**Seeking God’s Plan in our Knowledge of God**

**The Mercy of God**

Exodus 25:22 - *There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.*

Exodus 36:4-7 - *And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, and they said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the Lord commanded us to perform.” So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary.” Thus the people were restrained from bringing any more. For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it.*

**I. The Presence of Mercy in the Person of God**

A. An essential aspect of God’s character

v. 8 - *The Lord is...merciful.*

Psalm 119:156 - *Great are Your mercies, O Lord; revive me according to Your ordinances.*

Psalm 86:15 - *But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.*

B. Various definitions

Wayne Grudem – “God’s mercy means God’s goodness to those in misery and distress.”

Charles Ryrie – “Mercy is that aspect of His goodness that causes God to show pity and compassion.”

Millard Erickson – “God’s mercy is His tenderhearted, loving compassion for His people. It is His tenderness of heart toward the needy. If grace contemplates man as sinful, guilty, and condemned, mercy sees him as miserable and needy.”

1. Mercy is aroused by the pitiful condition of someone less fortunate and often less powerful (both materially and spiritually)

2. Mercy always includes an emotional component

The New Testament Dictionary of Theology – “the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else [similar to compassion and pity]...These feelings are the reverse of envy at another’s good fortune.”

3. Mercy always includes a willingness to act

Miley – Systematic Theology – “Mercy is a form of love determined by the state or condition of its objects. Their state is one of suffering and need, while they may be unworthy or ill-deserving. Mercy is at once the disposition of love respecting such, and the kindly ministry of love for their relief.”

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia – “The mercy of God is not simply an emotion; it is always manifested historically in personal actions.”

C. Rooted in the idea that God, the great King, is willing to enter into a covenant relationship with His people

D. Motivates God to be slow about meting out the just consequences for sin

v. 8 - *The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger.*

Psalm 86:15 - *But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.*

E. Relationship of mercy to grace

R.C. Trench – “Grace is extended to men because they are guilty. Mercy is extended to men because they are miserable.”

F. Especially manifested in the Person and Work of Christ

1. in His birth

Luke 1:49-50 - *For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him.*

Luke 1:54 - *He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy,*

Luke 1:58 - *Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.*

2. in His ministry

Matthew 15:22 - *Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Matthew 17:15 - *Lord, have mercy on my son.*

Lawrence Richards – “Jesus responded; in each case, He healed and He met the need. There were two lessons for those who observed Jesus, and they are there for us as well. First, those with needs must recognize Jesus’ ability to help them: each recorded cry for mercy is also an expression of faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Second, those who come to Jesus invariably have their needs met. This latter fact vividly expresses the attitude of God toward us.”

G. Mercy is essential for our salvation

Ephesians 2:1-3 - *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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. 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.*

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy.*

1 Peter 1:3 - *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*

Titus 3:5 - *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit*

H. Mercy is available to all

Romans 11:32 - *For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.*

**II. The Absence of Mercy in the Spiritually Empty**

A. Evidenced by cruelty

Jeremiah 6:23 - *They seize bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roars like the sea, and they ride on horses, arrayed as a man for the battle against you, O daughter of Zion!*

Romans 1:28-31 - *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful*

B. A sign of the end times

C. Cannot be replaced by religiosity

Matthew 23:23 - *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.*

Micah 6:8 - *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what the LORD requires of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

**III. The Application of Mercy to People Like Us**

A. Be sure that you have come to Him for mercy in salvation

B. Let your regular confession of sin remind you of your ongoing need for mercy

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.*

C. Let your regular dependence on Him create a growing appreciation for His mercy

Hebrews 4:16 - T*herefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

D. Seek to grow in mercy toward those in need

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

1. in your family

2. in our church

3. in our community