy (Ephesians 2:4-5).

We must be merciful because this is the very character of God. Jesus said, *“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful”* (Luke 6:36). Learning to be merciful is not easy. We must show mercy, not only to those we think deserve it, but to everyone, just as Our Father in Heaven does. Grace is not grace if it is earned; mercy is not mercy if it is deserved.

Seldom are compassion and pity given praise even though they are the very heart of God that we are showing to our fellow man. The merciful reach outside themselves to help others without caring if others may react negatively. Mercy does good toward others even in the face of hostility, strife, evil, or ungratefulness. In Luke 17 the ten lepers raised their voices saying, *“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”* They wanted His healing power to touch them. Only one Samaritan, a foreigner, returned to thank Him.

God only shows mercy to the merciful. *“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain (receive) mercy.”* James takes this a step further. *“For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment”* (James 2:13). Judgment will be without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.

Have you heard or said that people are getting what they deserve? Is that what we want to happen to us? We tend to refuse to help people and withhold mercy because we think they should not have put themselves in the mess in the first place. Jesus would not think like this, and neither should we. Another phrase is, “What goes around comes around.” When we show mercy, somewhere, somehow man or God will show us mercy in return.

A merciful heart shows compassion toward the helpless (Luke 10:37) and bestows forgiveness even to the one who repeatedly sins against us (Matthew 18:21-22). It is not easy to continually forgive the same person over and over and over, but mercy demands this. God’s mercy should drive us to be gracious, kind, compassionate, and merciful toward others.

How desperate are we to receive mercy from God and mankind? Let God’s mercy transform our hearts to be mercy givers to all people.

Rebecca Voraritskul, Khon Kaen, Thailand

†††††

### **Be Kind When Someone is Down!**

An old song was written and recorded in 1923 during the days of prohibition. John Carson, a fiddler of the time, wrote the song, “Be Kind To A Man When He Is Down.” He wrote it during a time when alcohol was illegal. Of course, anyone who participated in making, distributing, or consuming alcohol could be arrested. They were looked down upon by those who knew of the evils that this lifestyle might bring. Instead of having mercy on those who partook, people shunned them and wanted them punished in jail. This attitude split certain areas into two subcultures. John Carson wrote this song because he realized a grassroots effort involving mercy was needed to reconcile the folks craving a drink back to the side of righteousness and those who wanted the drinkers to be “locked up.” He wanted his fellow man to have mercy and help the weak back to their feet by showing them the way back to the right with kindness. The lyrics of the first verse of the song go this way:



*When a boy goes wrong and leaves his home,  
he passes by the good of his town.  
Go lend him your hand and help him to stand,  
be kind to a man when he’s down.  
Oh forgive and forget, there is good in him yet,  
he will drink his sorrow to drown.  
So go lend him your hand and help him to stand,  
be kind to a man when he’s down.*

These were simple words to help with a not-so-simple, widespread problem. The concept can still be applied today. We know in the beatitudes in Matthew 5:7, Jesus says, *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”*

A kind and merciful act can shine our light to our community and to a confused culture within our nation and world who look in the wrong places for answers to their problems. People always look for something. In the 1920's, it was alcohol. Today you can take your pick of the many subcultures in our society that lead to sin. Just remember to try mercy, be kind, and help someone up. Show them there is a better way. Show them God's mercy and the way of righteousness and salvation. Remember Luke 6:36, *“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”*

-Eric Derrickson, Bolivar, MO  
✠✠✠✠✠

### Is It for Me?—God's Mercy and Grace

*“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail....The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him”* (Lam. 3:22-25).

Are you ever haunted by a past sin? Something you did that hurt someone. Something you did that hurt yourself. Something that could have had disastrous consequences for your future or which did have such consequences? Something which makes you think you are less than. These kinds of memories often come to me in the middle of the night, interrupting my sleep and reminding me that I am a sinner and causing me to question my standing before God.

I struggle to turn my thoughts to the forgiveness I have in Christ and to the fact that I have done nothing irredeemable before God. On such occasions, it is helpful to think of the Bible greats who may have also experienced regrets, but because of God's mercy and love, were given great blessings in life.

Moses was regarded by God as the humblest man on earth. But because he did not give God the glory for the water that came forth from the rock, he was not allowed to enter the promised land. Yet, the Lord said there was no one like Moses, no one with whom He spoke face to face (Numbers 12:3-9; 20:9-12).

David was a man after God's own heart. Yet he committed adultery and murder and exercised poor parenting skills. I am sure thoughts of these actions kept him awake at night. Yet, the Lord promised David that

he would never fail to have a son on the throne. And God blessed him with plans for the temple and with being in the lineage of the ultimate king, Jesus Christ. (II Samuel 7: 11; I Kings 8:25).

Abraham is known as a great man of faith. He was willing to sacrifice his son because God had told him to, reasoning that God was able to raise his son to life again. In spite of this, Abraham was afraid of a king whose land he was passing through and told his wife to lie and say she was his sister. (Well, she was his half-sister. Do those little white lies count?) He did this not only once but twice, causing the Lord to intervene on his behalf. Yet, God made Abraham the father of the Israelite nation and through his seed, is blessing all the peoples of the earth (Hebrews 11:17; Gen. 12:10-13; 20:1; Gen. 12:1-2).

These great men of God made horrendous missteps in their walk with the Lord. The common denominator for all of them is their humility and dependence on God, before and after their missteps. Their great faith that God was who He said He was and that there was no other god in all the earth triumphed their humanity. We can learn from them that God's love and mercy also triumphs any sin we have committed and turned away from. We can't conceive of how much God loves His creation—so much that He sent His only Son to earth to die, so that we could be forgiven. Satan tries to convince us otherwise by reminding us of our sinful nature. But we need to pay attention to what God told Isaiah: *“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!”* (Isaiah 43:18-19). As someone once said, don't put a period where God puts a comma. Instead, like Paul, we can cry out, *“Who can rescue me from this body of death?”*

*“Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord...we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us”* (Rom. 8:37).

Carolyn Kusler, Coweta, Oklahoma  
✠✠✠✠✠



*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. *Sunrise* is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on *Sunrise* Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

✠✠✠✠✠