

The Pursuit Of God

Session Seven / August 3, 2016

The Attributes Of God

An attribute of God is anything that is true of Him.

THE MERCY OF GOD

1 This paragraph written by A. W. Tozer is particularly striking to my heart:

2 *When through the blood of the everlasting covenant we children of the shadows reach at*
3 *last our home in the light, we shall have a thousand strings to our harps, but the sweetest*
4 *may well be the one tuned to sound forth most perfectly the mercy of God.*

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DEFINITION OF MERCY VS GRACE

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9 We sing with such joy the familiar stanzas of "Amazing Grace that saved a wretch like
10 me." And well we should. So - are we singing then of mercy? No. Mercy and
11 grace are often confused. A very simple separation here:
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"Mercy" is God not punishing us as our sins deserve.
"Grace" is God blessing us despite the fact that we do not deserve it.
"Mercy" is deliverance from judgment.
"Grace" is extending kindness to the unworthy.

Let's simplify this: Mercy - not getting what you deserve.
Grace - getting what you don't deserve.

As I, as all humans, was born into sin and actually do sin, I deserve Hell; but because of God's mercy I will go to Heaven. And the blessings of God, which are beyond all accounting in my life, constitute God's grace to me - my getting what I never deserved.

Mercy could be illustrated like this: A judge finds you guilty of murder in the first degree, but he or she does not prescribe any penalty to you whatsoever. Then - to top it off - the judge hands you a million dollars after finding you guilty. Grace!

For this study, we will concentrate on **MERCY AS NOT GETTING WHAT WE HAD COMING!** We can count on Scripture for foundation to our belief: Exodus 33:19
And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the

1 name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and
2 will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. *“I will have mercy on whom I will
3 have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”* NIV
4

5 If anyone ever deserved the wrath of God for his sin, it was King David. He knew it,
6 too! After taking another man’s (Uriah) wife (Bathsheba) and orchestrating the murder
7 of the man, he was confronted by the prophet Nathan: 2 Samuel 12:9-14 **Wherefore
8 hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast
9 killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and
10 hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. [10] Now therefore the
11 sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast
12 taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. [11] Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I
13 will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before
14 thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the
15 sight of this sun. [12] For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all
16 Israel, and before the sun. [13] And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against
17 the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou
18 shalt not die. (God’s mercy!) [14] Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given
19 great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born
20 unto thee shall surely die. (God’s justice.)**

21
22 By man’s laws David should have been immediately dethroned and executed for murder,
23 not to mention adultery. But God allowed him to live and not only to live but to
24 continue on the throne. Talk about mercy!

25
26 But consider this: I, too, have sinned for all sin - regardless of its dimension - is an
27 affront to God; it is rebellion against God. Yet I am forgiven (mercy) and blessed
28 (grace). Small wonder we sing loud and long, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!”
29

30 But let’s consider yet another stunning biblical example of God’s mercy:
31

32 Acts 8:1-4

33 **And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great
34 persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered
35 abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. [2] And
36 devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. [3]
37 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling
38 men and women committed them to prison. [4] Therefore they that were scattered
39 abroad went every where preaching the word.**

40 Acts 9:1-2

1 **And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of**
2 **the Lord, went unto the high priest, [2] And desired of him letters to Damascus to**
3 **the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women,**
4 **he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.**

5
6 Paul's own testimony before King Agrippa: Acts 26:9-11 **I verily thought with**
7 **myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth**
8 **(rebellion). [10] Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I**
9 **shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they**
10 **were put to death, I gave my voice against them. [11] And I punished them oft in**
11 **every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad**
12 **against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.**

13
14 If any man ever deserved the wrath of God it was Saul of Tarsus. But because of the
15 mercy of God we know this man as the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary and
16 theologian of all time. This is the mercy of God.

17
18 The laws of God demand penalty for sin: Jeremiah 21:14 **But I will punish you**
19 **according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord: Numbers 32:23 ye have**
20 **sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.** The only reason we
21 don't go to Hell is because of the mercy of God.

22
23 Yet....while we may not lose our soul, though we may still go to Heaven, there is a price
24 to be paid for sin.

25 a person lives the life of a drunkard....gets saved....yet his liver is shot
26 a person lives a life of infidelity....gets saved....still suffers from sexually transmitted
27 disease

28 29 THE PATIENCE OF GOD

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31 Romans 2:4 Living Bible Romans 2:4 **Don't you realize how patient he is being**
32 **with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see that he has been waiting all this time**
33 **without punishing you, to give you time to turn from your sin? His kindness is**
34 **meant to lead you to repentance.**

35
36 The Lord gives us opportunity after opportunity to repent....to turn to Him....His patience
37 is a vital part of His mercy.

38
39 Let's take a look at the degrees of His patience:
40

1 Job's testimony is strong: Job 33:27-30

2 **'I have sinned, and perverted what was right,**
3 **And it did not profit me.'** (I did not get what I deserved.)
4 **[28] He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit,**
5 **And his life shall see the light.**
6 **[29] "Behold, God works all these things,**
7 **Twice, in fact, three times with a man,**
8 **[30] To bring back his soul from the Pit,**
9 **That he may be enlightened with the light of life.**

10
11 In baseball, it's three strikes in you're out. But in Job's case, he got another swing of
12 the bat. Why? Because of God's mercy.

13
14 Ezra, the Old Testament priest in the exile (Jews in Babylon returning back to Jerusalem):
15 Ezra 9:13 **And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great**
16 **guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have**
17 **given us such deliverance as this...**

18
19 Paul, the Apostle, however, may have the most striking testimony of all concerning God's
20 patience and mercy: 1 Tim. 1:13 **Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor,**
21 **and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.** No
22 one can doubt Paul's sincerity in persecuting followers of Christ; but he did not know
23 better until he encountered the Christ enroute to Damascus.

24
25 But what about you and me? Can we, too, experience such mercy? Let's check the
26 contract (Bible): Hebrews 4:16 **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of**
27 **grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**

28
29 One more witness: Psalm 103:8

30 **The Lord is compassionate and gracious,**
31 **slow to anger, abounding in love.**

32 Psalm 103:10-14

33 **he does not treat us as our sins deserve**
34 **or repay us according to our iniquities.**
35 **[11] For as high as the heavens are above the earth,**
36 **so great is his love for those who fear him;**
37 **[12] as far as the east is from the west,**
38 **so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**
39 **[13] As a father has compassion on his children,**
40 **so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;**

1 [14] for he knows how we are formed,
2 he remembers that we are dust.

3
4 Oh, let's have one more: Micah 7:18

5 Who is a God like you,
6 who pardons sin and forgives the transgression
7 of the remnant of his inheritance?
8 You do not stay angry forever
9 but delight to show mercy.

10
11

Satan delights in badgering God's saints, accusing them of everything he can think of. But the follower of Christ must remember that when we repented of our sins, truly, those transgressions were covered by the precious blood of Jesus and, by an act of His sovereign will, God forgives AND FORGETS them. Such is His mercy!
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13 **WARNING!**

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15 You and I can turn off God's bountiful mercy by taking it for granted and sinning with
16 pleasure against His directives. Romans 2:5 **But after thy hardness and impenitent**
17 **heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the**
18 **righteous judgment of God;** Another word for "treasurest" would be "stores up" or
19 "accumulates."

20
21 Galatians 6:7 **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,**
22 **that shall he also reap.** Romans 11:22 **Behold therefore the goodness and severity**
23 **of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in**
24 **his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.** That little preposition IF is a biggie
25 in many scriptures. It means in this case there must be a sincere pursuing after God
26 (THE PURSUIT OF GOD) which insures His divine mercy.

27
28 SINCE GOD HAS SHOWN US MERCY, SO MUST WE SHOW MERCY TO OTHERS

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30 • How should the Christian react to fellow believers who fall?

31
32 Galatians 6:1-2

33 **Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an**
34 **one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. [2] Bear**
35 **ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

36
37 It is God's directive to us to "restore" our brother or sister and to watch ourselves very

1 carefully lest we, too, should fall prey to Satan's devices.

2
3 All too often we shoot our own wounded. But God has given to us a gift of
4 reconciliation. Jesus gave us a parable that makes very clear what our attitude should be
5 to our "wounded:"

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7 Matthew 18:23-35

8 **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take**
9 **account of his servants. [24] And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought**
10 **unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. [25] But forasmuch as he had not to**
11 **pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he**
12 **had, and payment to be made. [26] The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped**
13 **him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [27] Then the lord**
14 **of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the**
15 **debt. [28] But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which**
16 **owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat,**
17 **saying, Pay me that thou owest. [29] And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and**
18 **besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [30] And he**
19 **would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. [31] So**
20 **when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and**
21 **told unto their lord all that was done. [32] Then his lord, after that he had called**
22 **him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou**
23 **desiredst me: [33] Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy**
24 **fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? [34] And his lord was wroth, and delivered**
25 **him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. [35] So likewise**
26 **shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every**
27 **one his brother their trespasses.**

28
29 This truth is expounded upon in the Old Testament word of the prophet Micah: Micah
30 6:8 **He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of**
31 **thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?**

32
33 It is not a matter of "it would kinda nice if we would show mercy," but instead it is
34 **REQUIRED OF US BY GOD.**

35
36 Showing mercy to those to whom God shows mercy does not show "weakness" of our
37 testimony nor a slackening of holiness. It is a matter of simple obedience unto the Lord.

38
39 I can give you any number of illustrations where showing mercy trumped all feelings of
40 vindication or anger.

1 The collapse of the PTL television network and its founder and leader, Jim Bakker, is a
2 case in point. Following his release from prison, Bakker was invited to Billy Graham's
3 home in the Carolinas. Upon leaving there, he surprised me by coming to my church
4 study door rather late on a Friday night.

5
6 The following Sunday I introduced him to our congregation during the worship service.
7 (We had only one service at that time on Sunday morning.) It came as a huge shock to
8 the people when I had Jim come to the platform. Never was I so proud of this
9 congregation as I was that morning when, as one, the crowd stood, applauded and cheered
10 as one of God's children "came home."

11
12 I never received one letter of condemnation or criticism. I previously had had a good
13 history with Jim and his ministry and he blessed the Revivaltime ministry, which I led at
14 that time, in ways that were just monumental - facts which the general church population
15 did not know. I had the choice to either assist in the restoration of Jim or to ignore or
16 rebuke him. The commanded me to "restore." You were part of that and I am still so
17 proud of you.

18
19 This is what MERCY is all about.

20 21 THE GRACE OF GOD

22
23 A reminder from page 1 of these notes, lines 15 and 16:

24 Mercy - not getting what we deserve

25 Grace - getting what we don't deserve

26
27 Grace is God's goodness directed toward human need and benefit. Tozer explains:
28 "*Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the*
29 *undeserving.*"

30
31 Jesus told the great story of the prodigal son, who took his inheritance, squandered it, and
32 then came home in shame and poverty. His father not only forgave him, but he blessed
33 him with exquisite grace:

34
35 Luke 15:17-24

36 **And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's**
37 **have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! [18] I will arise and go to**
38 **my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before**
39 **thee, [19] And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired**
40 **servants. [20] And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way**

1 off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and
2 kissed him. [21] And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,
3 and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. [22] But the father
4 said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on
5 his hand, and shoes on his feet: [23] And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and
6 let us eat, and be merry: [24] For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was
7 lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

8
9 The father freely forgave his son for his transgressions - MERCY - but then bestowed
10 upon him the blessings of a son - GRACE.

11
12 Why would God show us such grace? Because we have earned it? Deserved it? No, we
13 receive grace because of Christ. Remember Paul's great line: "Where sin abounded,
14 GRACE did much more abound!" (Romans 5:20)

15
16 The gifts of God are beyond all human comprehension. We may never understand the
17 extent of His love, but we can enjoy and appreciate them, certain Mercy and Grace.

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21 Next week: More Pursuit of God
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