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**Because
He Is...
Mercy**

#1241-A

Series: The Character of God

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Because He Is...Mercy

In the days of the Revolutionary War, there lived in Pennsylvania a pastor named Peter Miller, who was a friend of George Washington. There also lived in the same town an evil man named Michael Wittman, who hated the things of God, and lived to make Rev. Miller's life miserable. He was, in the truest sense of the word, an enemy of the gospel. One day Michael Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to death. Most of us would imagine the kind of rejoicing that might have taken place in the church as its avowed enemy was to be put away for good.

Pastor Miller, however, had a different concept of God's mercy and love. The day after the trial, he set out on foot and walked seventy miles to Philadelphia to plead for the life of his foe. He was admitted to George Washington's office. Humbly, he asked the general to grant a pardon to this nemesis who had made his life so miserable. George Washington looked him in the eye and answered, "No, Peter, I cannot grant you the life of your friend." The preacher responded, "Sir, he is not my friend, he is the bitterest enemy I have."

The General turned to Peter Miller and exclaimed, "You've walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? Pardon granted." And Peter Miller rescued Michael Wittman from the shadow of death, took him home with him, and his fiercest enemy became a precious friend. You say, "Why?" Because he understood the meaning of the word "mercy". Do you?

Peter Miller, you see, had met someone who had done the same for him. His name was Jesus Christ. Miller, too, was guilty of treason against the law of God. He was a sinner, bound over to a holy God, and condemned to die for the sins he had committed. But the very person he had offended one day trudged up a hill called Calvary and stood between the Righteous Judge and the penalty of death. Because of that, he had been set free, and Peter Miller knew that the very mercy he had been shown now lived in his heart.

THE MERCY OF GOD...WHAT IS IT?

Mercy. What an awesome word. It defies every basic characteristic of the natural man. It takes the arm of justice and places beneath its gavel a velvet cloth. It takes the lightning of

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God's wrath and wraps it in a blanket of love. It takes the laws of sowing and reaping and, without repealing them, cloaks them in an umbrella of unwarranted, undeserved relief. It is the other side of the holiness of God. It allows Him to exercise His love without compromising His righteousness. It makes allowances for the frailty of man without making a shambles of the grandeur of God. It is the cloud cover of divine expression that allows the sun of God's wrath to shine, yet covers over enough of its power to give man new beginnings, new refreshment, new cleansing, new power. Mercy is the nature of God in its finest hour. No other attribute of His Being more greatly benefits sinful man than this one.

We continue in our study of who God is, and we look once again at the reality that because He is who He is, we can live in a totally different realm of existence. And because He is...Mercy, we can live, indeed.

The mercy of God is that aspect of God's nature that allows Him to temper His wrath without compromising His holiness. Psalm 103 is a good passage to meditate on if you want to come to better grasp His mercy. Listen to what it says:

Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our

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transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him

For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

For as the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more,

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,

To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.

Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul! (Psalm 103:1-22 NKJV)

THE MERCY OF GOD...WHAT DOES IT DO?

God has painted for us on the canvas of His precious Word a portrait rare and beautiful of the magnitude of His mercy. It reaches to the heavens and causes the angelic host to sing. It stretches to the depths of man's sins and rescues him from eternal destruction. It wraps its arms around each of us and describes His relationship with us as one who longs to forgive us, who lives to renew us, who loves to give us good things. From the multi-colored palette of God's graciousness there flow the subtle hues of lives made over, sins forgiven, power restored. It measures His goodness into overflowing vessels of eternal blessing and bathes the believer in its cleansing flow. Truly, God has ordained for His children a life that is so sheltered from what we deserve, that to even grasp His discipline, while accepting His mercy, often causes us to become presumptuous and cease praising Him for the very thing we have the most to praise Him for. His mercy is that attribute of His being that chooses not to give us what we deserve. It is the opposite of God's grace. His grace gives us the good we do not deserve; His mercy refrains from giving us the evil we do deserve. Packaged

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together in Christ, the grace and the mercy of God form an anthem of love that fills the courts of Heaven with joy at what God gives His rebellious creation just for letting Him save them.

Scanning the pages of God's Word, there are at least six things that the mercy of God does for the believer. If you study those six things, you begin to grasp that mercy is more than an attribute of God, though it is indeed that. It is God's expression of that nature in His dealings with fallen man. Here are some of the benefits God's mercy provides for us:

God's Mercy forgives...

The first word that comes to most minds when asked "what is mercy" is the word "forgiveness". What a word. It means to have the slate wiped clean and the offense overlooked. It means a fresh start. It means another chance. It assumes guilt, but transcends guilt with love. In Numbers 14, God describes this aspect of His mercy:

The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression;

Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. (Numbers 14:18a,19 NKJV)

God's abundance of mercy demonstrates itself, first of all, in how He chooses to forgive you. It is a deliberate choice on His part. He does not just overlook your sins because He was glancing the other way. He is omniscient. He saw. He knew. He was grieved. His holiness was bruised; therefore, He had to exercise His wrath. He hates sin, but he wanted you to have a way out, so He arranged a pattern so that by confessing that sin, (by acknowledging it before Him, agreeing with Him of its offense at His holiness), He will always agree to for-give that sin. By for-give, He means He will give-for. He will give His righteousness for you to satisfy His holiness, thus giving His wrath its rightful expression, but not at your expense.

The load of guilt you were carrying will vanish. Like a miracle, He will take it from you. You need carry it no longer, because your sin bearer took it away from you, and for you to continue to carry it is to say to God, "You lied to me; You don't really for-give". That's blasphemy. Psalm 32 describes the sheer ecstasy of the man or woman whose sins have been forgiven:

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

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Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
(Psalm 32:1,2a NKJV)

Then the Psalmist goes on to describe the agony that belongs to the one who refuses to seek forgiveness. His bones grow old; he groans all day long. His vitality vanishes. Then he concludes,

“I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah
(Psalm 32:5b NKJV)

There is no greater joy in life than to experience the forgiveness of sin. Psalm 86 adds:

For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

(Psalm 86:4b,5 NKJV)

The abundance of God’s mercy first reveals itself to the Christian when his sins are forgiven. Mercy is God’s divine intervention in the process of discipline that removes the stigma of the offense, even when the reaping must go on.

Oh, the joy; oh the wonder
That as long as I shall live
Once I cry to God for mercy...
Always, Jesus will forgive.

The unbeliever does not have that assurance. Counseling rooms are filled with men and women who have not yet learned what to do with the load of needless guilt they are carrying. The forgiveness of God. If that were the only thing His mercy did, we would still stand in awe for all of eternity, worshiping Him for loving us so much that He would exercise mercy on our behalf again and again.

God’s Mercy redeems...

The second thing we learn about God’s mercy comes from the first. Because God can forgive, God can redeem. We need not carry the excess baggage of the offenses that have separated us from Him. He has a vehicle through which we can be reconciled and redeemed. Were it not for God’s mercy, we would be helplessly, hopelessly lost in our sin. Titus puts it this way:

not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

(Titus 3:5 NKJV)

The reason God could turn His wrath away from you and save

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you was because He owns an attribute called “mercy”. That attribute allowed Him to transfer your sins to His own Son, and let His death be the propitiation for your transgressions. His wrath was satisfied, your sins were pardoned, and you were “saved”. (That, incidentally, is a Biblical word.) It was “according to His mercy” that He “saved” you. There was no other way. Ephesians adds:

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (for by grace you have been saved),

(Ephesians 2:4,5 NKJV)

His love cared; His mercy overtook His wrath, and His grace moved on our behalf. Had He not loved, His mercy would not have overcome. Had He not been merciful, His grace would not have been ours. The three are like a trinity, inseparable, but distinct. Zacharias prophesied of John the Baptist’s role in Luke:

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,

To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,

Through the tender mercy of our God,

(Luke 1:76-78a NKJV)

Never was there any doubt. Salvation was an act of God’s mercy. If you are a believer, fall on your face before God, even today, and worship Him that because of His great mercy, you have been redeemed. It was “not by works of righteousness which you have done”, but “according to His mercy...”. And according to His mercy alone.

God’s mercy extends God’s patience. It makes God slow to anger. Were it not for His mercy, you and I would be consumed by the wrath of God. We fail Him constantly; we grieve Him continually. We are not nearly as patient with our children as God is with us. Because of His Holiness, He must be repulsed by our disobedience. But because of His Mercy, He extends the duration of His tender love beyond our understanding. And though we often become presumptuous and ungrateful, were it not for His precious mercy, we would not be able to stand one moment in His presence. Scripture is clear:

The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, And His tender

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mercies are over all His works. (Psalm 145:8 NKJV)

“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.

(Joel 2:12,13 NKJV)

Our God is slow to anger. It is an integral part of His mercy. He must be angry over sin because His nature requires it. But that aspect of His being called mercy allows His anger to be postponed and stretched to its limits of patience, so that we can have still another chance. Were we God, we would have rules; and the moment those rules were broken, punishment would ensue. So often in the Old Testament we see that picture of God. But our God of mercy has given us His Spirit to indwell us and His Word to conform us. And so, He often grants mercy and holds back His anger for a season, that we might yet repent. How awesome the very thought that a Holy God could withhold His wrath simply because His nature allows His anger to be held in check by His mercy. Oh, Beloved, praise Him even now for His mercy, and give thanks...for His mercy endureth forever...and forever...and forever.

God's mercy shortens His wrath.

Not only does He withhold His anger for a season, He shortens His anger, lest He destroy us. That aspect of His being that allows Him to do that, yea that draws Him to do that, is His mercy. If you want a pattern of how God demonstrates His mercy to unfaithful believers like us, read Nehemiah, chapter nine. Oh, what a God we have. First, he lists all of the blessings God had bestowed upon these ungrateful children.

You saw the affliction (Nehemiah 9:9)

You showed signs and wonders (vs 10)

You divided the sea (vs 11)

You led them by day and by night (vs 12)

You spoke with them from heaven and gave them just ordinances (vs 13)

You made known to them your Holy Sabbath (vs 14)

You gave them bread from heaven... and brought water out of a rock for their thirst” (vs 15)

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All of these gifts were theirs, but in verse 16 we read:

But they and our fathers acted proudly, Hardened their necks,
...And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to
their bondage.... (Nehemiah 9:16a,17 NKJV)

That was their gratitude. They decided to forsake God and run the other way after all He had done. Sound familiar? And what would you have done, were you God? Listen to what He did:

...But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake
them.

Even when they made a molded calf for themselves, And said,
'This is your god...'

Yet in Your manifold mercies, You did not forsake them in the
wilderness.

Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness;

"Nevertheless they were disobedient And rebelled..."

...And in the time of their trouble, When they cried to You, You
heard from heaven; And according to Your abundant mercies
You gave them deliverers who saved them...

But after they had rest, They again did evil before You.
Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies, ...Yet
when they returned and cried out to You, You heard from
heaven; And many times You delivered them according to
Your mercies, (Nehemiah 9:17-19,21a,26-28 NKJV)

Why didn't God just give up and call a new people? Why did He warn them over and over, yet after they failed and repented He always gave them another chance and shortened His anger? His incredible mercy, that's why. It is the very same quality of His being that has caused Him to be so patient with you and with me. Time and time again we rebel. Time and time again we make commitments and fail to honor them. Time and time again we wait until we find ourselves in deep water, then we cry out to God for help. And time and time again, He rescues us, and answers us, and restores us, and delivers us. There is only one explanation, Beloved. It is His precious mercy. Because of that mercy He forgives us, He redeems us, He extends His patience with us, and He shortens His wrath for us.

God's mercy overlooks the past.

But His mercy does even more than that. His mercy acts as a

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giant eraser, moving back through the recesses of time, eliminating the files of our past offenses and sins that have long since been forgiven. Were it not for His mercy, the account of our past infractions would form such a wall of evidence against us that any one tiny act of disobedience would be the end. Unlike the courts of law that man has created, the fact that this is the 400th or 4,000th time we have been “arrested” by His love is incidental. The past is forgotten. We start each time with a clean slate.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

(Hebrews 8:12 NKJV)

Our initial passage said it so well:

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

(Psalm 103:12 NKJV)

That means that every time we confess our sins, He is not only “faithful and just to forgive us our sins”, but to “cleanse us of all unrighteousness.” Clean slate. New day. That’s what Lamentations 3 means when it says, “His compassions fail not, they are new every morning.” God does not keep a computer file and build up a case against us. He rather pushes the “delete” button each time we are cleansed and forgiven, and a brand new file is formed that is called “my child from now on”. Incredible? Yes. Impossible? It would be, were it not for...His marvelous mercy.

God’s mercy comforts in adversity.

Finally, His mercy not only withholds His anger, limits His anger, forgives our sins, and overlooks our past; it reaches down to the very recesses of where we live and enters into our hurts and comforts us in our adversities.

Sing O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted.

(Isaiah 49:13 NKJV)

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.

(Psalm 30:5 NKJV)

I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For you have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a wide place. Have mercy on me, O LORD for I am in trouble.

(Psalm 31:7 NKJV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

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Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in
all our tribulation. (II Corinthians 1:3 NKJV)

The mercy of God causes the heart of God to reach out to the children of God in their hour of need, not because we deserve it, or even because we appreciate it, but rather because His nature requires it. Picture Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. That was the incredible mercy of God in action.

THE MERCY OF GOD...WHY DOES HE DO IT?

Which brings us, of course, to the next question. If God's mercy does all those things for us, and we are so undeserving, why does He do it? There are too many reasons to name them all, but let's look at a few of them, as the Scripture describes them.

He understands our weakness.

Reason number one that God's mercy keeps pouring itself in our direction is that He understands our limitations, our frailties, and our propensity towards evil. His omniscience informs Him, His holiness alerts Him, but His mercy overwhelms Him, and He moves to temper His judgment with love. God made a covenant with Noah in Genesis that spoke of the relationship of His judgment to our weaknesses. He said:

Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;..." (Genesis 8:21b NKJV)

God's judgment would be tempered with an understanding of man's evil heart. In Genesis 18, Abraham was interceding on behalf of Sodom, and after some collective bargaining, the agreement was concluded in verse 32.

"Suppose ten [righteous men] should be found there?" And He [the Lord] said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." (Genesis 18:32b NKJV)

Why? He knew how wicked and depraved man had become. A good memory verse is in Psalm 78:

For their heart was not steadfast with Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.

But, He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, And did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, And did not stir up all His wrath;

For He remembered that they were but flesh, A breath that

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passes away and does not come again.

(Psalm 78:37-39 NKJV)

God does not deal with us as though we were gods. He deals with us as sinful, frail, unfaithful flesh. He understands our weaknesses. He desires to turn them into strength. And so often He stirs His mercy into action, simply because of how pitifully needful we are. Oh, what a compassionate God we have.

He has a plan for us.

A second reason God demonstrates such mercy to us is because He has a plan for our lives, and the fulfillment of that plan is often contingent on His overlooking our faults and using our mistakes to further glorify Himself. For that reason, His mercy, though it is over all His creation, is also selectively demonstrated on occasions to some more than others, that His plan might be fulfilled. Speaking to Moses God said:

“I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”
(Exodus 33:19 NKJV)

God’s mercy is often selective, but always correct. Because His mercy is an outgrowth of His omniscience, He cannot make a mistake. You and I struggle with why He allows certain things to happen to certain people. We fret over the apparent inequities that sin has invoked on society that He appears to allow. But God has not fallen asleep. He is apparently demonstrating more of His mercy to some than to others. Dare we question His omniscience? Of course not. On occasions, we understand. In Hosea we read:

For in You the fatherless find mercy. (Hosea 14:3 NKJV)

Certain groups who are more oppressed receive more mercy. But on still other occasions, we do not readily understand. We read of God:

As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”

What shall I say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”

So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
(Romans 9:13-16 NKJV)

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We do not always understand. We are not equipped to. His ways are higher than our ways. We must not question His mercy, but praise Him for it. For in order to accomplish His plan, He sometimes pours mercy on some, more than on others. He is not to be questioned. He is to be worshiped.

He loves it when we repent and return.

Another reason for His mercy towards us, however, is easier to understand. He longs for us to enjoy His fellowship. And when He shows mercy upon us because we repent, He is encouraging that fellowship. Therefore, we read:

Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

(Isaiah 55:6,7 NKJV)

God's heart is pleased when His children recognize their sin and return to Him. That is why so many of the passages we have read in this lesson couple His mercy with our repentance. He extends mercy constantly, but when we acknowledge our transgressions and agree with Him about them, He often extends a measure of mercy we cannot comprehend.

THE MERCY OF GOD...OURS FOR THE ASKING.

Which brings us to the most amazing fact of all. We have the right to ask for mercy.

The often quoted Hebrews passage says this:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV)

I do not totally understand that concept. That we would be given by a loving God the priceless gift of His sovereign mercy is, of itself, more than the mind can grasp; but, in addition to that, we would be given the right to boldly approach Him and actually ask that His

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mercy be further extended, is totally beyond my comprehension. It is sad that, unbelievable as it is, I fail most of the time to even take advantage of that gracious offer on my behalf. And some of you, no doubt, do the same. We must never become presumptuous with His mercy and ask as though we deserve it. Were we to deserve it, it would not be mercy at all. So the very act of asking presumes that:

a) We do not deserve it.

b) We are asking only because He gave us the right.

c) We understand that His sovereign knowledge alone knows what we need and when we need it.

Oh, the marvel of it all. Not only are we to ask for mercy for ourselves, we are to approach God and ask Him to demonstrate mercy to those for whom we pray, as well. Paul wrote:

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.

The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—
(II Timothy 1:16-18a NKJV)

How seldom do we pray for others that way. Paul prayed that “Grace, peace, and mercy” would belong to those he wrote to. He understood that those things are gifts from God; and yet a sovereign God who gives them at will, delights to give them even more when his children have the faith to ask.

So God’s mercy is ours for the asking; and it will often be granted, even when we fail to ask, because of His great love for us. His holiness is repelled by our sins. His righteousness would judge us accordingly, were it not that His great mercy intervenes on our behalf. Because of that mercy, we have forgiveness of sin. Because of that mercy, we have redemption. Because of that mercy, His anger is withheld and His patience extended. Because of that mercy, His wrath is shortened. Because of that mercy, He overlooks our past and cleans the slate each time we are cleansed of sin. Because of that mercy, He continually looks down upon our sorrows and afflictions as though they were His and sends us comfort and love. He does so because He knows our frailties and weaknesses. He does so because His plan requires it. He does so because He delights in our repentances as well. So dear are we to His precious heart that He has even extended to us the right to ask

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for His mercy, both for ourselves and for others. Because He is... mercy, we can live lives free from guilt, free from fear, free from the condemning arm of the wrath of God.

And yet how seldom do we pause in our hurried quest for religious accomplishment long enough just to praise Him that His name is...Mercy. And how often do we take that mercy for granted, presumptuously assuming that because He has withheld His anger and discipline in the past, that we deserve it. How foolish is the mind of man. How forgetful is the heart of God's own. We read those Psalms that speak of Israel's constant disobedience mixed with phrases that speak of God's mercy, only to be followed by further disobedience, and we marvel at their insensitivity to God's forgiving love.

Are we any better than they? When was the last time you gave a week of your life to listing the mercies of God on your behalf, and praising Him and thanking Him from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same? When was the last time we devoted an entire worship experience to simply standing in awe at the incredible mercies of God? When was the last time we stopped and taught our children to understand the grandeur of His mercy in the light of our disobedience? When was the last time we stopped and simply worshiped God just because He is...mercy?

I think it is time now. Let's pray:

Dear wonderful Lord,

We cannot grasp it; but we do so abundantly receive it. And so to thee we offer praise for thy wonderful, bountiful mercy. It is ours for the taking; we cannot grasp that. It is even ours for the asking; how can we even begin to understand? And yet, dear Lord, you have again and again forgiven us when we have sinned against your holiness. You have withheld your anger, shortened your anger, and overlooked our past. How can we thank you, Lord? We can thank you as we are now. And we can thank you by not presuming on that mercy and trampling it underfoot. Oh, dear loving God, we love thee. We praise thee. We worship thee. Just because thou art...mercy. In the name of the one who made the mercy seat a reality in our lives, even Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, we pray.

Amen.

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A Challenge to Further Study

- 1- See if you can, in diagram form, describe the mercy of God.
- 2- Using only Psalm 103, find passages that define God's mercy as:
 - a- forgiveness
 - b- redemption
 - c- slowness to anger
 - d- shortened wrath
 - e- knowing our frailties
 - f- cause for praise
- 3- How presumptuous have you become over the forgiveness of God? What can you do about it?
- 4- Meditate on Psalm 32:1-5. Worship Him for His mercy.
- 5- Memorize Titus 3:5. Worship Him for His mercy.
- 6- Give a Scriptural illustration of how the mercy of God makes Him slow to anger. Can you relate a personal example from your own life? Worship Him for His mercy.
- 7- Spend time alone with God thanking Him that He cannot recall your past as testimony against you, because His great mercy has erased it forever.
- 8- Read Psalm 78. Relate your rebellion and God's mercy to that of the children of Israel. Worship.
- 9- Ask God for mercy: for yourself, for others, humble yourself acknowledging that if you deserved it, it would not be mercy. Worship.
- 10- Review the closing prayer in this lesson. Rewrite it in your own words as a love letter to God. Worship.

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