

“Mercy of God”
By Bob Heirtzler
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I feel a powerful, powerful presence of God today. God has truly blessed us. God has truly been in our lives. God has truly been in every step that we have made since we've been born.

It is fait to say that this message about mercy, there are so many different directions that you could take this message. So many. I was on a four-lane highway at the beginning of the week, trying to whittle it down; I got it down to a dirt path. I could go so many different directions with this.

First, I'd like to start off with a praise report. the gentleman that I talked about, his name is Joe, he lives in Fort Lauderdale, that I talked about last time I was up here, he's been constantly going to Bile studies. He's met up with Pat Taylor and Cedric. Pat texted me the other day that Joe is so close to getting baptized in Jesus' name. So amen to that. I said that because the beginning of the message is about our actions:

When I was going through this, I realized that mercy is about our actions. We're responsible for our actions. Soon, in this message, we're going to be talking about that we are not only responsible for our actions, but we are also responsible for our faults. So, if you think about it, you're just as guilty as if you did it.

So, I'd like to open up and just share: I am thankful to be here today. I thank God for calling me to this ministry. I thank God for all the testimonies that were said today. All the songs that were sung today went right along with the message that I'm teaching today. I thank God that You put this together. I had no idea what songs Andy and Parrish picked for the week, and, as I am listening, “

Actions

When I was thinking about our actions, my reference text is Joshua 7:19-26. I'm not reading it word-for-word, I'm just going to tell the story about Achan.

Joshua 7:19-26 ...all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire...

Joshua is in the midst of a battle, and he's losing men in the battle: they're being killed. God told him that there was sin in the camp. As they went down, tent by tent, looking for this person that's causing this problem, he came across Achan. He asked Achan, “Please tell me; don't beat around the bush, I want to know exactly what you did.” Achan shared that he took a Babylonian garment, some silver, and some gold, because he lusted after that, and he buried it in his tent. Joshua sent men to go look for it, and they found it buried in his tent like he had said. Joshua had Achan, and his family and his livestock and all his belongings, stoned, buried, and left a marker until this day. One man sins, and causes his whole family to be wiped out, and all his livestock. So his actions spoke loud that day. What he did, he was responsible for.

Parrish, in his message last week, talked about grace. The second man I'm talking about is Noah.

Genesis 6:5-6 ...it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him...

God was pretty upset about what he had done.

Genesis 6:8-9 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD...

Noah did exactly everything that God asked him to do, even to the building of the ark, that took a hundred years to build. Down to the tee, down to the measurements. Because of Noah being faithful, he found grace in God, and his entire family went onto the ark. Another man whose actions caused a good thing to happen and his whole family to be saved.

The third person I'm going to talk about is David. The reference Scripture is Psalms 51. His actions: he committed adultery, he had somebody murdered, he was involved in a conspiracy, he was caused all kinds of grief going on, and he got caught doing it. Knowing the consequences of his sin, knowing that he could be a pile of rocks out in the middle of the desert too—he was worthy of a pile of rocks, he cried out for mercy. I'm going to read exactly what it says:

Psalms 51:1-3 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness...

He cried out for mercy; he didn't blame anyone else but himself. People blame everybody else for their problems today in our society. "It's his fault." "It's her fault." "It's their fault." They never look in the mirror at themselves. They don't look in the mirror when they get up in the morning and say, "yeah, it's me." We have to look to the source and get it right. I haven't even gotten to the messy part, yet, but I'm trying to express that we are responsible for our actions. We are responsible for what we think, what we say, what we do, what we hold, what we watch; everything! We're responsible for it. Then David went on to say:

Psalms 51:10-12 ...Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit...

He was crying out, "Please don't take the spirit of God out of my life." I know there have been times, and there are people that can raise their hands to this, that we have prayed in the sanctuary, "Please, God, don't take the spirit of God out of my life; I need You, I need You, I need You! I know I messed up this week. I know I messed up last night. I know I messed up this morning, said the wrong thing, did the wrong thing, but, God, I need You mercy on my life that I can move forward and be that light for You. I can be that testimony for You, God. I don't blame anybody but me for this one."

As I continued to put this together, I was reminded that Parrish shared last week that grace is a gift. His opening scriptures were:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

He went on to say that grace is a gift; there's nothing we can do to obtain it. There's nothing we can do; we can't buy it; we can't find it on Amazon.com or any other website. It's a

gift. He already paid the price; it's a gift. we can't do anything to obtain that gift, but it's the gift that God gave us. Everyone in this room has the grace of God as a gift in our lives. Everybody has a different kind of grace, tailored to their needs. the word grace is singular—there's not several of them—but the grace of God is on our lives so that we can work together as a family. I got a lot of notes out of that message, saying that grace is a gift, but you need mercy, also. You can't have one without the other. One preacher said that they're the twin sisters. You need both of them to survive.

What about Mercy?

Mercy is... Let me ask you this: We are responsible for our thoughts and actions. What would happen if God judged us on the spot with some of our negative thoughts and actions? How many would still be here by a show of hands? That's God's mercy; we are not getting what we deserve! God overlooks that, and He gets into our hearts, so that we can move on. Then grace, the definition is... often said to be a blessing that we do not necessarily deserve. This is defined as the love of God that has been bestowed to man, despite his own shortcomings, failures and sins. It can also be described as the generosity that we get to receive unexpectedly. They work hand-in-hand—you need both. If you haven't gone over Parrish's notes, they are posted on our webpage. They are downloadable and printable. I go to those all the time.

You've got those people that say, "I've never done anything wrong. I've always done everything right." They don't like this Scripture when I read it:

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Another Scripture says that our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). We come short every day.

What about mercy? I have two texts here. I kind of like using Old Testament and New Testament scriptures together, because somebody always wants to say, "That's in the past. That doesn't apply to us now." I get that a lot.

Exodus 33:17-19 ...will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

God knows us by our names. He knows you're not George if your name is Jill. He knows your name is Kayla, not Crystal. He knows your name is Jim, not Yvette. He knows your birth name.

It's up to God to show mercy; nobody else. It's God only. In Romans, Paul made reference to the same scripture:

Romans 9:14-18 ...For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will show mercy...

God is not unrighteous at all. God is righteous. God still has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy on. It's the same in the NT. It hasn't changed.

What About Showing Mercy?

Matthew 5:1-9...Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy...

Merciful is a little different from the others... If we want mercy, we have to be merciful. If we want God's mercy, then we have to show mercy to other people. We can't have grudges against people and expect God to bless us. We can't hold things against people, "He did me wrong!" One brother told me yesterday, "I'm glad that you shared that with that other brother because that brother probably never knew that you were angry with him. He probably didn't even know that he got you mad at all." It's good that I was able to clear the air about the situation. There's another reference:

Luke 6:36-37 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not...

If we want God's mercy, then we be judging; we have to forgive people. we can't hold grudges against people. Imagine, if I'm mad at Ken Avellino, I can't be telling Jeff about it; I've got to go to Ken Avellino. If I'm mad at Malcolm, I can't tell Brent about it. If I'm mad at Donna, I can't tell Nancy about it. I have to go to that person, "Hey, I'm mad at you; you said this and it offended me." Maybe it was not *what* they said, it was *how* they said it. Maybe I didn't have a crystal clear picture of the situation. But I do know not to tell everybody in the room about it. So I can't hold judgment against people, unless I want God holding judgment against me. A lot of times we find that when we point things out in other people's lives, that we're just as guilty of it, too. You see it in their life because it reflects your own life; you both have to get things right, you know?

Matthew 5:21-22 ...whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger...

He's making it more personal now in His message. It's not just your actions, it's your thought-pattern now. He wants us to go the extra mile for people now.

Matthew 5:27-28 ...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery...

Now it's more than just an action, it's a thought. If you have that thought, that lust, you're just as guilty as having done it. Again, we're responsible for our actions AND our thoughts.

Matthew 5:33-37 ...Swear not at all; neither by Heaven; for it is God's throne...

He's saying let your yeas be yeas, and your nays be nays. If you can't do it, say no. If you can do it, say yes. Don't make promises that you can't keep. How many people do we know that made New Year's Resolutions on January first of this year? People that we work with, or just come across... How many of these people are still doing it? we promised that we would do it—lose weight, or cut back on fried chicken, or cut back on banana pudding, or we're going to eat a better diet, and we swear up and down that we're going to do it, and then we don't do it. With God, it's much more serious. Much, much more serious. You can't tell God one thing and do another. If you're saying, "I'm going to get more involved in ministry," and you're still sitting at home not doing anything, are you really keeping the promise? no. "You know, I'm going to communicate more with the leadership," but then you don't. We've got to be careful;

our words are weighty in the eyes of God. He takes everything by our word. If you promise to do something, do it. If you can't do it, say no.

Matthew 5:38-42 ...whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also...

Now, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If you hurt me, then I'm going to hurt you. You knock out my tooth, I'll knock out your tooth. If you break my hand, then I'm going to break your hand. Here Jesus is saying don't do that any more. He's saying turn the other cheek.

Sometimes—somebody mentioned today about you have to travel with a person to understand what their needs are. I kept hearing that a lot today. We had one person share that we won't know their needs—let us know; we'll walk faith you. we'll go the extra mile to make sure things are going right for you in this family of God. We can't just say, "They deserve it; ha, ha, ha!" we can't have that attitude. If you want mercy, you can't have that attitude in your life.

This was a very hard one for me to get over (I did get over it):

Matthew 5:43-48 ...Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate...

Sometimes, someone's giving us a hard way to go, and God's saying, "Pray for them." You may have anger in your heart, but pray for them. Greg shared that today, how that people are looking for someone to pray for them. There's people out there hurting just like we were hurting before we knew God. They need God just like we were looking for God. I shared that about Joe, that he tried everything. He lives in Fort Lauderdale, and, for those of you who don't know him, he sought every avenue and relationships, but he couldn't find the peace that he was looking for. Now he did. Now, he's involved in Bible studies. Any day now, I'm expecting to hear that he got baptized. That will be awesome.

How's your prayer life?

Somebody shared this today:

Luke 18:9-14 ...God be merciful to me a sinner...

The first man is on a routine. At a certain time of day, he does a certain thing, he's got a routine. He's saying, "I'm glad I'm not like that person there." That's not a good position to be in. Maybe you could be in that position; God's pulled the rug out from under our feet... But, the second man that prayed (this is the one that really encouraged me), he knew he was a sinner. "I've messed up today. I said Your name in vain. I watched the wrong thing. I read the wrong thing. I got mad at my neighbor. I got mad at my co-worker. Be merciful to me, God, I am a sinner." And He said this man walked out more justified than the other man. We're still talking about the mercy of God in our lives. If we want mercy, we have to stay humble. We have to pray, "God, please help me get it right." Our sins need to go ahead of us, not behind us. Don't wait until judgment day to clear your luggage. Make sure your luggage is clear, ready to go, and clean.

This brings up the Lord's Prayer. we all know the Lord's Prayer:

Matthew 6:9-13 ...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...

We have to have God forgive us, so that we can forgive others. God can't forgive us until we do forgive others.

We were singing that song, "Call Him Up" and then we switched to: "This Little Light of Mine" earlier. This is the Scripture talks exactly like those two songs:

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We have to call Him up and tell Him what we want. No one else is going to pray for us, for our needs. Other people do pray for us, but we've got to pray for our selves as much as we pray for other people. I have learned as I've gotten older that I have to pray more for myself. I pray for other people, but sometimes I feel like I'm being selfish, "Oh, I can't pray for myself, other people have more needs." I realize that we have to pray for ourselves also. We've got to check our prayer lives. It was mentioned in the beginning of the song ("Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus") before we read it, about baptism, we have to trust in Jesus.

Acts 17:30 ...ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

He used to wink at ignorance, now He's commanding all of us to repent.

Next, we go to Acts chapter 2, where Peter was preaching to the Jewish people that day. There were thousands of people there, and he was preaching a message.

Acts 2:38-39 ...ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...

It wasn't just for that day; it's for today also. If we repent, get baptized in His name, then we have the gift of grace in our lives. We need to keep seeking for mercy every day, and get things right and keep things right, because we're human and we do make mistakes. I know I do. God wants us to constantly seek His face daily on a daily basis; not just Sundays and Wednesday nights or Friday night prayer meetings. It's a daily walk with God. You might have to find some time in your day, if you're having a bad day—you're frustrated or aggravated—you want to reach out and choke somebody (you're angry at some co-worker or something), you've got to find that break time and go call on His name. "God, help me!" He's on the main line; He's not going to hang up the phone on us. He's not going to have a busy signal when we dial the number in because He's always open. It's like the Prodigal Son: as soon as he turned to go home, the father knew, and as he was coming back, the father ran out and met him. God will run out to meet us, wherever we're at, as soon as we realize we need Jesus. He's fast, He's faster than a speeding bullet. God is there to help us. Ten seconds there can change your whole day; it can change your whole outlook on things, just calling on His name.

Closing Thoughts

Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus...

We have to seek this every day until Jesus comes. It's an every day walk. What do we have, eighty people in this room? We have eighty walks with God in this room. We have to be proactive about fellowship and prayer. The gatherings that we have, people are learning about each other. The Bible studies, the coffee shop gatherings, we're learning about other people's needs. We need to encourage one another every day. Whenever Brother Parrish gets back from his trips, he says he's so thirsty because he's been gone two weeks. I mean, he's praying while he's gone, but there's something about having two or three gathered together in His name (Mathew 18:20); it does things for you. If you feel like no one cares, that's Satan's trap. We do care. God does care. He's just waiting for you to call out His name. He's just waiting. Say, "Jesus." He's waiting.

James 3:17-18...the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle...

So, this mercy comes from above. It's pure. Every day we wake up, it's there. I was raised that the only day you talk to God was Sunday. That's the way I was raised. I thought I could go crazy the rest of the week and then make it right on Sunday. If God had come back on a Thursday night, I'd have been in a lot of trouble, or Friday night, when I was tipping back a couple of bottles. If I made it right on Sunday, then I figured I was good for the week. That's the way I was taught. I realized, that's not the right way; God wants us to live for Him every day.

My last Scripture, that was also mentioned in a song, this is about us.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

People don't understand why we do what we do. That's why they look at us and wonder why we do what we do. You remember that message from last week, that when we walk into a room, they sense something. They walk into your kitchen, or they walk into—Donna mentioned the prayer night the other night—they sense a spirit there. They sense a presence of God there. They're just wondering why you do what you do. "What is this? You've been through all of this and you're still praising God? I'd be punching the walls by now." God takes from our sinful ways, He washes us through baptism, and now we're shining bright for Him. Yes, we make mistakes, but God puts up with it. God will continue to deal with us until He takes us home. He will continue to deal with us every step of the way; if you mess up, get it right, right away. Call on His name; get it behind you. get it covered by the blood of Jesus. Don't let it build up. The Gentiles, which is us in this room, unless you're Jewish, but the door was opened to the Gentiles, which is us. We are the chosen generation. Keep in mind that this generation the Jews were decadent, and he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46) God has given us mercy. When you do this study, it goes in so many different directions. I pray that we will each spend some time doing our own study on mercy. This is just the tip of the iceberg. There's so much more I could say; there's so much depth to this message. I thank you all, God bless you.