

THE MERCY OF GOD

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1. THE MERCY OF GOD - PART ONE

Mercy of God is an important ingredient in the Christian life. I learned about the mercy of God when many times I found that injustice has been done or when I am in a position to pronounce a judgment. The more authority we have, the more we must balance it with the understanding of mercy. Authority without mercy becomes tyranny. God is all-powerful; His name itself means almighty, Almighty God. Our God is abundant in mercy. And His mercy is new every morning and His mercy endures forever.

I began to understand the mercy of God when there was a particular case where this brother has done something that needed some judgment. It was serious enough because it did not glorify the body of Jesus Christ. I was in a position to take an action that would bring justification to the situation. And I spent my time in prayer in God. I asked, "God how shall I handle this situation?" It's serious enough because it is causing hurt in the body of Christ. It has nothing to do with me personally. It has to do with that person's action to the body of Christ. Between that brother and me, we have a good relationship. I want you to understand that; it has nothing to do with me. But there were some things that were done that didn't glorify the Lord. The actions were done out of irresponsibility, out of a lack of fear of the Lord. And I was right in the position to do something about it. But of course, I always bring it before God in prayer. I spent 2 hours in prayer and during the 2 hours, the Lord never said anything. But when I finished and got up, finally I heard Him say in my spirit, "Mercy." The Lord began to say, "Just show mercy in this case." And the Lord said, "Blessed are those who are merciful for they shall receive mercy."

We need to understand mercy because mercy is tied up to grace. In Heb. 4, it talks about how that when we come to the throne of God we may find mercy and obtain grace. If you do not understand mercy, you can not get more grace. And the mercy of God is also tied up to healing. When Bartimaeus a blind man heard Jesus was coming along the way, he recognized that He was the Messiah and by his confession that He was the Son of David. But the recognition of the Messiah is not enough. He said, "Son of David have mercy on me." He was appealing to the mercy of God for healing. There are other incidences that we see how that the mercy of God was tied up to healing. Like the man who came to Jesus and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son."

In the Old Testament, the revelation of God was crystallized in the ark. And God gave the ark a special name. It was called the Mercy Seat. Why didn't God call it a judgment seat? Because if He called it a judgment seat none of us will be able to get there. We understand the judgment of God. One of the principles of the Christian life is to understand the judgment of believers. The seat of God for judgment is the same seat for mercy. And it depends on our knowledge on the mercy of God that we could approach Him boldly. If you know that God is a powerful judge, you may not get that close to Him. I assure you that you would probably be afraid of Him. Judgment brings fear but mercy brings faith. When you are aware the He loves you and He will accept you not based on what you have done, it brings boldness to come before Him. It gives you a boldness to come right to the throne of God and just sit on His lap. Paul said it; you remember when Paul says we are seated with Christ Jesus. We are seated together with Him in the heavenly places, because of the mercy of God.

Lets look at Matt. 7:1-2 Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you will give will be the measure you get.

Here is Lk. 6:38 working in a judgment area. The bible says the way you judge the same measure of judgment will fall on you. How would you like some one to be critical of you, judging you all the time? None of us like that kind of situation. Yet, what we do to others is going to be measured back to us. I believe in giving out mercy. If giving out judgment brings judgment, I rather give out mercy and have mercy. So, when we release mercy we began to receive mercy.

King David understood mercy. There were times in his life where he could have pronounced judgment on some of his subjects. He could have killed Saul twice. But he said because he recognized the anointing on his life he didn't kill him. What did he practice? Mercy. After all king Saul was coming after his life. He had a right, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. He had a right in the Old Testament to come against the king. His life was at stake. Saul was the source of his troubles. But he did not; he showed mercy. And later on in his life when he needed mercy, he found mercy. Look at the mistakes he made. His adultery with Bathsheba. You notice he obtained mercy. The mercy of God showered upon him.

What we do to others or our attitudes towards others in an invisible way affects our relationship with God. If you remember the Lord's Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven. Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Forgiveness is based on mercy. If you don't have mercy, you can not forgive. Forgiveness can only come when you release judgment. In other words, we all have a right to judge in many areas. But we are only to judge things. Paul says that the spiritual man judges all things.

Jesus in Matt. 7:1 spoke about judging a person. When you judge a person, you are judging more than things. I can judge the fruit and I can judge the various works and we all practice judgment to a certain extend. When you choose to buy a certain brand of watch instead of another brand, you are exercising judgment. In your estimation, you feel and you think that particular brand is better than the other. When you chose to go to a certain barber instead of the other, it could be No. 1 convenience, but if the barbers are in the same location, you choose the one because in your judgment he would do a better job.

When you buy a house, you make a judgment. When you say that this particular house is a better house than the other, you have pronounced a judgment. When you are an employer and the employees are under your command, you make a judgment when you promote one above the other. Without an evaluation, you can't determine people's progress. When we choose which speaker to invite to our church and which not to invite, who are welcome and who are not welcome, we have made certain judgment. We have determined which of these are of benefit to the Body, and which we don't feel to be of benefit to the body of Christ at the moment. We have made judgments. We do that all the time in our life.

When you are led of God to link up with your life partner, you have made a judgment and you have felt that this is the one God has for you. Usually you think that he or she would be the most suitable as a life partner in your life. You have made a decision a

judgment. We make judgments all the time but the difference in pronouncing judgment over things over situations, over the fruits of peoples' life and over people is different.

Jesus was able to divide that but some Christians are no able to divide. Jesus could divide between sin and sinner. He hates sin but He loves the sinner. Jesus was able to divide between the two. Jesus did not judge the sinner but Jesus judge sin. When a woman was caught in adultery and all the Pharisees brought her to Him saying what shall we do to her because the law says stone her. Jesus said let him who have no sin cast the first stone. Do you know what He was saying? Judge yourself. And according to the bible, He started writing on the ground. Some modern scholars thought that He was just scribbling on the sand, things that have no meaning. I believe that He wrote the sins of all those people around by the word of knowledge.

I just checked that up in a tiny little booklet written by Sadhu Sundar Singh where he had a vision and he was talking to Jesus. Jesus said that at one time when He was confronting these people who had the woman and they wanted to stone her, He knelt down and wrote on the sand the sins of the people. If you read the bible very carefully, He wrote the sin of the first person and the first one went. Then He wrote the sin of the second one and the second one went away. Then it says they left one by one. They themselves had to be judged.

The only one who had the right and authority to cast the stone who had no sin was Jesus. Jesus had the right to throw the stone. But it's interesting to know that when you have reached that stage of perfection you are also perfect in mercy. Mercy was full in His life. And He chose not to judge. He hated sin. When all her accusers had gone away He turned to the woman and asked, "Woman where are your accusers?" She was stunned because she had never seen such a thing before. She said, "Lord they are all gone." Jesus said, "Go and sin no more."

It's obvious that He hated sin. The wonderful thing about our Lord Jesus is that He could divide the sin and the sinner. And He could look into our life and divide the disobedience in our life to the person that we really are. And in doing that, He could still love us. But what happens among some Christians is that they relate a person's action to that person themselves. Of course, that person produces the action. But we conclude from the action of the person that, that is the nature of that person. So, we find it hard to love that person. We see the sin and the sinner to be one. We don't divide them.

I am sure you know some people who have caused hurts in your life. They have done many things to you, said many wrong words, and did many abusive things. And in your life, every thing you know about them was a bad thing. Every incidence that you know about them was a bad incidence. And every time you see the picture of that person, you see the devil. And in your mind, you conclude that guy is the devil himself. So, you began to relate the actions of that person as the nature of that person. And you see the two to be one. You say this is what that person is, that person is good for nothing. When you do that, it begins to cripple your love. You can't release mercy. Mercy comes from love. When you want to love that person you find it difficult because you say the person's action and the person's nature and the person's personality are all wrapped up together.

But God still could see the difference. The bible tells us God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that who ever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. If we have lived in the time of Paul and we saw how he persecuted the Christians and imprisoned them, we may have judged him harshly. He did it for the Jewish religion. But God sees. Paul says, "I did it in ignorance and I obtained mercy." God saw his potential. God isolated Paul from his action. God saw that his actions were not his true self. God saw the apostle that was there in embryo. God saw the great missionary. God saw the many souls that are going to come to his life. God saw what he really could be. And God isolated his actions from his person. And Paul obtained mercy.

The bible says judge no one. Jesus said judge not. That is not contradictory to I Cor. 2 where it says the spiritual man judges all things. We have to judge things in order to make a decision. We have to judge and evaluate a person's action and isolate it from judging a person. See the judgment that Jesus is talking about is not judging things or actions. It is condemnation. Condemnation goes beyond judging things. I Cor 2 tell us to judge things. The spiritual man judges all things. If you don't judge things, you can't live your life. For example, if you don't judge things you will be swayed by every doctrine that comes. You will submit to every heresy that comes. To guard against heresy we judge. We have to judge whether a particular author is a good author or not a good author. By doing that, you are pronouncing a judgment. But you are not pronouncing a judgment of a person. You are pronouncing a judgment on the works. You are not pronouncing a judgment on the author. You are pronouncing a judgment on the book. You should be able to differentiate that. We need judgment of things in order to function properly. Otherwise, we are unprotected. Heresy can come by every whim of doctrine. But that judgment of things is a positive judgment. It is a judgment in order to progress. So, you judge sufficiently to make a decision and a course of action so that you could move towards the future.

Some people go beyond that. They move beyond the normal judgment necessary to function in this life. In Phil. 1 where Paul was praying for the Philippians, he says that I pray that your love may grow in judgment. Discernment implies judgment of things. You are allowed to grow in discernment. In other words, don't let people take advantage of your love. Your love grows in discernment. Yet, judgment has a limit. Sometimes people go beyond that. And they begin to judge that person. When you begin to judge that person what you are doing is actually no more judgment in the positive sense. It is actually condemnation. Condemnation is when it gets personal. And sometimes it gets emotional and irrational.

I have known some time people who judge others and condemn them until some of the things they say are very irrational. See I could know 'A' and I could know 'B'. 'A' thinks 'B' is a devil and goes around condemning until it's just beyond reason. The things that are said are no more reasonable. When it's beyond the realm of reason its no more judging things. It's outward judging a person. And the measure you use will be the measure given back to you.

The Holy Spirit does not condemn. Neither does the human spirit condemn. Conviction is different from condemnation. The word condemn is an English word that means taking a chop and chopping a product when it comes along. Condemnation involves writing off a person's future whereas judging things does not write off a person's future yet. See I can judge a person's action and evaluate a person for the

purpose of taking a course or plan an action to help that person. For example if you want to help somebody and you know he has a problem, you already pronounced a judgment. The fact that you believe he has a problem means you have judged him. But it's judging his action and not judging him yet.

So for example this brother may have some problem, I check it with God, and I check it with the Word. My conclusion means that I have judged. I have not reached a point where I write his future off. When you judge just his actions and you bring correction into his life, you have not written off his future. You know that there is still hope. You know that there is a plan in his life. You can see goodness in his life. You want to bring him into the right direction. But when you reached a point where you write a person off, you have moved from judging things to condemnation. And that is when mercy is no more there. Mercy is given because there is still a future.

The reason why Jesus Christ forgives us is because God could still see a future in us. If we have no future, we would have been condemned like the devil. The devil is condemned but we are judged. There is a difference. We are judged for our actions and we need repentance. But the devil is condemned. So there is a time limit given. Then there is a time that comes for eternal judgment and after eternal judgment there is condemnation. You have no second chance that is for those who have not come to receive the mercy of Jesus.

So, the mercy of God is an important ingredient in a Christian life. Jesus said in Matt. 5 blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. If we understand this verse, we realize that mercy is given back to us. And Jesus said it shall be measured back to you good measure pressed down. You see the popular Christians in the world. And you see how one ministry judges another and starts condemning. Before long, you see the very same ministry under condemnation. What you measure out will be measured back to you.

Jesus said, "Why do you look at the speck in your brother eye but do not consider the plank in your own eye. How can you say to your brother let me remove the speck from your eye when there is a plank in your own eye. Hypocrite, first remove the plank from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye." The principle that Jesus brings forth is very important here. He is not saying that we should not correct and help each other. He is not saying that we should not help each other when we see wrong in another person. If you love a brother or a sister with the love of the Lord, and you know they are doing certain things wrong you would tell them. Of course, your telling them is guided by this principle here.

Jesus said that if you see a speck in your brother's eye, don't just go straight away and tell the brother you got a speck in your eye when you have a plank in your eye. Jesus did not say don't do anything. Look at what He said. He is saying judge yourself. The only person who is worthy to help another person is one who knows how to first pass self-judgment. The fact that Jesus tells to take the plank out of your own eye means that you have first pronounced self-judgment. We have to judge ourselves before we are in the position to help another person. You judge yourself and say I got a plank in my eye let me pull it out first. And then you can go to that brother and take out the speck.

Self-judgment must come first. And in the same area, you judge another you judge yourself first. What happens is many people are giving out judgment without judging themselves and it hurts the body of Christ. Do you know that it is very hard to pull out specks from people's eyes when there are planks in your own eye? No wonder they go around hurting people.

And there is something marvelous about self-judgment. When you judge yourself, people will bring themselves to you to allow you to judge them. But those who have not judged themselves nobody wants them to judge them. So, we have to examine our position, our standing and ourselves before we judge. And because of that very reason, I withhold from areas where I have no standing in. When I was starting off in the ministry and have not pastored a church before, I saw many problems in churches but I kept my mouth shut. How could I tell people how to run a church when I myself have not pastored any? I kept my mouth shut. I saw many problems but I kept my mouth shut. Then later when I had my own church to run I saw all the problems in a different perspective. Then I was in a better position to help other churches.

It's like this my father love badminton and he used to watch badminton. Every time a player makes mistakes, he passes comment. You know the only problem he himself doesn't play badminton. He is telling the badminton players how to play when he himself don't know how to play. The judgments he made would be blunt and inaccurate. That is the reason why a sports commentator is usually someone who knows the sport or plays the sport very well. They can give the right comment on what is going on. Many times, it is a non-badminton player who judges badminton players.

The best way of correction is by doing it yourself. You feel that everybody should pray. You go to them and say you must pray but you yourself never show yourself as a person of prayer. Christianity is more caught than taught. We catch it more by inspiration and by example. Many times people will say, "Don't look to the leaders; don't look to man, look to Jesus." The purpose of leadership is that the leaders be living examples of Jesus Christ. It is a universal fact that people will look up to people. If you are in leadership, you should realize that people would look to you. And the way to lead is by showing forth you can do it not by telling them how to do it. So, we have to withhold judgment over things we have not done before. That is part of mercy.

If you understand mercy, you must realize that there are levels of judgment. And there are levels of mercy. As long as you have not come into the area yet you have no right to judge any thing you have no experience in. Whenever you think you see a problem you have to not only judge the problem Jesus said you must judge yourself. Then you check yourself, am I in the position, am I in the place to help them. If you find the answer is no withhold judgment.

This is why sometimes it is very difficult for someone who is not married to judge people who are married. In the same way when we have not experienced things that people have gone through we should withhold judgment until you got the experience. We judge the action of a 4 year old differently from the action of a 12 year old. To the 4 year old, we give a greater liberty. To the 12 year old, we give less because they are supposed to understand more. Before judgment of others comes, (that is judging things and not condemning things) self-judgment must come. So Jesus Christ says

here that you must judge yourself, take out the plank from your own eye. Then you will see clearly, where you could help another person by pulling the speck out of their eyes.

We must learn the secret of withholding judgment. To withhold judgment is to tell yourself to come to a decision not to pass any condemnation because it's beyond you. You don't learn Algebra before you learn Mathematics. So, in the same way if I don't have knowledge of Algebra I can't judge Algebra. So, I withhold judgment.

The secret of practicing mercy is to withhold judgment. Mercy is most relevant when there is imperfection. If every one is perfect, mercy is redundant because no mistakes are made. But we live in a society that is imperfect and we live among believers who are still imperfect. And being imperfect, we have to learn the art of withholding judgment and putting forth mercy.

The ability to give mercy is yours when you are in a position to judge. Jesus said judge not that you may not be judged. He talks about how you have to judge yourself and determine yourself whether you are in a position. Mercy is not yours to give yet if you have no right to judge. The right to give mercy is only when you have the right to judge. It is yours to give when you are in a position to judge. When you are in a position and you withhold judgment then you have practice mercy.

Very few people do it you know why. Those who don't have the position to judge love to judge. They like to play judge. Then those who are in the position to judge do not understand mercy. They will set themselves as the judge. They enjoy judging because judging others give them a sense of superiority. And some people who are insecure who are in no position to judge run others down because of their own insecurity. These all has to be dealt with.

When you are in the position to judge and you withhold judgment, you have practiced mercy. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. When you practice mercy, you are being like God. The most wonderful thing about authority is that you have a choice not to oppress but to give out mercy. The more God blesses you and increases your position the more chance you have to practice mercy. The more abundant mercy you sow the more abundantly you reap of the mercy of God. If you understand mercy, it will bring you into the depths of God.

Let me just give you a glimpse; you remember when Moses talked with God. God said I am going to destroy all the Israelites. Numbers 14:12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they. But Moses understood mercy. God has a right to judge and Moses has a right to judge too. God even said Moses I will make you a mighty nation. And Moses said in verse 18 The Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression. "You got the right to destroy us. We don't deserve to live but we appeal to your mercy." That's a powerful approach. Moses was saying, "See God we don't deserve it but have mercy because Your nature is merciful." You have such power with God when you understand mercy.

David understood that when God judged him. God gave him 3 choices. And he said Lord let me fall into the hands of God because He is merciful. If you understand mercy, you dare to pray fantastic prayers. Moses prayed, "God forgive these

rebellious, hardened and faithless people. Forgive them.” See mercy is not based on a person’s action. But it’s based on God’s nature and what God can do in that situation.

2. THE MERCY OF GOD - PART TWO

Matt. 6:9 Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Notice that included in the Lord's Prayer is a prayer for forgiveness. And the prayer for forgiveness is directly related to our releasing forgiveness to others. When we consider mercy, we can not avoid considering forgiveness. Mercy is opposed to judgment. What actually is mercy and when is mercy required? Mercy is required when you have to confront something that is wrong. That's when mercy is required. Otherwise, when there is no necessity for judgment there is no necessity for mercy. Because there is, a judgment then there is a mercy. And judgment comes because things have been done that are wrong. And so, mercy is required.

Mercy is tied up very intricately with forgiveness. We will consider forgiveness this morning and see how it is tied up to mercy. There are many aspects to forgiveness.

Forgiving Means Forgetting

One of the most important aspects about forgiveness involves forgetting. When we want to release forgiveness, we must also release forgetting. It is the ability to forget those things that are past. Our brain, our soul, our mind has an ability to erase off from our conscious mind the things that hurt us, the things that are unpleasant, the things that are frightening and fearful. Our conscious mind has an ability to do that. It pushes all those things that are unpleasant into the background. Just like in your house, you take care of the outward impression. People seldom go to see what your storeroom looks like. You don't decorate your storeroom but you decorate the living room.

The conscious mind has the ability to push all the unpleasant things into the background. For illustration, there is a line here below this line is where the subconscious mind is above it is where the conscious mind is. All the hurts that you received the conscious mind push it down. The reason the conscious mind does it is because if it does not do that, you can not live, you can not have sanity. You will go insane if you remember all those things that hurt your life.

The only problem is pushing the unpleasant things down is not a permanent solution. It is just like sweeping dirt under the carpet. After a few years of sweeping dust under the carpet, do you notice that the carpet is not the same? There are lumps that begin to appear on the carpet. So, in the same way as you push them in, the tension inside increases. In the end, it's just like a kettle boiling. Before long, it boils to a point that you can not stand it. It breaks through the conscious mind and a person goes mad. The build up tension is too much.

God has created our mind and our soul with a certain ability to take stress. However there is a limit. There is a limit to how much stress a person can take. The limit depends on your condition. It is just like if a person were sick, he would be very weak. He will not be able to do 8 hours' work like he normally does. So the amount of stress a person can take in life is dependent on a person's condition. What determine a

person's condition? Sometimes it is his upbringing. And many times the amount of love you receive. The more love you have received in your life the more stable you are. The less love you have received the less stable you are.

However, these are in the soul realm. It is not a permanent solution to sweep things under the carpet and to push all the things down. The conscious mind was designed to do it so that you could continue with life. The bible offers a greater solution: the Blood of Jesus Christ. What the bible offers here is that when the stress goes in, the bible says that the Blood of Jesus can cleanse your inward part. What it does is it comes in and it wipes it off. The Blood of Jesus comes into your inner most being and whisper, "Peace, be still." Therefore, you understand how a person with peace is a very stable person.

When we talk about forgiveness, we are talking about not just pushing something into the depths of your subconsciousness. But forgetting has to do with wiping it out. It's not even in your record. This is not humanly normal. It takes supernatural understanding to release our forgetting. We need to learn to remember something. And we need to learn to forget something. There is something that we need to meditate and remember all the time, the promises of God, the prophecies that God has spoken into your life, and the visions that God has given to you. We have to remember and meditate on them day and night.

There are on the other hand certain things that we have to learn to forget. And if you don't have the ability to forget you will not be a very stable person. Your life is tortured by unforgiveness. To forgive means to forget. In Phil. 3:13 Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. Paul speaks about the ability to forget. I forget those things that are behind. And I press on to the things that are ahead. Notice the ability to press forward is affected by the ability to forget.

Think about it this way. How fast can you run? If you were wearing normal running clothes, you would have no problem running 5 miles an hour. But if you wear an astronaut's space suit and run, even a snail would have overtaken you. What has affected you? Something is holding you back. Your ability to go forward is affected by your ability to forget. See how important it is to learn to forget.

The bible does say about things that we have to remember. There are some things we have to remember and there are some things we have to forget. God Himself said, "I will remember your sin no more." It is quoted from Jer. 31 says I will remember your sin no more. And Heb. 8 and Heb. 10 the author of Hebrews quoted the same thing talking about the cleansing by the Blood of Jesus, a new covenant and a new heart. God writes His laws into our hearts and into our minds. Then the Lord says in Heb. 8 and Heb. 10 I will remember their sins no more.

When God forgives you, He forgets. God has a supernatural ability to forget. And when you have sinned and you came to God and say God forgive me, cleanse me, God cleanses you. The moment He forgives you, He forgets. The next day you fall into that same sin. God has a supernatural ability to forget. And when you have sinned and you come to God and say God forgive me, cleanse me, God cleanses you. The moment He forgives you, He forgets. The next day you fall into that same sin. You come back to God and say God forgive me. This is the second time I have done it.

God say no as far as I am concerned this is the first time. Why because He forgot. If He acknowledges, this is the second time it means He didn't forget. You could come to God a thousand times and nine hundred and ninety times you have asked for forgiveness from God. Then the one thousand times you fell again. You feel rotten and the devil condemns you. You come dragging your feet to the throne of grace. So you come to God and say God forgive me this is the one thousand times I failed you. I am no good I just can't make it in the Christian life. God said this is the first time. He says I will remember your sins no more. If your sins are under the Blood He forgets them.

What is the key to God forgetting our sins? The Blood. It is not just an inherent ability in Him. Before Jesus went to the cross, every sin that God forgives and forgot was based on the Blood of Jesus. We all realized that there is a certain sickness called amnesia. We are not talking about amnesia. Sometimes I hear people preaching about how God forgets our sins. They say that God has amnesia. God does not have amnesia. What God has is because of the love. When God forgets is not because there were cells in His spiritual being that was at work. It is because the Blood could cause Him to forget. It's some thing with out Him and not within Him. Amnesia is something within a person causing him to be forgetful.

But the power of forgetting is not from within - it is from without. It is based on what the Lamb of God has done. Look at the book of Gen. 3 way back before Jesus Christ came to this planet earth when the first sin was committed. Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit. So, Gen. 3 tells us in the very same passage after God judged them. What God pronounced was more or less the cycle that is released. But God give them a chance to come back. Gen. 3:21 And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them. The Hebrew word when He clothed them tells us that it was an animal that God slew. And God kept the skin of the animal with the blood dripping on it. And God put it on Adam and Eve. It was dripping with blood and God clothed them. What is that pointing to? The Blood of Jesus Christ.

The ability for God to forget is based on the Blood. Every time He sees the blood of the animals, He looks forward to the Blood of Jesus. God forgives those who lived before Jesus based on what Jesus is going to do by His death and resurrection. In the Old Testament when they slew those animals, every act of them points to the Blood of Jesus Christ.

King David in Ps. 103 tells us bless the Lord and forget not His benefits, who healed all thy diseases and forgave all thy iniquities. See God forgave David many times based on the Blood. And for those of us who lived after Jesus look back at the Blood. It's the Blood that causes God to forgive and forget. Every time He sees the Blood He just wipes off the darkness of sin. So, God has an ability to forget. We all must learn the secret of forgiveness from God. Forgiveness is looking at the Blood and not looking at ourselves. In Christ, everybody's sin is covered. And based on what Jesus Christ has done you can forget.

God is not demanding you to forgive and forget based on your own strength. But God demands that you forgive and forget based on the Blood of Jesus Christ. So, when somebody does something against you, you can forgive him or her because the Blood covers the act that they have done. When you see the Blood, you can say that Jesus

has died for his sin. That's the power of the Blood. So, forgiveness involves forgetting.

Forgiveness Comes From the One Who Did Not Sin

The second thing that we are going to cover is forgiveness itself. Forgiveness comes from the one who did not sin, not from the one who sinned. This is contradictory to the world's teaching on forgiveness. Do you know what the world's teaching on forgiveness is? If I did something wrong to you, I have to come to you and say please forgive me for what I did. In the bible, we don't call that forgiveness; we call that repentance. You become sorry for your sin and you want to change your life. Every time when the bible talks about forgiveness, it does not talk about the one who sinned coming to the one who did not sin. It talks about the one who did not sin going to the one who sinned and saying, "I have mercy on you, I forgive you."

What a concept. See the world is upside down. The one who has the power to forgive is the one being sinned against, not the one who sinned. Look at the Lord's Prayer. It says forgive our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us. You did not do any sin. They sinned against you. But if you sinned against them, they learn to have mercy on you. See how wonderful this teaching on mercy.

Matt. 6:12 Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Now you are the creditor they are the debtors. The forgiveness is from those who have been sinned against not the one who sinned. That's God's concept of forgiveness. That's mercy being shown.

Matt. 5:23 So if you are offering your gifts at the altar, (now you are coming to worship God, you are bringing your gifts to the altar,) and there remember your brother has something against you. It did not say you have something against him. You are the innocent lamb. You came to worship God with the gifts to the altar. And there as you are worshipping God you remembered somebody did something to you. Not what you did to somebody. What you did to somebody you repent. But what somebody did to you, you learn to say, "I give mercy, and I forgive."

See mercy sometimes involved reaching out to say I give you mercy. It does not mean I just stand there and say I give mercy. When God showed mercy to Adam and Eve after they sinned, He slew the animal and put it on them even though they sinned. Here this brother comes to the altar with the gift and it says leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. Verse 24 says first be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift. You forgive; you go to the person and say I have mercy on you. Mercy is coming to show love to the person. You take the opportunity to show mercy by giving love to the person. That is the bible concept of forgiveness.

Now let me give your Matt. 18:21 The Peter came up and said to him, "Lord how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him. Notice it's not him who sin against his brother. And he asks, "Is 7 times enough?" Jesus said, "70 times 7." Not that He wanted to count to 490 times. And then at the 491 times, you really get a hammer ready. Jesus uses an expression in Hebrew that means there is no end to it. The stronger you are the more you have to learn to be gentle. Spiritually the stronger you are the more mercy you must learn to release. When people have sinned against you, you are the one required to release the forgiveness.

The world teaches you they must ask for forgiveness. Look at the bible: the One who did not sin releases forgiveness. Jesus on the cross turned to the Father and said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Who releases forgiveness? Jesus. He releases mercy. It gives you a chance to be like God.

When we talk about being like God, people imagine having signs and wonders, the power of God and the greatness of God. Do you ever consider that being like God is being like Him in love also? When you want to be like God you have to be like Him in love as well as in power. Not just going out to raise the dead, cast out demons, heal the sick, you demonstrate the power of God. But in forgiveness, you demonstrate the love of God and the mercy of God. When you learn to forgive and forget you are learning to be like God as much as raising the dead or healing the sick. You are acting like God. Who love it better than our Father? He loves it when you behave like Him. You thrilled His heart. The Holy Spirit rejoices, when you are like God in mercy as well as in power.

That is the second area we have touched on forgiveness. No. 1 forgetting and No. 2 that forgiveness is released by the one sinned against. So, if anybody has sinned against you, you have to learn to release forgiveness. Not wait for them, they need to repent, you need to forgive.

Forgiving Releases the Power to Change

That brings us to point No. 3. What is the purpose of forgiveness? What is the purpose of this life that you live in? What is the will of God on this earth? This is it that all man will grow from glory to glory, grace to grace, to be more and more like the Father. All of mankind has been conformed to the image of God. So, our goal in life is to be like God and to help others to be like God. You don't want your life to teach others to be crooks, do you? Teach them to be rude, teach them to be murderers, teach them to be thieves. Deep in the depths of your being you want to cause others to be better.

Now if we do not forgive others we are not seeking to change them, we are seeking to destroy them. The opposite of forgiving and mercy is judgment. Judgment does not change; it destroys. The purpose of judgment is to destroy. So, if somebody sinned against you, the fact that they are sinning shows forth that they are weaker than you. And the fact that they are sinning shows forth that they need more help than you. If you really have God's nature in you, you will want to see them changed not just see them destroyed.

For example if this brother sin against me, and if I don't release forgiveness, my unforgiveness blocks this person from receiving the blessing through me. So, I am in a struggle. Deep within my being, I want everybody to change for the better. Because I don't forgive the other part of me wants to see this person destroyed. And if you choose not to forgive, all your prayers for this person will never work. It is tied to the power of loosing and binding.

In Matt. 18:15 If your brother sin against you, (not you sin against your brother, it's the other guy sinning against you. There is where forgiveness is required from you. Not the one who sin need to release forgiveness. But the one who did not sin but who

is sinned against needs to release forgiveness.) you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained a brother.

You know what is the purpose - to show mercy and to gain a brother. Not to go there and judge the brother. This is what sometimes people do. They just want to justify themselves. We don't need to be justified. We have already been justified in Jesus Christ. If you are right, you are right. If you are wrong, you are wrong. Here it says if he does not listen to you, take it to two or three more witnesses, if he refuses tell the whole church.

Matt. 18:18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Suddenly He ties it to the power of binding and loosing. We always use it in casting out demons. But Jesus uses it in reference to forgiveness. And the subject is not over.

In verse 21 Peter understood what He is talking about and asked, "How many times must I forgive?" The whole chapter is on forgiveness. Forgiveness binds or looses a person. When you don't forgive some people, you are binding them. And when you bind them, judgment is due on them. And when judgment is due on them, you don't want them to change. You want them destroyed. Jesus on the cross knew if He did not forgive them, they would all be finished. I believe because He released forgiveness most of them have a chance to repent. Among the 3000 and 5000 in Acts 4 and 5 that came to know the Lord were those who were against Him at one time. Remember it is the same Jerusalem that He walked. So, they had a chance.

If you don't release forgiveness, you are not releasing the power of God to change that person. You are holding back the power of God from changing that person because of your unforgiveness. You are binding that person. And this is so true in relationships. Those whom you have trouble with unforgiveness are those closest to you, those whom you know by name, your own family, your own brothers and sisters, your parents or close friends. This has to do with people you know. But it is the people whom you know that you hope will change.

You talk to any one who has unforgiveness and he will tell you he really wants to see the other guy change. They say if only that person will change without realizing that their unforgiveness will bind that person from changing. So unless you change they don't change. You say I can't release to him after all that he had done to me. Forgiving means forgetting. And when you forget you treat as if it has never happened before.

I know that is hard because you want to forgive but the devil won't let you forget. When he reminds you, you should tell him to shut up. Remember when you hold back to the past you can not live in the future. Your ability to forget determines your ability to go forward. Some people have never gone forward in their life because they are holding to the past. You can't hold to the pole and get into the bus. Two things will happen: either your hand will be left in the pole or the pole will go with you in the bus. You can't hold on to the past and yet go forward. Some thing has to give way.

Forgetting is the ability. Learning to forget is you treat a person as if it never done before. When you release forgiveness to that person God is going to change that person. It opens the floodgates of heaven and releases blessings on that guy. What you

loose on earth is loosed in heaven. When you bind up its bound in heaven. So, you choose to release so that God could release the blessings on their life. This is the art of showing mercy. As long as there are imperfections, we need to learn the art of mercy and forgiveness.

3. THE MERCY OF GOD - PART THREE

We are on the subject on the mercy of God.

Heb. 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It says here let us boldly come into the throne of God that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So, we see how mercy and grace are related. Grace is an impartation of God into our spirit man that we may be able to stand firm in any circumstances. And when we have grace imparted into our lives, we become people who are able to change our circumstances. Paul prayed to God 3 times asking God to deal with the demonic power, which was the thorn in the flesh, the messenger from Satan. Paul prayed for God to change his circumstances. But instead of changing his circumstances, God changed Paul. God says my grace is sufficient for you. So, when God changed Paul through grace, Paul was able to change his circumstances.

As we pray to God to change our circumstances, so actually we are praying for grace. And unless you change, your circumstances will not change. Your circumstances will change in proportion to the change that takes place inside your spirit man.

Here in order to find grace we must obtain mercy. We must know the approach of God. We must understand what mercy is. And our text is taken from Ps. 119:124 Deal with thy servant according to thy steadfast love, and teach me thy statutes. David was speaking to God and said to God, "I like you to deal with me according to your mercy."

There are 2 ways that God can deal with us. God can deal with us according to our works. Or God can deal with us according to His mercy. I will assure that if God deals according to your works, you will only receive that much. But if God deals with you according to His mercy, you can receive above what you sow. This is what David understood by this principle. He says, "Lord deal with me according to your mercy," - implying to God not to deal with him according to his works. This principle is only available to those who have fulfilled their works. In other words, you have done your best to know how. You have learned the law of sowing and reaping. And you want to go above those laws. There is a way by which you could go beyond those laws. That is by the mercy of God.

The mercy of God will enable you to receive from God what you have not even sowed and what you have not deserved. The mercy of God surpasses the law of sowing and reaping. When God deals with you according to His mercy you are going to receive some thing you never sowed. You are going to receive some things unexpectedly that you don't deserved at all. So, mercy is a powerful tool in our spiritual walk with God.

David as a man of God understood mercy. And there was a time in David's life when he made a mistake. The mistake he made was he numbered the Israelites. When he had numbered the Israelites the prophet came to him and said choose between 3 judgments.

II Sam. 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or there shall be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me.

So, God gave David a choice of 3 judgments. Three years of famine, 3 months of running from his enemies, and 3 days of plague. You know what David did?

In verse 14 Then David said to Gad, I am in great distress; let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.

David was actually saying Lord deal with me according to your mercy not according to my works. So David was saying let us fall into the mercy of God and he began to plead for mercy. He came to the throne of grace and he says let us fall into your hand. Here is a wonderful example of what it means to obtain mercy. Mercy is coming to God based on His nature. Mercy is an appeal to the nature of God. Judgment is not a normal attribute of God. When God speaks about judgment God speaks about it as a strange work. In other words, it is some thing necessary for Him to do as the law keeper of the universe. But His true nature is a nature of love, loving kindness and compassion and mercy. Those who understand Him will dare to appeal to that.

And here David appealed to God's nature. He can not appeal on his own works any more. Some times our attitudes in Christian life are tit for tat. I do this you give me this. I do this you give me that. And we forget the principle that God is a person. He is not just a slot machine where you slot in a coin you get some thing out of it. God is a person whom we relate to. He has created this universe with laws.

One of the major laws is the law of sowing and reaping. Beyond this law is a higher law the law of mercy. David understood that if he came to God based on his own works he would be finished. He deserved to die. He deserved the worst. He deserved to be punished. David was guilty and he pleaded guilty. He says Lord I am guilty but Lord I appeal to your mercy. I appeal to your nature. Deal with me according to your mercy.

The judgment of God started falling. People died by the thousands when the plague started. And as the plague started and people died by the thousands, the angel who was judging was about to take his sword and point to Jerusalem. The bible says God has compassion on Jerusalem and He says to the angel stop. It is all because there was a man who pleaded for God's mercy.

Notice in II Sam. 24 it was not even 3 days. God said three days of pestilence but the pestilence did not even last three days. On that very same day itself, the judgment was stayed. There was a man who understands the nature of God. He says Lord deal with me according to your mercy.

In verse 15-16 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan to Beer-Sheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched forth his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented of the evil, and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, It is enough; now stay your hand.

The mercy of God held back the plague. It was His mercy. How powerful is the mercy of God. Deal with me O Lord according to your mercy. When God deals according to His mercy, we can receive things that we normally can not receive. It's a powerful understanding on this principle. Whether it be in your ministry, be in your business, you claim the promises of God. You understand the mercy of God and say God I thank you for all you blessings. I thank you that you grant me all that I sowed that I harvest. You grant that the windows of heaven open. But God don't deal with me according to my works. Deal with me according to your mercy. Because I know you, Lord and I love you and I know your nature.

God loves those who know Him. God loves those who appeal to His nature. And He will bless you beyond what you are able to. He will grant you grace that you could never earn with a thousand years of work. When His grace is granted onto you, you will be promoted, you will be blessed more abundantly than if you could have worked 24 hours a day without sleep for a thousand years all because of His mercy.

Moses was another man who understood the mercy of God. See those men who live close with God understand His nature. They understand the nature of God is not to punish. All of us who are parents know that when you bring up your child at times you have to punish them. You have to cane them when they do the wrong thing. But yet, when you cane them you want them to know that, that is not your nature. You don't enjoy caning them. You want your child to know you love them. You discipline because you want them to grow up to be good.

God is the same although judgment comes because He is the law keeper of the universe. What He wants us to understand that in the very beginning He is love. And the seat that He causes the Israelites to build for Him called the ark where His presence can dwell was known as the mercy seat. When you approach the Holy of holies, your approach is based on His mercy. Not just on your works. And those who learn to approach Him based on His mercy could draw more than those who approach Him basing upon what they can reap.

A million years' work will not earn you the one act of mercy can give you. You have been doing all you can, working all you can and claiming the promises of God. Keep on doing it but learn the mercy of God. One thing the mercy of God does is that it humbles you. We realize Lord we don't deserve any thing. Lord let your mercy be today. God loves people who humble themselves before Him. He loves to grant them grace, mercy, and blessing.

Here is Moses in the book of Numbers talking to God. When the Israelites refused to enter into the Promised Land, Numbers 14:11-14 And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise Me. And how long will they not believe in Me, in spite of all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." But Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for thou didst bring up this people in thy might from among them, and they tell the inhabitants of this land that you killed these people.

And in verse 17 and 18 And now I pray thee, let the power of the Lord be great as thou hast promised, saying, the Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression.

If God dealt with the Israelites according to their works and according to the law not a single one of them would have lived even those 40 years in the wilderness. They would have died on the spot.

They wouldn't even have those 40 years to complain. But God has some one who stood in the gap. The man named Moses who understood the mercy of God. He stood between God and the people and he said, "Lord I appeal to your mercy. You have the right to destroy them. They deserved it; they reap what they sow."

But Moses did not come based on the works. "But God deal with them according to your mercy." God dealt with them according to His mercy and allowed them to continue living. Great is the mercy of God. They continued receiving food in the wilderness because God dealt with them according to His mercy.

When you understand the mercy of God, you become a great prayer warrior. You become some one who learns to stand in the gap of people. Some times when you stand in the gap of people you know that they are reaping what they sow. You know they deserved it. If it is just an ordinary prayer and does not based on the mercy you say God give it to them according to their works. But because you understand the nature of God, you say God show mercy. We plead for mercy. Mercy is given when you deserved the punishment. If you understand the mercy of God, it will bring you to great heights.

King David understood this and he put it in the Psalms. There are many Psalms that talked about the mercy of God. One of those is that I will sing of the mercy of the Lord forever. Or songs like Thy loving kindness is better than life. What is he talking about Thy loving kindness is better than life. Now loving-kindness is the same root word as mercy. Thy mercy is better than life. What does the bible speak about?

We know what life is. How come thy loving kindness and the mercy of God is greater than life? If you live life without God, you can do your best; you know how the people are in the world. They do all they can, they reap what they sow, and they reap from their hard work. They can only reap according to a certain measure. That is life as the world shows it.

King David was saying that when I have the mercy of God is better than all that life can offer me. Thy loving kindness is better that all that I can achieve in life. When God bless you richly because of His mercy, you can go beyond the realm that you can press into with ordinary diligence. The mercy of God should not be a replacement for diligence.

You understand what is the law of sowing and reaping; the law of diligence; the law of grace and you want to press further on deeper into God. If you understand about the mercy of God, it benefits you. But for those who are lazy if they take it out of context they will say well the mercy of God; Lord have mercy on me and be lazy they missed the point.

Here we are talking about people who work hard for God; people who are obedient to God; people who are righteous in God; they want a bonus. Do you know in a working place a bonus is given to you when you have worked hard? In the same manner, we have kept the laws of God. We have been righteous for God. We consecrate our spirit,

soul and body to serve Him. Then we want to reach into the bonus of God, that bonus is reached by understanding the mercy of God.

You are saying, “God I appreciate what you have done. I appreciate your blessings. I appreciate you have always brought back what I have sowed. And I have kept all the laws as far as I know how. And God I ask you to continue to deal with me according to your mercy. Lord, I want you to bless me not according to my work. I want you to bless me according to your mercy. Deal with me according to your mercy.” That will bring great blessing to you. God loves to do that when you understand His mercy.

One of the reasons that apostle Paul’s life was dramatically transformed was because of mercy. The apostle Paul grew up in a religious home. Some how he got into the wrong religious group. When he heard about this group called the Christians, he started persecuting them in the book of Acts 9. He took many of them to prison. When they were stoning Stephen, he was the mastermind. He was encouraging people to stone them, to kill them, such a cruel man he was. He said that he obtained mercy from God. God showed him mercy when Stephen was being stoned. He said, “Lord forgive their sin. Don’t lay this charge on them.” What was Stephen doing? Stephen was saying, “Lord they deserve what they reap but Lord have mercy - don’t bring it back to them. Instead bring mercy to them.” And mercy came forth.

Paul said in the book of I Tim. 1:13 Though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief. He obtained mercy because somebody forgave him. Forgiveness is when others have done wrong things against you. You could release judgment on them. But when you release forgiveness, the mercy of God shines on them. And their lives are beginning to change. Think about it very carefully. Deep in the depths of your heart, you never want evil to fall on another person. The only way for you to change people’s life is to release forgiveness to them. When Stephen said, “Lay not this charge on them” the mercy of God started coming upon Paul.

If God had dealt with him according to his work, he would have died long ago. Paul tells us a certain reason he says I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. He thought that when he gets all these Christians killed, he was helping God out by getting rid of more heretics.

Look at what he told the Jews in Acts 22:3 I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are today. His zeal was actually for God. Now in chapter 24:16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. So, Paul deep in his heart had what you would call a right intention but because of the fuzziness in his mind, he thinks that Judaism was the only true religion. He thought all opponents of Judaism were heretics. When we get rid of the heretics then we are doing something for God. That was his thinking. That was his mental concept. So, in his heart he was zealous towards God. Which is why in I Tim. 1:13 he says I did it ignorantly. He intentionally wanted to serve God.

Galatians one tells us he said that he had a call from his mother’s womb. He knew he was supposed to do all these religious stuff. And in his zeal for God, he was doing the wrong thing. How many of us have gone through time when our intention was right

but our actions were wrong. Not because you intended your actions to be wrong. But because your understanding was imperfect, so your actions became wrong. But the worse part of it is that you didn't realize your actions were wrong. Many of us did wrong things without realizing that we were wrong just because our intentions were right.

Under the classification of judgment, we will still be judged. And pleading that you have good intentions does not assure you of righteousness. You can not come before a lawful court and say, "I intended to do good," and get away with a murder or some robbery. You can not come like Robin Hood and say I rob the rich to help the poor. That is robbing Paul to pay Peter. Two wrongs do not make one right. Because of your imperfect understanding, you do a lot of wrong things. Paul did the wrong thing without realizing that it was wrong. If you do the wrong thing, you began to reap what you sow.

How do you stop the law of reaping and sowing from operating? By appealing to the mercy of God. David understood it and says Lord deal with me according to your mercy. Because some one called Stephen understood mercy and he says, "Lord lay not this charge on them," he released his persecutors from judgment. And the mercy of God started coming and out of that incident came a mighty apostle.

We human being are very self-righteous. Any thing done wrong to you and you know that you deserved to be justified you release judgment on that guy who did wrong thing. We all had that sense of righteousness placed inherent in us. When wrong things are done to you, you say God judge them. But it is divine and part of the divine nature in you when instead of releasing judgment you release mercy.

Jesus said in Matt. 5 Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. If you release judgment, you do not obtain mercy. Do you know that when Moses release mercy and pleaded for mercy, those very people he pleaded for would have killed him if they had a chance? He didn't plead for mercy because they like him and he likes them. It was not a situation where they are buddies. That was not the case. You look at it in the book of Numbers chapter 14:10 those guys would have killed him if they had a chance. They say stone Moses, stone Joshua, stone them. And Moses said Lord mercy. Now you why Moses himself obtained mercy? Those who obtain mercy are those who give mercy. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Jesus said judge not that you may not be judged. For with whatever measure you judge it will be measured back onto you. If you want God to deal with you according to your works, then you deal with others according to their works. You be a judge and start judging everybody you will get it too my friend. But when you learn to show mercy, you have a great heart to give mercy, God releases mercy to you. And there are times when you say God I don't deserve. I need this blessing but I don't deserve. There is no way I could deserve and work towards that. And when you have given out mercy you can say, "Lord deal with me according to your mercy and let your blessings come to me." The intentions of your heart are not enough to justify you.

Paul says I did it ignorantly in unbelief and I obtained mercy. When God deals with you according to mercy, God can still bless you according to your intention. This is in spite of the wrong actions and the wrong principles you have misapplied. Did you realize that Paul's intention was met? What did he want to do? He wanted to serve

God. What did he say in Acts 22? He says I was zealous towards God. I did it because I wanted to do God a favor. So, I shut up those heretics to get rid of them; the fewer heretics there are the better. He was a well-educated man. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He could have lived a quiet good life.

Why did he get involved in these religious things? He was a man who was zealous towards God. In the end when God showed him mercy, do you know what happened? He obtained what he intended in the first place. But now he had the right intention. He had the right understanding and he had the right method. He became an apostle. He still had the same zeal. He still serves God except now his understanding of God is better. Now he got on the right track. He discovered the Christians were not heretics. The Christians were the truth and the Jews were the heretics. And he got what he intended.

Many people don't get what they intend. Many people die in life without accomplishing what they intend to do and intend to achieve. But when God shows you mercy you are able to bring out everything you conceive. Everything you conceive within you, you can achieve with the mercy of God. But if you don't have the mercy of God no matter how hard you try, you may never succeed. With the mercy of God, God helps you to bring to pass everything you conceive in your heart. When you look at it, you say it is impossible.

Many of us have received visions, have received dreams, have received ideas, have received calling, have received ministry, and have received the work of God that God has placed in your heart and mind. It's like a vision in your life. It's like a dream that capture you. You know that you could rise higher. You know that you could do better. You know that the body of Christ should rise higher. But you say if I could work for a thousand years and I can never reach that. But thanks be to God when you have the mercy of God you could in one day accomplish what a thousand years can not reach, regardless of whether it is in your business or in your ministry.

For example, when I look at the ministry I see the need of souls to be saved. I see the need of teaching all over the world. I see people being born every day and Christianity still needs to go forth. In our own nation, there are many people in the streets who have not heard this message. How to bring the gospel to them? How to bring the power of God to them? How to bring the Word all over this land until every ear hears the gospel of God. We look at the task and we say it's not possible. But thanks be to God through the mercy of God its possible.

We ask God to deal with us according to His mercy and its help us to bring all the intentions of our heart to pass. Irrespective of the imperfection of our understanding; the imperfection of our actions, God can bring mercy and grace to your life. It could be in your business where you see some thing and you say here are all these unbelievers getting all these things. They worked 40, 50 years to reach that stage. Some of them inherited it from their forefathers so they have a great start ahead of you. Here you are a believer you are keeping the principles of God. You say God I want to catch up with them. But if I work as hard as them by the time I reached that stage, I will be old like Simeon. But thanks be to God when God shows you mercy in one day you will overtake them. Thanks be to God for His principles and His words.

We should be familiar with the laws of His word that we have learnt, including the law of tithe and offerings. So, when all these things are already ingrained in you and you want to press further into the greater things of God, you began to study His mercy and understand how to come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy. The bible says come boldly.

There are 2 ways in which the bible tells us in receiving mercy. One is to come in prayer. You kneel down and humble yourself to God. When you kneel and humble yourself before God, you acknowledge He is the God of the universe. He is the creator there is nothing that you can receive in life without His decree. And you acknowledge that if God decree that you be a multi-millionaire, you can become that because He decrees by His mercy. If God decreed that you have a ministry to reach a million souls, He can do it because He decrees. But you can never do it by your own strength. You can work for a million years and you will never achieve it. But if you learn to continually depend on the mercy of God, the mercy of God will bring you into areas where no work can do.

Because of the mercy of God Joseph was quickly promoted wherever he was. It was the mercy of God on his life. Because of the mercy of God, he became the head at Potiphar's house. Because of the mercy of God, he became the head in the prison. Because of the mercy of God, he became the right hand man of Pharaoh over and above Potiphar himself. Potiphar worked all these years to become one of those big shots in Pharaoh's army. But when Joseph came about, he was a slave. He was not even an Egyptian. In a short time, he overtook Potiphar. And he became lord over them.

Think about Daniel he came into Babylon as nothing. But he had all those principles refined in him. The religion, prayerfulness, a man who wanted to obey God's word and not drink and be merry like the others young Israelites. He kept himself for God and he was the right hand man in 3 kingdoms. Tell me where could such a favor come to a person who started with nothing. It was because the grace and the favor of God.

We all realize that outside in the world some people are where they are because of a set of circumstances. Let me assure you that God is in control of circumstances. He was in control of circumstances to bring about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. God is in control in all situations to promote you. And God works all circumstances for good to those who love Him, to cause them to be promoted, to cause them to rise up. The mercy of God lifts them up.

Potiphar could see the Lord was with Joseph. And people will be able to see that the Lord is with you. There is something about you. When you come into their midst they all started receiving the mercy of God. You are not a judge. You are a man of mercy. When you bring mercy to others, others also start getting blessed. Remember when Joseph was serving Potiphar, Joseph was not getting blessed for he did not own anything. Potiphar was the one who was blessed. But Potiphar recognized that he was blessed because of Joseph. Why because he was a man of mercy. But if Joseph was very critical and judgmental, he will never be able to give blessing in the house. We should learn to be positive about people. When you are talking about people, do you give them a chance? Are you cruel to them to cut them off? If you don't give them mercy, you can not obtain mercy. You bring a blessing wherever you go. And that is

possible because you learn to give mercy and you learn to draw mercy from God all the time.

At the bottom of this mercy is an understanding of the nature of God. You appeal to God's nature day by day. Moses understood this in the book of Exodus he said Lord show me your glory. The Lord showed him His glory. And then the Lord declares, "The Lord is full of mercy, compassion and loving-kindness." Then he bowed his head before God and said, "Lord if I have obtained mercy go with us." He came down from that mountain with his face full of the glory of God. He has seen the mercy of God. At the crux of the matter is the understanding that even though judgment does occur because He is the ruler of the universe, He is still the mighty God of love. God so loved the world. He is a God of love.

4. THE REALM OF MERCY AND LOVE

We are going to look at the realm of mercy and love that God has been showing lately. Sometime back, I experienced an angelic visitation and I received some deposits of the presence of God into my life.

That presence has always been there. It has always been burning like a fire. Every time I just think about the presence of God, the fire rises up. But the presence continues to grow into something that has been quite interesting that I want to share with you. From time to time in our past Christian experiences, we have experienced the love of God. But now there seems to be a permanent development of that love from that presence. And every time that presence is strong, there is a peculiar kind of the love and mercy of God. The Lord has been showing me increasingly that where there is love, there is power. When the power of God is present, there will also be love present. It is not by might not by power but by His Spirit. Many things are produced from natural power and soul power. But these types of power do not produce the love of God. Where the power of God moves and works, there will always be the love of God. There will always be that sense of God's love. The presence of God always comes with the love of God. The power of God always comes with the love of God. The two are one and they should be released from our life to bless people around us.

Let us look at Eph. 3 in Paul's prayer for the church of Ephesus from verse 14. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever, Amen.

Notice here in verse 19 he talks about the love of God. Verse 17 speaks about being rooted in the love of God. Both of them are linked up to the fullness of God. We all realize what the fullness of God can do. In the fullness and presence of God, there is no sickness; all diseases will be healed. In the presence and the fullness of God, there is great power. All hurts will be healed. And here is a description of the fullness of God that ties up to the love of God. It seems that where love is, God is present. Where love is absent, God is absent. And every time when the power of God was about to flow, there is always this awesome presence of the love of God.

Let us look in our bible for some examples. Mk. 1:40 Jesus was just beginning His ministry and one day as He was preaching the Word from place to place, a leper knelt before Him and said in verse 40, If you are willing, You can make me clean. He was able to do this. He is always willing and He is always able. But look at how the power of God flows in verse 41, Then Jesus moved with compassion - Its not just compassion, it was a pulsating force inside Him. Anything that moves is a force. It is not just an attitude. Compassion is not just an attitude. Here is a living vital force that flows through Jesus. He was moved with compassion - stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." It was the compassion of God. One of the greatest keys to the power of God is to walk and move in love.

The lack of love of God is the only barrier to the healing and miracle that God can have for your life. Even the faith that moves mountain is limited by the lack of this quality. Jesus said in Mk. 11:22, Have the faith of God. Verse 24 whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you received and you will have them. Verse 25 when you pray, forgive. Do not forget verse 25 when you want to have the kind of faith that can move mountain. You can say to this mountain be up rooted and remove yonder and it will be moved. Verse 22, 23, and 24 speak about mountain-moving faith but then in verse 25, Jesus connects that kind of faith to love and forgiveness. Jesus is saying in one breath, "When you pray, believe and when you pray, forgive." Prayer is the coin where one side is faith and the other side is forgiveness. If you will only know that, all the fullness of God, all the miracles of God will be available to you. Standing between the miracles of God and us is just one little key - love. Love your neighbor, love your loved ones, love your enemies, love all who are wrong and the miracles of God will constantly flow in your life like an ocean.

The compassion of Jesus was the key behind the healing power that flows from Jesus' life. And yet love is something we all struggle with. As humans, we struggle to love. We struggle to love the unlovable. It is easy to love the lovable. We struggle to love those who do not understand us. We struggle to love those who hurt us. Love is a struggle. But if you could ever succeed in love, the power of God is yours. If we fail, there is no power. There is no power to help us. If we fail to love and fail to forgive, even the mountain moving faith is rendered ineffective. Yet, we have to struggle to love despite the fact that God has loved us so much. Why do we struggle to give forgiveness to people when God has forgiven us so greatly and so freely? Why do we struggle to love our enemies when Jesus loved us and God loved us while we were still enemies of God? Why do we struggle to love when we were born to love? We were of the nature of God and God is love. We were born with the seed of God in our life. We were born with a spirit of love in our life. Why do we still struggle? If only we know all we have to do is to surrender and let God love through us. The day we learn to love is the day the power of God will be manifested in ways that we have never seen before.

Matthew 9:35, Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. Although verses like the above occurred a few times elsewhere in the gospels, we need to know they portrayed a consistent picture of the life of Jesus. That should be our desire. Our desire should be that we would have so much of the presence and the power and the fullness of God in our midst that every single sick person, every single broken heart would become whole the moment they step into the presence of God. That should be the goal; that every sickness and every disease among the people be healed. But when He saw the multitudes, I want you to know behind the healing, behind the power, was a heart aching to love humanity. Behind all the power, behind all the presence so powerful that demons cried out was a heart that was pulsating with the love of humanity.

When Jesus saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion for them because they were scattered like sheep having no shepherd. He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Let me

tell you, He is not just telling us to go out and teach the gospel. Look carefully behind the command to go is a command to love. We Christians need to see this fact we were not just called in Matt. 16:16-18 to preach to every creature. We were not just called in Matt. 28:18-20 to preach and teach all nations and make disciples. We Christians need to see that we have a call to love this world as God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. There are far too many Christians trying to go out and fulfill the great commission without love. And they are not very successful. There are far too many people trying to do too many things without love. Behind the command when Jesus said there are not enough laborers, what Jesus was also saying is there are too few who love mankind and people.

A lot of laborers are doing things that the Father may not have asked them to do. They are doing things that are not as important as it is to help somebody else who needs our love. That is the call of God. When you read the story of the wise man and the foolish man, do you realize the foolish man is also as busy? Everyone is busy. So what do you mean by the laborer being busy about God's work? There are a lot of people trying to do God's work, so what is the problem? The problem is very few laborers are moved with love and compassion. Paul calls it the labor of love. That should be birthed inside each one of our hearts. Do you know that visitation and caring should not be something that we organize? No doubt, we need to organize when things grow bigger but caring for others should be natural for us as Christians. We are not born of this world; we are born of the Spirit of God. It should be natural for us to go and care for someone who needs care. It should be natural for us to offer a helping hand to someone in need coming to church. In some way, even though you can not help them, you can still give them some encouragement. It should be natural for us to help people who are lonely, in prison or are in difficult situations. It should be natural for Christians to go and put their hand over a hurting person's shoulder and say, "We care for you. We love you and we will carry you through." Laborers of love are few but the harvest is plentiful.

Let me tell you, there is real shortage of laborers who could be moved with the same compassion that Jesus had moved in. Some of us will say, "I have many needs to take care of. I have to take care of my food, clothing, and shelter. I have this thing and that thing to do. Can't you give a little time to care for somebody else? Do you have to devote a hundred percent of your life 24 hours a day seven days a week to increasing your possession and money? If you do so, you are just thinking of yourself. Can't we just give a little thought to care for somebody else? And the most beautiful miracle you can ever find, the greatest joy you could ever have is when you find that your life means something to somebody else. When your life means something to somebody else, it is because you have been helping somebody else.

If some of us would be going right now to heaven, how many people would feel what they felt when Dorcas died and went home in the book of Acts? Or if your life were to be extinguished now, nobody else would know but your own family members would feel the duty and the responsibility to just bury you. Have your life been lived in love and in care for somebody else? Not that you want to make people dependent on you, no, but that you have made your life meaningful to God and to men. The laborers are few but the harvest is so plentiful. It is not just a matter of having laborers but it is a matter of having laborers with the same compassion as Jesus had. Behind all His

healing, behind all His power, is the compassion, the love to care, to touch and to be with everyone who is in need.

When we read Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, we would be asking, "Who is my neighbor?" They are around you. You say, "I don't know who to help." Open your eyes and you will see. Ask God to open your eyes that you may see. There are always people to help. There is no end to helping people. Who are my neighbors? They are all these people around you that need help. They need encouragement; they need your love and your care in some way. If love has been given so freely to us, why are we stingy with our love? God has not been stingy in loving us. He loved us so freely, He loves us so ultimately, and He loved us so fully. Why do we need to be stingy with our love? We need to be generous with the love of God and to be willing to love each and everyone. We should not confine our loving to those who are easy to love. The greatest goal that you could ever set in your life if you want the greatest reward in heaven is to love every human being with the same love that Jesus had. Achieving that standard makes you god-like and godly.

Matt. 14:13 When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

There we have again - the fullness of God is synonymous with the love of God. Many things are also synonymous. The power of God, the healing of God, the presence of God, is synonymous with the love of God. That is why when somebody says, "The presence of God is here," the first thing I want to sense is that love. If that love is not there, it is an imitation. It is some other power of the evil one that is not God or some other things of the flesh that is not God. There are minds that do not come from the mind of God, or powers that are not of God.

That is why the bible says Zach. 4:6 Not by might nor by power. That means there is some kind of power that is not of God. Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of God. Wherever the presence of God is, look for love. If you can not find love where people claim the presence of God is, it is not God.

We need to understand how the love of God can flow to our life and bring the reality of His presence. There we have it again in Matt. 14. The compassion of Jesus moved the power of God to operate mightily.

One of the interesting things I find about the power of God is the flow of compassion. This compassion is nurtured daily in the presence of Jesus. Since the day I had an angelic visitation, I would just burst out in ways I do not understand. Sometimes when some people share their life-stories with me, I do not know why everything they shared just make me cry. I felt for them. I felt their hurt. I felt their pain. And I do not mind that becoming a permanent feature because I know that is the love and compassion of God.

There are three aspects of the presence of God that I want to point out.

The Manifestation Realm

Firstly, there is the aspect of the manifestation. When the presence of God is there, there is always a manifestation. Now the manifestation is only the first aspect. It is a side effect of the presence of God. It can be any manifestation. Now that presence of God is only the beginning. Jesus did promise a manifestation.

Turn to I Cor. 12 as the Spirit of God moves in our midst there will be a manifestation. Verse 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. A manifestation comes with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Turn to Jn. 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. Here He is talking about a different aspect. As we continue to keep God's Word, God's commandments, meditating on His Word and loving Him, Jesus says, And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. God is always there, God is always here, God is in every place you are. As long as you love God, the presence of God is there with you.

Do you notice that the Spirit of God in I Cor. 12 and the Word of God in Jn. 14:21 bring about a manifestation? How do we bring about the presence of God? As you obey God's Word, as you yield to His Spirit, the presence of God can increase to a point where I call it the manifestation point. A manifestation comes forth. It can have a side effect on various ways. It can have a different side effect on the physical body. It can have a side effect in the gift of the Spirit operating in different things. That is just the first aspect of the presence of God. When the manifestation comes, you realize some tangible thing about the spirit world. There is something real about the spirit world. But please do not stop there. Go beyond the manifestation to the second aspect of that presence. I call it the revelation point. When you have a manifestation do not stop there. Go beyond. Go further into a realm called revelation because God desires us to know Him. And He desires to reveal Himself to us so that we could know Him and love Him.

The Revelation Realm

The second aspect of the presence of God is revelation. It brings a revelation of God and a revelation of some principles that have eluded us. A revelation of something that we need to know that has escaped us for a long time. When the presence of God comes, many times clarity comes in some spirit realm.

Let us look over at the book of Daniel. We have here a manifestation in Daniel's life when the angel appeared to him. There are several occasions but I just take one of them. Lets take the one from Dan. 10:7 at the end of the twenty-one day fast he had a manifestation. It was a visitation from God. Verse 7 And I Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me, for my vigor was turned to frailty in me and I retained no strength.

Now all these descriptions are called the side effect of the manifestation of God's presence through the angel. What was the side effect? He had no strength and he became weak. His vigor and strength turned frail. In verse 9, Yet I heard the sound of

his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. He was slain under the power of God. That is a side effect. Then in verse 10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. So, his knees were shaking and his palms were shaking. That was a manifestation. But that was not all there were some more things. I mean the angel did not just shake him and go off. He had a manifestation, a side effect of the presence of God. But is that what the angel came to do? No. He wants to give him some more things. He wants to impart a revelation in verse 11. O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright. Notice that he wants to go beyond the manifestation.

What was the manifestation? In verse 8, he couldn't stand upright. In verse 9, he couldn't stand upright. But now God wants him to stand upright which is the opposite form of manifestation he had earlier. He was slain but the angel says, "Stand up." God could have left him to enjoy all the presence of God. But God wants to move him into a revelation realm and said, "I want to talk to you." God can talk to him while he was in deep sleep. There is a lesson to learn here. There is an aspect of the presence of God where there is a manifestation. But as you go further there is a revelation. This revelation will still be in line with God's Word. God always delight in showing Himself. Some of us say, "If God can show Himself what is there more to see?" Even if you live for ten thousand years and have a revelation of God everyday, you would not have touched one drop in the ocean of God. God wants to reveal Himself so that we can know Him better and love Him more. That's the second aspect called the revelation aspect where God begins to commune with you. There is a communion of Spirit with spirit. Knowledge will be revealed to your finite mind. Things that we never saw before we suddenly see clearly. That is the spirit world. Beyond the manifestation is No. 2 a revelation.

Love and Mercy Realm

But the most touching part is the third part. Beyond the revelation is another powerful point. Do you know why we need to go beyond the revelation knowledge? It is because knowledge puffs up. Even spiritual revelation can puff us up. Look at II Cor. 12:7 Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations. Did you see that? Paul says that he had revelation so great that he could not utter them in any earthly language. He saw things that he could not express. A spiritual battle took place in Paul's life. In the end, Paul realized that though he was weak yet he is strong. There is an aspect beyond that revelation. There is another powerful aspect of that presence and I call it the realm of love and mercy. It is like liquid love.

What is that realm like? In that realm, you can not judge anyone and you do not judge anyone. What Jesus says is so true in Matt. 7 Judge not and you will not be judged. Jesus was teaching us not to judge one another. Do you know that at the back of our minds, we naturally judge one another? There is a point where we may judge something. In I Cor. 2, Paul writes that the spiritual man judges all things. Some things need to be judged in this life. To say that judgment is not needed is false and unscriptural. Because I Cor. 2 says the spiritual man judges all things. I Cor. 14 says when a prophet prophesy, let the others judge. That is why I never believe in people giving anonymous prophecies. Some people give anonymous prophecies so as not to allow others to judge them. If you ever give a prophecy, you must be willing to stand and be judged by the prophets. There is no such thing as anonymous prophecy. When

you prophesy in order to correct others, you must be willing to be corrected too. I Cor. 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. If you are not willing to let your prophecy be judged, then you should not prophesy.

Here is an example in the bible to show forth that judgment is still necessary and we still need to judge things so that we will not be deceived. One more verse Philippians chapter one let your love grow in discernment, that is, in judgment. But here is another point beyond that. One of the problems that we can have is that the more knowledge, the more revelation we have the easier to judge. How do you judge something? Your judgment is based on your knowledge and you compare the knowledge. If you are not a musician or a pianist, you can not really judge a musician's work properly. You can roughly judge in a sense that you like it or you don't like it. But you can't judge as accurately as an accomplished pianist. Because the more knowledge we have the more we are able to judge. Do you realize something takes place if we grow in knowledge daily? The more knowledge you have, the more judgmental you can become. Is that not right? Without knowledge, you can not judge. A little child can not judge much. But as we grow in life, whether it is from natural knowledge or spiritual knowledge, we are able to judge. And the more capable and accurate our knowledge the more capable and accurately we are able to judge. Isn't that dangerous? And that is why one of the requirements for leaders is that a leader must not only be able to have knowledge; he must be able to have love. If you have knowledge without love, you will be a very, very stern judge. It is only natural to judge more when you have more knowledge. So there must be a protection factor, love.

As you grow in the Word and yielded to the Holy Spirit, the manifestation comes first. Then you press further into God. We do not only want the manifestation of shaking uncontrollably. We want more. Let me tell you what you should want. We want more of God. We want more of Jesus. We want more of the Spirit of God. We want more of the character of Jesus. As we press on, we pray, "O God we want to know You." You see I do not want to just have God. I want to know God. I want to love God. I do not want just be filled with God. Then I am just an empty vessel. I want to be a vessel that is living and vibrant, filled with God and knowing God. We want to be a living sacrifice. God does not want just a piece of clay. God wants sons and daughters who can relate to Him. And we need to move beyond the manifestation into the revelation of God.

Now by revelation, I do not mean just mental knowledge. What I mean is an aspect of God that you never saw before. You want something of God that you can confirm with the Word of God. Something of God that changes your life. As we see Him so are we transformed. And God said blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. There is so much more to see of God. God is revealing Himself to us but to stop there is dangerous lest we be puffed up with so much revelation. Someone once said, "Talents are God-given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful." Pride comes before a fall.

The first realm is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The second realm is the realm of truth and revelation. The third aspect is a realm of mercy and love. That is the realm where the love of God is so strong that when you look at somebody else you can never judge that person. Do you know why God calls the place where His presence dwells, the Mercy Seat? The book of Exodus tells us about the tabernacle of

Moses where in the Holy of holies there is a piece of furniture called the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant is shaped like a box. There is one angel and cherubim and there is an empty place on the top of the box, which is called the Mercy Seat. Even in the New Testament, the real place where God sits on the throne is also called the Mercy Seat. Here is an interesting thing about mercy. Mercy can only be shown after knowledge in judgment. When you know that the person is guilty and you judged that he is guilty then only are you in a position to show mercy. If a person is innocent, does he need your mercy? No. It is a realm not only of love - it is a realm of love and mercy. When people are innocent, they do not need mercy.

One of the highest revelations of God is the mercy of God. Every time when people sing about His mercy, the glory of God comes in. In the book of II Chronicles, when the priests were exalting the mercy of God, the presence of God came in. Mercy can only be shown after we know what the judgment is. And we cancel the judgment. That is where mercy comes in. You know what is the judgment and you completely erase and eradicate it and count it as if its not there any more. You forgive and pardon a person – that is mercy. There is the third realm in God where the presence of God is so strong that when you look at people, it is not a look without knowledge, but all you feel for them is that what I believe Jesus felt - the mercy and the love of God. Isn't it wonderful when you move into a realm where you don't judge people any more. Isn't it wonderful when you move into a realm when you look at people you don't condemn people for anything at all. Even if it is something wrong, all you show is mercy, love, and truth. You do not deny the truth. You know the truth but you have mercy and love. You walk in truth, mercy, and love.

Jesus speaks about mercy in a fine way in Matt. 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law; justice and mercy and faith. Jesus considers mercy, justice and faith to be greater than any work that we can do for God which the Pharisees were not showing. They were so strict with the people that the people were suffering under the yoke. Jesus uses many interesting expressions to describe them. Mercy is what they forgot. May the church of Jesus Christ never forget mercy. Everyday you worship, where do the worship go? It goes to the Mercy Seat of God. If we worship at the Mercy Seat of God and don't show mercy what are we doing? Mercy and love go together. Because of the love of God, the truth is still there, you know what is judgment but you show mercy and love. I believe that all of us need mercy. All of us need to realize that in the sight of God is the mercy of God that we are what we are. Why are we not generous with that mercy? Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. This realm of love and mercy is a tremendous realm of the presence of God. It is a realm when we look at people all we feel is that tangible love flowing like a liquid love toward them. And you don't feel condemnation for them. You don't feel judgment for them. All you feel is you want to hold them and love them. That is the third aspect of the presence of God.

Let me describe something that John G. Lake experienced when he was in Africa. There was what I call a deluge of the Spirit. In the book "The New John G. Lake Sermons" edited by Gordon Lindsay and published by Christ for the Nations, it says here in page twenty:

In 1908 I preached in Victoria, South Africa, when one night God came over my life in such power in such streams of liquid glory and power that it flowed consciously on

my hands like streams of electricity. I could point my finger at a man and that stream would strike him down. When a man interrupted my meeting I pointed my finger at him and say, "Sit down." He fell and lay for three hours. When he became normal, they asked him what happened. He said, "Something struck me. I thought I was shot." At two o'clock in the morning I ministered to sixty-five sick people who were present. And the streams of God that was pouring through my hands was so powerful. The people would fall as though they were hit. I was troubled when they fell with such violence. And the Spirit said, "You do not need to put your hands on them. Keep your hands a distance away." When I held my hand a foot from their heads they would crumble and fall in a heap on the floor. Almost everyone was healed. That was the outward manifestation. That was what the people saw. But something inspire in my heart that made my soul like the soul of Jesus Christ. There was a newborn tenderness of God that was so wonderful that my heart reached out and cried out and wept over men in sin. I will gather them in my arms and love them. And Jesus Christ flowed out of me and delivered them. During that period, men would walk down the isle and when they came within ten feet from me, I see them fall one on top of the other. A preacher who had sinned as he looked at me fall prostrate was saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit and stirred the nation with a message of love. In 18 months, God raised up one hundred churches in that land. Those hundred churches were born in the tabernacle at Johannesburg. The multitude of those who compose those hundred churches were healed or baptized in the Holy Spirit under my own eyes as I preached or prayed. I continued in the ministry of healing. I saw hundreds of thousand healed. At that time my heart kept crying, "O God let me know You better." There was a cry in my soul for a greater consciousness of God; a yearning for God's love.

And here he talks about what he learned from that experience. And he says here:

The greatest manifestation of the Holy Spirit baptized life ever given to the world was not in the preaching of the apostles, it was not in the wonderful manifestation of what that took place at their hand. It was in the unselfishness manifested by the church. Think of it three thousand Holy Ghost-baptized Christians in Jerusalem from the day of Pentecost onward who love their neighbors' children as much as their own. Who were so anxious for fear that their brothers have not enough to eat that they sold their estate, brought the money, laid at the apostles' feet and said, "Distribute it." They carried the glow, the fire and the wonder of His divine salvation to the whole world.

That showed what God had worked in their heart. I wish we could arrive at the place where the church was baptized to the degree of unselfishness. That would be a greater manifestation than healing, greater than conversion, greater than the baptism in the Holy Spirit, grater than tongues. It would be a manifestation of the love of I Cor. 13. People see what's happening outside and they don't see what's happening inside. But the reality of the presence there is a tangibly liquid love.

Look at it this way. How many people have we judged with our heart and our mind? Sometimes, we don't say our judgment out but it is inside our thought. How many people have we judged by saying, "He is this kind of person; she is that kind of person." How many people have we kept judging? When will the judgment end? When will we move into mercy? And Jesus said, "Judge not and you will not be judged." When will we find that love to reach out to others, despite whatever problems and weaknesses they may have? Let us be honest. Not everyone of us is perfect. Some are more imperfect than others. Some may have different habits. When

will we stop judging others? The love of God and the mercy of God need to operate in our lives. There is a realm when judgment ends. There is a realm where you do not judge any single person any more. It is a realm of the presence of God where liquid love is flowing through you. And everyone you look, all you could feel was the same Jn. 3:16 love flowing out from you. God so loved the world and you love this very individual. And you love them. You want to care for them. You want to do good things for them. That is what the love makes you. It is a tangible love of God. It is the third aspect of the depth of God's presence.

John G. Lake made an important statement in one of his books. He was with a very young minister. And he was observing this young minister. When this young minister prayed he had hundreds of people fell under the power. Then John G. Lake came to him and asked, "How is everything?" He said, "Wonderful." Then John G. Lake told him frankly. He asked, "How many of them were healed?" Almost none of them were healed and John G. Lake as an elder minister advised the young. "You have concentrated the power of God on the manifestation and you have not brought healing. If you keep your eyes focused on the purpose that all manifestations are to reveal Jesus and to break the kingdom of darkness, you would see healing and miracles." Jesus sent us out to cast out devils, heal the sick and open blind eyes. That is what the kingdom of God is about. Do not channel the power of God for your own entertainment. Channel it out and reach out to more of Jesus.

Let it bring you into the realm of revelation. In the realm of revelation, move further into the realm of love. And as the love consumes you, let the love flow out from your life. Let the manifestation and the power you feel make you weep and cry for people. Kathryn Kuhlman saw so many sick people. In her days, the Charismatic Revival was going on. She went to tent after tent of healing preachers. She saw a lot of demonstration, a lot of showmanship, but very few people healed. Of course, people get excited when one or two people were healed but very few. She would cry. She would come back, lie on her bed and her eyes were red. She would cry when some took the sick home and they were not healed. "God, where is Thy real power?" She was not satisfied with what move there was and because her heart cried out, her heart was filled with love. You read the book "A Glimpse in the Glory." When she ministered in her miracle service, do you know what she felt? She felt that realm that I am talking about - liquid love. When she saw some of the sick, she felt if only she could die so that the child would live. And because of such love that she moved into, the power of God moved and thousands upon thousands were healed. A lot of people want that same power. They try the same manifestation but they do not have the same love. If you walk in love, you will be walking in the right path. If you grow in love, you are growing in the right path. If you do not grow in love you are growing in the wrong direction.

Love is the greatest thing. And if we were to set up to love God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love all men as God loves them, it may take time but where love is, the power of God is there. Where the fullness of God is, the love of God is present. Where the power of God is, the love of God is. When you are moved with compassion in your heart, you are the members and the flesh of Jesus. When the compassions are flowing in your life, get ready. That is the time for signs and wonders. It is time where every blind eyes are opened and every sick person healed. And the kingdom of God is such power that has never been seen before. But it must start with the love of God

burning in our heart. Liquid love starts by loving your neighbor. Start by loving all around you. Start by walking in love, moving in love and letting the power of God flow through your life. Let the love of God move you until all you feel is the heart beat of Jesus. As you keep moving in that direction, that right part will take you into the kingdom of God.

5. FROM THE MERCY SEAT

In the last message, we talked about the growth from the realm of manifestation to the realm of revelation into the realm of love and mercy. Let us start with the Old Testament in the book of II Chron. 5. We realized that mercy comes after judgment. Where there is no judgment, there is no requirement to show mercy. Mercy is only shown after sentence is imposed. There may be a penalty of a fine, jail term, or death, depending on the gravity of the crime. Mercy comes in and says, "Cancel the penalty," and the guilty one is now freed. When mercy is really shown, the penalty is not required anymore. Of course, judging is easy. It is easy to judge good judgment based on a clear interpretation of the law. It is also easy to fall into poor judgment because of insufficient facts or evidences. Sub-consciously, in our daily experiences with people, we judge them into different categories. But yet, we need to learn an important quality called mercy.

How do we withhold judgment and not allow our hearts to judge others? Allow mercy to come forth in our hearts. Jesus says in Matt. 7:1 Judge not and you will not be judged. He requires us to learn the secret of withholding judgment and showing mercy. Mercy is the quality required when judgment is due. Kindness comes forth where there is a need. It does not mean that there is no guilt or penalty involved but it means extending kindness to one who is in need, whether it is a spiritual need, a physical need or financial need. When one does something to meet that need, that is kindness. Compassion is something different. Compassion is the constant presence of God that we feel for His creation. Mercy relates to a king sitting on a throne or to the Pardons Board. After a judge has passed his judgment on the guilty and stipulated the penalty, the case is forwarded to the king or Pardons Board for review. After studying the case, the king or Pardons Board may grant pardon to the offender.

Kindness gives us a picture of a father. Mercy is a picture of a legitimate authority that withholds punishment. Kindness is a picture of a father and mother who show care. Compassion is a picture of a Creator who bleeds and yearns for His creation. That is what compassion and the love of God is like. It is that awesome sense of the Father when He looks at His creation that did not turn out good as He intended it to be.

As we look at II Chron. 5, we want to focus on a special word here called mercy. As the children of Israel completed the temple of Solomon, the choir came together and sang. In verse 13, Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, "For He is good. For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud.

Now we could enunciate many principles for the glory of God to come to a place. But I want to focus on the principle of mercy. Mercy is the quality related to the glory of God. If we want the glory of God to be on our life, we have to develop mercy in our lives. Remember, the bible prophesied in Isaiah that His glory would be seen upon us. Now before the glory can come the mercy must be there. We are not just talking about the mercy of God for us. We are talking about how we need to show the mercy of God to one another. If we want the glory of God to be on our lives, then we must learn to

show mercy. Mercy is to withhold judgment. It is to refuse to judge another person. It is to look at the person from a different point of view.

In our earlier message, we saw how mercy and love are related to the power of God. The power of healing, the signs and wonders are related to mercy and love. This morning we want to point to the fact that mercy is related to the glory and the presence of God. When the choir in the Temple was singing and emphasizing on the mercy of God rather than on the judgment of God, the Shekinah glory of God came down. Humans are always trying to focus on judgment. Humans are constantly judging one another. But God says that if we learn to show mercy, if we learn to emphasize mercy to one another and in the presence of God, God will release a greater measure of glory into our life. Sometimes, people can feel condemned in church. They feel condemned because they are lectured what they have not done and what they have done wrong. When we meet for fellowship, we may quarrel and talk about all the wrong things about each other and forget to show mercy. Mercy I believe is a quality that we need to emphasize all the time. We need to extol the mercy of God.

If we understand the debt that God forgives us, we can forgive every debt that people owe to us. Nothing that other people may have done to you; that other people may have hurt you and you can't forgive them can be equal to what we have done before we know God and God forgave you. Just like the parable of the servant that Jesus talked about. The master has forgiven the servant of a great debt but the servant could not forgive a small debt that another servant owed him. Every time you find it difficult to forgive somebody, remember this - you have been forgiven. God is not asking for something that we have not experienced. Whatever you have experienced, you can pass on to somebody else. We have the greatest experience of being forgiven of all our sins by God our Father. Out of righteousness, He now requires us to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

We need to emphasize on mercy because mercy brings the presence and the glory of God in our lives. If you do something against somebody in your heart and in your mind, it is going to affect the glory of God and the presence of God in your life. We must do whatever we do with a sense of love for everyone and that will release the glory of God in our life.

In Exodus 25, when the tabernacle was built, the instructions for the ark are mentioned there. Verse 16 And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. You shall make a mercy seat. Now why didn't God call it a glory seat, which was actually what it was. If you were to make a piece of furniture knowing that the piece of furniture was going to symbolize the fullness of your power on earth what would you name it? We could give it many names. We might name it the seat of authority. We might name it the seat of power. We might name it the awesome seat. We might name it the energizing seat. Of the six pieces of furniture and all the ceremonies that took place in the Old Testament, the whole life of Israel revolves around the tabernacle. And the whole tabernacle exists and revolves around the Ark of the Covenant. All the ceremonies revolve around it. If the Ark is not there, there is no point for anything else. The central point of the Jews in Moses' time was not called the seat of power although it was powerful. It was not called the seat of authority although it has authority. It was not called the seat of God's presence even though God's presence was there. It was not called the seat of God's name even though

God's name was there. If human beings were to name that seat we would probably name it something else. But when God named it, He calls it something that boggles our mind. Something that we never thought was powerful. He calls it the Mercy Seat.

And there is a revelation in that. Mercy and power are related. Mercy and glory are related. If you want to learn the secret of the most holy presence of God, you must discover mercy. You must discover how to show mercy to those who hate you and to those who judge you. You must show mercy to your enemies. You must show mercy to your fellow brethren who may have accidentally or ignorantly harmed you or hurt you. You must discover mercy to discover the Holy of holies. So many Christians desire to live in the Holy of holiest but so few have discovered the way to it – through walking a life of mercy.

We speak about living in the Outer court, the Holy place and the Most Holy place. We speak about the awesome presence of God that is now inside transforming us. We can imagine all kinds of power that we desire. How many of you desire the presence of God in your life? We all do. Yet the secret of God's presence, - listen carefully; this one sentence contains the whole bible, - the secret of God's presence dwells in mercy. If you want the presence of God to increase in your life, in your ministry, in your business, if you want to increase your anointing by ten times, increase your mercy by ten times. Increase ten times in mercy and then you will increase ten times, in whatsoever your hands lay upon.

The secret of the universe is the mercy of God, who is Yahweh in the Old Testament, who is the God of our salvation revealed in Jesus and our heavenly Father in the New Testament. Deep in the heart of God, deep from where the wells of the presence of God flow into the universe is a point in His being called mercy. No wonder in the Old Testament they were extolling His mercy. He is good and His mercy endures forever. It touches the Niagara Falls of God's presence and glory and it overflowed into their life. How great that mercy of God is. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. That is from Psalms 23. The whole of Ps. 23 revolves around God's mercy. The Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want, He leads you besides still waters, His rod and staff give you comfort, He prepares the table in the presence of your enemies revolve around the fact that His goodness and mercy will follow you. When you take away mercy, you take away the Lord being your Shepherd, you take away the green pastures, you take away the still waters, you take away the rod and the staff. You take away all these blessings of God if you take away His mercy following us. We need to learn His mercy.

And yet, mercy is not something hard or difficult to learn. It is only our willingness to let go and forgive. Forgiving is more letting go. How hardened can the human heart be when they will hold on to everything that hurts and grieves them and will not hold on to the mercy of God. It is better to live in the mercy seat of God than anywhere else.

In Exodus 33, Moses said to God, "Please show me Your glory." That is the desire of everyone who has walked with God. They want to see more of God's glory. When God showed His glory to Moses, He told him, "You can not see My face but I will show you the back parts of My glory. Exodus 34:5-6 Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,

longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.” You know He starts with Mercy. Mercy is the meeting point where we contact the other parts of God’s presence. If we want our lives to continue to flow with that mercy, we need to contact God at that point.

In the book of Acts 15, there is a prophecy about some things that will take place in the last days that we want to read about. In the Jerusalem council James quoted some scriptures as they discussed the Gentiles question. Verse 15-17 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: “After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up (Now that is the prophecy that in their time it has not come to pass yet) so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord. Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.”

Now what is this tabernacle of David that will be restored? Of course, we know it is related to praise and worship. We also know that it is related to the restoration of the temple to the Jewish age. We also know it is the restoration to the Jewish nation. But it is also the restoration of the fullness of the church of Jesus Christ in the last days. And part of that is expressed in Acts 13:34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoke thus: “I will give you the sure mercies of David.”

Now a cross reference will tell you that this passage comes from the book of Isa. 55:3. If you study it, you find that it is related to the covenant that God has made with David, which was also the basic covenant that they quote in Acts 15 the restoration of the Davidic covenant to the Jews. Now the whole restoration of God’s covenant revolves around one word and the word is the word mercy. In these last days that we live in where the love of many has gone cold and became cruel, the people of God need to rest strong in mercy. We have to understand the high realm of mercy that He desires to bring upon our lives and on the lives of others.

How is it possible for God to show us such mercy as is found in the book of Romans? In Rom. 8 even though the word mercy did not occur but that’s the fullness of the act of mercy. In Rom. 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And part of that is expressed in chapter 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So even when our minds were in enmity against God and we were enemies of God, God showed us His love and mercy. He forgave us before we ask for forgiveness. John didn’t write, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son but before He sent His Son to the world, we have to ask Him for forgiveness.” If God had waited for us to ask Him for forgiveness before sending His Son to die for us, we would never be saved. Before we knew how to repent, before we knew how to ask for forgiveness, God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. We were forgiven before we ask because He is a faith God. That is point one: He is a faith God and therefore, He forgives before we ask.

Now Heb, 11:6 tells us, Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that He is and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. The first point applies to us because we have faith in people. Since you are a man or woman of faith, you forgive before people ask for forgiveness. Be like God.

God forgave us before we ask. He acted out His forgiveness; He acted out His redemption before we even asked for forgiveness and redemption. We must be a faith people who give forgiveness even before forgiveness is realized or asked. Are you a man or woman of faith? Then we must act the way God acted. Be like God. God forgives us before people ask. Before people know they are in need of redemption, He acted out His forgiveness and redemption by sending His Son, Jesus to the cross to take our place in punishment. We must be a faith people who give forgiveness even before forgiveness is realized or asked. Are you a man or women of faith? Then we must act the way God act.

Firstly, you forgive before forgiveness is asked – it is in your heart. You act as if a person has been forgiven even before they ask. How many Christians have hurt you? If you say that it is so hard to forgive, you are not acting like God. What happens if God act like that to us? Whatever you want man do to you, do unto them also. What would have happened to us if God acted that way to us? We are finished. Because we are people of faith, we forgive and then we write off the debts. It is important to guard our hearts from unforgiveness and to always have tenderness and mercy in our hearts. When you act in faith, it becomes possible.

Secondly, part of acting in faith is seeing the blood of the Lamb applied on others. Because God is a faith God, He does things before we ask. Because we are faith man and woman of God, we act in love and we forgive. It is not just pretense; it is not mere acting; it is really from your heart. You really release it to God and you act it out in love. This second factor is important. The blood of Jesus Christ is our camera to look at people. Many times, we have always looked at the blood of Jesus for ourselves. We always want God to look at us through the blood. Not a single one of us would dare to ask God to look at you without the blood. We always need the blood to cover the sin of commission and omission. We always need the blood to cover all our imperfection. We always need the blood of the Lamb. How is it that when we want God to look at us we ask Him to look at us through the blood? And when we are looking at one another, we do not look at them through the blood of the Lamb? This is inconsistency. We should be generously applying the blood of Jesus to people as much as to ourselves.

Every time you think that somebody had sinned against somebody else, whether you were involved or not, wherever there is sin, you must see the blood. And through the blood offer that sacrifice which was paid once and you will not need to pay again. Plead the blood. When you look at the faults of people, what are you pleading? The blood of Abel cried for vengeance. The blood of Abel wanted revenge. The blood of Jesus Christ cried for forgiveness. We must look at them through the blood of the Lamb. These are little secrets to exercise mercy. When you look at people through the blood of Jesus, you don't see their sin any more. If you can see people's sin, it means that you have forgotten to put on Jesus' glasses to see His blood. I like to see people through the blood of Jesus. I don't want to see people minus the blood. If that's the way I expect God to look at me, that is the way I look at people. Many people are not wearing the glasses of Jesus to look at His blood upon other people.

I am sharing with you a very practical way to exercise mercy and to practice seeing and applying the blood of the Lamb in our daily lives. Do not just think about it for your own life. Hundreds and thousands of Christians see the blood only for themselves. But switch it around. You already have the blood, thank God for it. But

see the blood on people covering them. Think about anybody you may have a grudge against or may have some difficulty with. Think about somebody else whom every time you remember them, you always see their wrongdoings. Do not look so innocent. There are people like that all the time. This is human life. That is why He provided the blood of the Lamb. There are people whom you think about or the moment their names are mentioned to you, your face turns red with anger. Every time you remember them, you can only see their sin and their iniquity. Why not look at them through the blood? The next time you remember them, remember the blood. The blood is freely given for them as it is for you. You say they did not receive the blood yet. Neither did you when God first saw you. Remember the first point is faith. And practice this in your life.

Whenever I think about people, I must think about the blood and I cover them with the blood. No matter what faults they have, I see them under the blood and I see them forgiven. I see them cleansed where the blood of Jesus is. Look at people cleansed the way God sees them in faith all the time. You will not have an angry thought against them anymore. You are redeemed from your anger. You will not have a thought of hatred in your life again. You will not have a single negative emotion against people. Isn't that a wonderful life to live? It is as good as living without sickness and disease. It is a wonderful life to live without any wrong emotion towards people. Every time a negative emotion arises in your heart towards anyone, see the blood of the Lamb applied on him or her and your heart will soften. Every time you forget the blood, you will see people differently. (Singing "What can wash away my sin; nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again; nothing but the blood of Jesus. O precious is the soul that washes white as snow. No other fault I know; nothing but the blood of Jesus.") The next time you sing this song, don't just think about yourself. As you sing it, remember it is being applied on others too whom you can not see the blood on. You must see the blood upon them as much as upon yourself. The second point: put on the blood of the Lamb.

God shared with me these little secrets about looking at people the way He looks. I have never seen that before. In the past, I have always seen the blood of the Lamb as only applying to me, I and myself. Even in the Old Testament, there is a pattern. On the Day of Atonement, the lamb was sacrificed for the high priest and another sacrificial lamb for the whole nation for whatever sin the whole nation may have committed against God. On the Day of Atonement that blood is for every single man, woman, and child in Israel. They had to see the blood for them. After the high priest had carried out the necessary rituals in the Holy of holies, he comes out and he could bless the people because he now sees the blood on them. Seeing that they are cleansed and forgiven through the blood of the lamb, he could bless them by faith. They would then have another year of blessing in God. We must put on the blood of the Lamb and we will change the way we see things.

Thirdly, we must see like the Creator, as He sees things from the beginning. Look at Genesis chapter 6 even though the people were sinning against God yet the heart of God was grieved. Gen. 6:5-6 tell us something that is quite astounding if you look at it from a different point of view about how this feeling can be in Almighty God. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Now what was actually

causing that grief? Read the next verse. So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

See them through the eyes of the Creator. Now this is how it applies here. God saw man from the beginning. He worked with man from the beginning. He saw every little weakness and every faulting step that mankind took as civilization progressed. Now that sin has greatly increased, God has to pass a sentence because He is a righteous God though His heart was grieved. It is like spanking your own children. It is like having to cut off your own arm. Understand that was what God felt like. He was remembering from the beginning.

Now every time you look at somebody, try to recall how long you have known him or her. Some of you know each other over a period of a few years and some a few days. Didn't something happen in your life when you know someone over a period of years? Perhaps, you first knew that person when he or she was born. You saw every faulting step that little baby took. You saw every mistake that the baby made. You have seen every bright side that the baby has. Now that little baby grows into a teenager and into an adult. You have been with that baby. You have been with that person. You know the good side and the bad side. And there is something in you that love this child.

That is why no matter how hard a criminal is, no matter how cruel a man or woman has become, no matter how a monster society seems to view them to be, there will always be someone who weep, if that someone is still alive, for that monster. You know who? The mama. No matter how monstrous a human being has become yet in the heart of hearts, the mother still feels for her criminal son or daughter. Many were the times when that child was on his way to becoming a monster, many people had rejected that little critter. The mama is the first one to defend her little boy. The mama will scream, “DON'T TREAT MY SON THAT WAY.” Some of us logical, intellectual, and analytical nerds would say, “It is not very logical for you to consider him that way. We have known him and worked with him for the past ten years.” Yes but the mother was the one who nursed him from the breast. See the difference? At which point do you know a person?

Let me share something from my heart to you. Every person is loveable if you can see him or her from the beginning. After you hear the words from the beginning, the next word to focus on is exchange. Now what would happen if you had been through what that monster went through, if you had lived the life that monster had lived through? You have been through those incidences that monster had been through. Try exchanging your life for that monster's life. And I ask you this question. Would you have become a monster too? No matter who you could be thinking of that may resemble Saddam Hussein and Adolph Hitler to you. No matter who around you that you disliked intensely and find unlovable, nasty and a monster. (A) If you knew him or her from the beginning and (B) understand the exchange, you will never see that person the same way again. If you have seen that person from the beginning and if you had gone through all those things he had gone through, you would not have so easily condemned and judged him. Maybe some of them have been deprived from childhood. And here is a sad thing. I weep for them. Every monster has been abused by some other monster. The cycle of abuse goes on since a seed of abuse gives rise to more seeds of abuses. Every human being on this earth was born loveable. But

somehow, some had gone through a different path and had a different life, different family, different upbringing, different society, different kind of influence, and different kind of friendships. Do you see the hurt they have gone through? Do you see the suffering they had gone through? At first, that suffering was a cry of anguish. A cry for help but no one was around. They cried when they were little babies. They cried when they were little infants. They cried when they were teenagers. They cried in their loneliness, but no one was around. When they grow into adulthood that cry turned into anger and they became monsters.

But you and I never saw that cry for help. Think of any monster out there. Think of anyone who is so worried about judgment and hell that you could think of. Let me tell you, it is because before you knew them to be the way they are now, when they were crying there was no one to love them. When they were crying there was no one around to heal that hurt. The church was not where she was needed. There was no one to be Jesus to them. If somebody had been there to offer a hand of love and a word of love to them when they were hurting at that time, they wouldn't have become a monster today. It is because there was no one to love them. But maybe it is not too late. Maybe now if somebody somewhere who learn, No. 1, you could be like God who love by faith; No. 2, you could see people through the blood of Jesus and No. 3, like the Creator you could understand and see them from the beginning.

Maybe now it is still not too late. Maybe now if you reach out in love even though at first that love was rejected countless times maybe now you still can turn that monster into a prince or princess. Maybe now love still can reach out. Sometimes the scars of life are so thick that it takes great love to reach into that monster's thick skin, touch the heart, and bring out the beauty. It is still possible since God can so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, having faith that somehow He can make something beautiful out of ashes. True Christianity is to have this power of love. Maybe if you and I would have that kind of love to reach out to the unlovable, where everything else has failed, love will not fail.

Are you hearing me? Love will still reach out despite many rejections. No, it is not going to be reaching out once and then giving up. It has to be that kind of love that Jesus loves us with that will go to great lengths and great sacrifices. Even sometimes to the extent of that person who try to save that monster and loving that monster and caring for that monster and that monster only repay with anger, in cruelty and finally that person who loves that monster dies for that monster. And the monster realizes that the person who was killed and destroyed was actually trying to love. Maybe sometimes many lives may be lost. But one day I can assure you, love will break through. It may take the sacrifice of many lives to love, to win one terrible monster but in the end, love never fails. For the Word of God declares in Rom. 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you can in No. 3 see that through the eyes of the Creator from the beginning you will always find the love for such people. Not even sometimes but you will always find the love for such people. Christianity is about love and mercy. Christianity is not about judgment, is not about the power that calls down fire from heaven and destroy people although that can be a sign under God's permission. It is not about the power to rule and reign and influence nations although that is possible because Jesus is Lord

of Lords and King of Kings. But the essence of Christianity is about a love that we have found so powerful that changes our life and that we learn to release it through our life to change other lives. Faith is great. Hope is great but the greatest is love. And Jesus says, "This is My new commandment that I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you."

I want to end this message by reading a few pages of Rick Joyner's *The Final Quest*, an excellent book that has so much wisdom. What Rick Joyner wrote here confirms what we have been saying so far. However, his confirmation comes from meeting actual individuals in heaven, and understanding how Jesus viewed their lives. Rick Joyner began by narrating the vision of a man who was zealously serving the Lord. He says:

He was continually witnessing to people, teaching, and visiting the sick to pray for them. He was very zealous for the Lord, and had a genuine love for people. Then I saw another man who was obviously a tramp or a homeless man. A small kitten wandered into his path and he started to kick it, but restrained himself, but still shoved it rather harshly out of the way with his foot. Then the Lord asked me which of these men pleased Him the most.

"The first," I said without hesitating.

"No, the second," He responded, and began to tell me their stories.

The first man had been raised in a wonderful family, which had always known the Lord. He grew up in a thriving church, and then attended one of the best Bible colleges. He had been given one hundred portions of His love, but he was using only seventy-five.

The second man had been born deaf. He was abused and kept in a dark, cold attic until he was found by the authorities when he was eight years old. He had then been shifted from one institution to another where the abuse continued. Finally, he was turned out on the streets. To overcome all of this the Lord had only given him three portions of His love, but he had mustered every bit of it to fight the rage in his heart to keep from hurting the kitten.

I now looked at that man, a king sitting on a throne far more glorious than Solomon could have ever imagined. Hosts of angels were arrayed about him, waiting to do his bidding. I turned to the Lord in awe. I still just could not believe he was real, much less one of the great kings.

"Lord, please tell me the rest of his story," I begged.

"Of course, that is why we are here. Angelo was so faithful with the little that I had given to him, I gave him three more portions of My love. He used all of that to quit stealing. He almost starved, but he refused to take anything that was not his. He bought his food with what he could make collecting bottles, and occasionally finding someone who would let him do yard work. He could not hear but he had learned to read, so I sent him a gospel tract. As he read it the Spirit opened his heart, and he gave his life to Me. I again doubled the portions of My love to him and he faithfully used all of them. He wanted to share Me with others, but he could not speak. Even though

he lived in such poverty, he started spending over half of everything he made on gospel tracts to give out on street corners.”

“How many did he lead to You?” I asked, thinking that it must have been multitudes for him to be sitting with the kings.

“One,” the Lord answered. “I let him lead a dying alcoholic to Me to encourage him. It encouraged him so much he would have stood on that corner for many more years just to bring another soul to repentance. But all of heaven was entreating Me to bring him here, and I, too, wanted him to receive his reward.”

“But what did he do to become a king?” I asked.

“He was faithful with all that he was given, he overcame all until he became like Me, and he died a martyr.”

“But what did he overcome, and how was he martyred?”

“He overcame the world with My love. Very few have overcome so much with so little. Many of My people dwell in homes that kings would have envied just a century ago because of their conveniences, but do not appreciate them, while Angelo would so appreciate a cardboard box on a cold night that he would turn it into a glorious temple of My presence. He began to love everyone and everything. He would rejoice more over an apple than some of My people do over a great feast. He was faithful with all that I gave him, even though it was not very much compared to what I gave others, including you. I showed him to you in a vision because you passed by him many times. You even once pointed him out to one of your friends and spoke of him.”

“I did? What did I say?”

“You said, ‘There is another one of those Elijah’s who must have escaped from the bus station.’ You said that he was a ‘religious nut’ who was sent by the enemy to turn people off to the gospel.”

This was the worst blow that I had yet suffered in this experience. I was more than shocked, I was appalled. I tried to remember the specific incident, but couldn’t, simply because there were so many others like it. I had never had much compassion for filthy street preachers who seemed to me that they were specifically sent to turn people off to the gospel.

“I am sorry Lord. I’m really sorry.”

“And you are forgiven,” He quickly responded. “And you are right. There are many who try to preach the gospel on the streets for wrong, and even perverted reasons. Even so, there are many who are sincere, even if they are untrained and unlearned. You must not judge by appearances. There are as many true servants who look like he did as there are among the polished professionals in the great cathedrals and organizations that men have built in My Name.”

He then motioned for me to look up at Angelo. When I turned, he had descended the steps to his throne and was right in front of me. Opening his arms, he gave me a great hug, and kissed my forehead like a father. Love poured over me and through me until

I felt that it would overload my nervous system. When he finally released me, I was staggering as if I were drunk, but it was a wonderful feeling. It was love like I had never felt it.

“He could have imparted that to you on earth,” the Lord continued. “He had much to give to My people, but they would not come near him. Even My prophets avoided him. He grew in the faith by buying a Bible and a couple of books that he read over and over. He tried to go to churches but he could not find one that would receive him. If they would have taken him in they would have taken Me in. He was My knock upon their door.”

I was learning a new definition of grief. “How did he die?” I asked, remembering that he had been martyred, half expecting that I was somehow even responsible for it.

“He froze to death trying to keep an old wino who had passed out in the cold.”

As I looked at Angelo, I just could not believe how hard my heart was. Even so, I did not understand how this made him a martyr, which I had thought was a title reserved for those who died because they would not compromise their testimony.

“Lord, I know that he is truly an overcomer,” I remarked. “And, it is so just for him to be here. But are those who die that way also considered martyrs?”

“Angelo was a martyr everyday that he lived. He would only do enough for himself to stay alive, and he gladly sacrificed his life to save a needy friend. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, even if you give your body to be burned, but do not have love, it counts as nothing. But, when you give yourself with love, it counts for much. Angelo died every day because he did not live for himself, but for others. While on earth he always considered himself the least of the saints, but he was one of the greatest. As you have already learned, many of those who consider themselves the greatest, and are considered by others to be the greatest, end up being the least here. Angelo did not die for a doctrine, or even his testimony, but he did die for Me.”

“Lord, please help me to remember this. Please do not let me forget what I am seeing here when I return,” I begged.

“That is why I am with you here, and I will be with you when you return. Wisdom is to see with My eyes, and not to judge by appearances. I showed you Angelo in the vision so that you would recognize him when you passed him on the street. If you had shared with him the knowledge of his past that I had shown you in the vision, he would have given his life to me then. You could have then disciplined this great king, and he would have had a great impact on My church. If My people would look at others the way I do, Angelo and many others like him, would have been recognized. They would have been paraded into the greatest pulpits, and My people would have come from the ends of the earth to sit at their feet, because by doing this they would have sat at My feet. He would have taught you to love, and how to invest the gifts that I have given you so that you could bear much more fruit.”

I was so ashamed that I did not want to even look at the Lord, but finally I turned back to Him as I felt the pain driving me toward self-centeredness again. When I looked at

Him, I was virtually blinded by His glory. It took a while, but gradually my eyes adjusted so that I could see Him.

“Remember that you are forgiven,” He said. “I am not showing you these things to condemn you, but to teach you. Always remember that compassion will remove the veils from your soul faster than anything else.”

As we began to walk again, Angelo spoke, “Please remember my friends, the homeless.

Many will love our Savior if someone will go to them.”

His words had such power in them that I was too moved to answer, so I just nodded. I knew that those words were the decree of a great king, and a great friend of the King of Kings. “Lord, will you help me to help the homeless.”

“I will help any who help them,” He responded. “When you love those whom I love you will always know My help. They will be given the Helper by the measure of their love. You have asked many times for more of My anointing; that is how you will receive it. Love those whom I love. As you love them you love Me. As you give to them you have given to Me, and I will give more to you in return.”

My mind drifted to my nice home and all of the other possessions I had. I was not wealthy, but by earthly standards, I knew that I did live much better than kings had just a century before. I had never felt guilty about it before, but I did now. Somehow, it was a good feeling, but at the same time, it did not feel right. Again, I looked back to the Lord, as I knew He would help me.

“Remember what I said about how My perfect law of love made light and darkness distinct. When confusion such as you are now feeling comes, you know that what you are experiencing is not My perfect law of love. I delight in giving My family good gifts, just as you do yours. I want you to enjoy them, and appreciate them. Only you must not worship them, and you must freely share them when I call you to. I could wave My hand and instantly remove all poverty from the earth. There will be a day of reckoning when the mountains and high places are brought down, and the poor and oppressed are raised up, but I must do it. Human compassion is just as contrary to Me as human oppression. Human compassion is used as a substitute for the power of My cross. I have not called you to sacrifice, but to obey. Sometimes you will have to sacrifice to obey Me, but if your sacrifice is not done in obedience, it will separate us.

“You are guilty for the way you misjudged and treated this great king when he was My servant on earth. Do not judge anyone without inquiring of Me. You have missed more encounters that I have set up for you than you have ever imagined, simply because you were not sensitive to Me. However, I did not show you this to just make you feel guilty, but to bring you to repentance so that you will not continue to miss them. If you just react in guilt you will begin to do things to compensate for your guilt, which is an affront to My cross. My cross alone can remove your guilt, and because I went to the cross to remove your guilt, whatever is done in guilt is not done for Me.

“I do not enjoy seeing men suffer,” Wisdom continued. “But human compassion will not lead them to the cross which alone can relieve their real suffering. You missed Angelo because you were not walking in compassion. You will have more when you return, but your compassion must still be subject to My Spirit. Even I did not heal all those for whom I had compassion, but I only did what I saw My Father doing. You must not just do things out of compassion, but in obedience to My Spirit. Only then will your compassion have the power of redemption.

“I have trusted you with the gifts of My Spirit. You have known My anointing in your preaching and writing, but you have known it much less than you realize. Rarely do you really see with My eyes, or hear with My ears, or understand with My heart. Without Me, you can do nothing that will benefit My kingdom or promote My gospel. You have fought in My battles, and you have even seen the top of My mountain. You have learned to shoot arrows of truth and hit the enemy. You have learned a little about using My sword. But love is My greatest weapon. Love will never fail. Love will be the power that destroys the works of the devil. And love will be what brings My kingdom. Love is the banner over My army. Under this banner you must now fight.”

6. THE THEOLOGY OF MERCY

In the last message, we pointed out the fact that when God commanded Moses to build an ark where His presence could dwell in the tabernacle of Moses and He called the ark the Mercy Seat. Incidentally, when Solomon built the temple he did not build any more new ark. The same ark that Moses built was placed into the Holy of holies in the temple that Solomon built.

Some years ago, I received a video about the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant. We have written to Ron Wyatt because he was the one who discovered both the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem and Noah's ark. The place the Red Sea crosses the towns Sodom and Gomorrah, many archaeological discoveries were made in our time. (If you are interested in his discoveries, check out Wyatt Archaeological Research (<http://www.pilgrimpromo.com/WAR>) website. Ron Wyatt has passed away in August 1999 - Ed.)

All the pieces of the furniture of the tabernacle of Moses have been discovered. God seems to have hidden these ancient secrets until our times as we fast approach the end times and the rapture. God is getting the church to be ready for these events.

We need to bear in mind that the Mercy Seat that Moses made was only a pattern of what he saw in heaven. We know that in heaven there is an actual brazen altar. There is an actual altar of incense. Isaiah the prophet saw that in Isaiah 6. There is an actual candlestick as mentioned in the book of Revelation. There is an actual place of God's Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat is God's throne in the holiest part of heaven and is the control center of the whole universe. Humankind would probably have given another name to it - the place of power, the place of glory, the place of authority. These aspects would have been part of this throne but God chose to give it the name the Mercy Seat.

Heb. 4:14-16 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 can not sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace. Now the author is not just talking about approaching the Ark of the Covenant. He is talking about approaching God's real throne. The concept of grace is more developed in the New Testament than in the Old Testament and grace involves mercy. When mercy is expressed, grace is being shown. God calls His throne, not the throne of power, not the throne of glory, although it includes these things, but God calls His throne the throne of grace, which also includes the throne of mercy. For where mercy is, there is grace. Grace is a further development of what mercy means.

What might we find in the throne of grace? Let us read on that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Since we are always in time of need, it looks like we continuously require mercy and grace from His throne. The bible in the book of Ps. 23 tells us, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life. We need goodness and mercy. Mercy is continuously needed in our life. It is not just once that we receive the mercy of God. It is not just once that we receive the grace of God. We need to grow in grace; we need to grow in mercy before we can grow in compassion, in power and in glory. We are gradually transformed into His image as we receive His mercy and grace.

Today we are concluding the short series on the Mercy of God and we have three theological reasons why mercy is required, why God needs to show mercy, and why we need to show mercy where sin, imperfection or evil is present. Mercy is a way of life that we need to assimilate in our Christian walk with God.

To Eradicate Evil

The first point is the eradication of evil. To eradicate is to remove totally until there is no more evidence of its previous existence. God is not just interested in overcoming evil, sin and imperfection. God is interested in totally annihilating and eradicating evil. Because of that, evil can not be removed by evil. Evil or wrong can not be removed by wrong methods.

When a dog barks at you, what do you do? You do many things to stop the dog from barking at you but it still barks at you. In the end, you lose your temper and you became mad. You finally scared the dog away by barking back at the dog, and the dog ran off. If you behave like a dog to another dog, you have just become a dog. So, when people do wrong to you, when people hurt you knowingly or unknowingly, you should never repay with a wrong. If you repay evil with evil and you succeeded, you have become a greater evil than the other person.

Suppose someone beats you up. You go home and train under a karate coach for many months. Later, you hunt that fellow down and whacked him good and proper. Guess what? That gangster beat you up and you have to become another gangster to beat him up. What have you become? A meaner thug. You have not succeeded in eradicating evil. You have succeeded in removing a smaller evil around you without realizing that you have become a bigger evil capable of wreaking greater havoc and evil.

That is why God needs to eradicate and remove evil. He is not just in the business to punish evil. He is there to totally remove it. The Old Testament laid down the law of retribution before the revelation of grace and mercy came in the New Testament. The Old Testament laid down the rule of demanding an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and a leg for a leg. In all civilizations before the New Testament shed light with the law of love and mercy, there is a sense of strict justice without mercy inbuilt in man to demand a tic for a tac. However, if all of us go around demanding an eye for an eye, the world will soon go blind. Everybody has something against everybody and everybody end up losing something. We have not removed evil. We punish what we think to be evil to a small extend but that evil is not completely eradicated. It will surface further down in time and exact its toll on some unsuspecting victims.

History records stories of vengeance between families, between gangsters and triads, between ethnic groups and tribal peoples, between monarchies and countries. When one person in a particular family, tribe or triad is killed, his members go off and kill someone else in the other family, tribe or triad. Revenge is executed for the sake and honor of the slain one. Revenge killings may even take place in the next generation. When will it end? It will continue until both sides come to their senses and decide to stop the senseless killings once and for all by signing a peace truce. It is then that the cycle of evil will end. Otherwise, it will go on continuously.

Thus, the first reason why we have to show mercy is that only in mercy can good overcome evil. There is no other way to eradicate evil. God is interested in removing evil completely. He has to use good to overcome evil so that when evil is overcome by good, evil disappears. When evil is overcome by another evil or by another natural imperfect method, the imperfection will continue to the next generation.

Lets look at the book of Rom. 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Now in chapter 12 it gives an example in verse 17. Now this is New Testament. The Old Testament demands an eye for eye. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge ourselves, but rather give no place to wrath: for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. Therefore, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Now this is taken from Proverbs 25:21-22 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, (this is the part Paul didn’t quote) And the Lord will reward you.

Look at it this way: how many of you are losing your rewards? God has a reward for those who show mercy. “Vengeance is Mine,” says the Lord. It is human to desire vengeance and justice. Every single one of us deep in our heart wants righteousness and justice to be done in our lives, in our career, in our family, in the world around us. It is human to desire that evil be punished and vengeance be served. However, it is divine to forgive. So choose whether you want humanity or divinity. Choose whether you want to become more human in nature or godlier in nature. It takes a divine nature in our life to rise up above what human can not do and say that we will repay good for evil. The more we want to overcome evil, the more we must show mercy and love. If we try any other methods of overcoming evil, it will not remove or eradicate that evil. It will only temporarily punish that evil. The only way you can remove evil is by overcoming it with love and mercy. Jesus asks every Christian to abide by this standard.

How many Christians find it so easy to repay evil for evil. We who live in the New Testament must live by the New Testament standard and not by Old Testament standard. Jesus in the gospel of Matthew gives us the highest standard that He requires every true believer in Him to follow. Chapter 5:38 You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. However, Jesus said in verse 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. Now isn’t that so foreign to worldly thinking? He says do not fight with flesh and blood. Do not resist evil people.

Paul said resist the devil and he will flee from you. Resist the demon power that is found in Ephesians 6:12. For we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. The book of James tells us in chapter 4:7 Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

God is not against us using our spiritual energy to resist demon forces. However, He is against you lifting your finger against your fellow men, whether they are brethren or they are people of this world. It is Jesus' standard. He says do not resist them, do not fight them with natural methods.

Look at what he says in Matt. 5:39 Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. These are the standards of Jesus. Question: Did Jesus practice what He teaches? When they came and slapped Jesus, He did not do anything.

How many of us would get angry when somebody slap us? How many of us would get upset when somebody kicks us? A lot of us do. To have those feelings make you human. However, to yield to them reduces you to a mere mortal. We are not mere mortals. We are a new species in II Cor. 5:17. We are born of divine nature that refuses to use carnal methods to seek just ends. We have a higher nature and a lower nature. The lower nature says to fight back. The higher nature says to let go. To which nature will you yield? The old man says, "Go ahead and fight." The new man says, "Yield to God and love." When we are told to yield to the new man inside us, some of us would say that it is not fair for we will get bullied. Everybody wants to bully us. We will be like little mice.

You have forgotten Proverbs 25:22. What is the last phrase there? Say and the Lord will reward you. If you will be patient, the Lord will reward you. I do not know how the Lord will reward but the Lord will reward. And the Lord will always see that in the end justice triumphs because He is the Almighty Policeman. He will see that justice and righteousness prevail. Look at the earth and the story of this earth. The just always survive in the end. Sometimes evil seems to thrive for ten years, twenty years, but in the end the wicked falls. There is a Person controlling the lives of people on this earth to see that righteousness, truth, and justice prevail. All He is asking for is to be patient and in the process keep showing love and the Lord will reward you. I wonder how many of us are daily losing our rewards.

Because we lose our reward unknowingly, we don't know what the reward could have been like. I can assure you that the rewards are tremendous. More than you could ever realize. Jesus says in Matt. 5:40 now this is a practical situation. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic - what did Jesus say? - let him have your cloak too. Some of us from the human side will say that is not fair. Wait a minute, it depends on how big you think your God is that He can supply your needs. Lets say for example, somebody comes to your home and some of your money was lying around the house. You see him taking one dollar and walking away. If you lose one dollar you would not take that fellow to court, will you? You know the reason. You could afford to lose a dollar. Think about the fact that you can afford that small loss. Your Father can afford to get you another tunic. Somebody wants to sue you for your tunic and you say, "I am going to fight you tooth and nail." Look at it this way. Your Father can afford that. Your Father is not El Gangster, El Terror. Your Father is El Mercy, El Shaddai. It depends on whether you know God as your Father and you know what you could afford. If somebody wants to take all those things and you say, "I am not sure whether God is going to give it back to me," then your problem is your faith in God and your relationship with your Father.

Say I have a rich Father. I have a rich heavenly Father. He owns all the cattle on the thousand hills. He owns all the silver and the gold on the planet earth.

When you look at it from that point, you see how big your God is. Can you afford the loss when somebody wants to sue you for your coat? You tell that person, "If you want it, then take it. No problem, I got a few thousand more." See it depends on our viewpoint. If we can see how big our Father is, how big our God is, we can freely give away what people ask or demand or steal from us. Some of you will say in heaven we got this silver and gold. We have a heavenly account that is unlimited. You just call Jesus' name and you can have any amount you want. Yes, but why is it not being transferred into my account yet? The key is patience and faith.

God the Father wants to see whether you believe in Him. For he who comes to God must believe that He exists. We believe our Father exists. We believe our Father God cares for us. If He gave His only begotten Son to die for your sin, will He not give you another coat, another tunic? We must believe that He is and must believe that He is the rewarder of everyone who seeks Him diligently. When we see how big our God is and when somebody comes and slaps you, you know why you can take it because your Father is bigger than him and you are strong and you can afford it. You can afford to take that kind of thing because the strong can bear with that imperfection of the weak.

Pastor Joshua, give me a punch here. Now I can take it because I am strong enough to take it and therefore I do not react. If we do not know that God is in us and that we are strong, we will want to react because we think that we are going to get killed. The reason many react is because of self-preservation. They think that if somebody slaps them, that will be the end of their life. It is the end of their reputation. They lose their face; they lose everything.

However, you remember you do not have to preserve yourself. You know who is on your inside, who is your strength, and you know that you could take it because you don't have to worry about your life. You see those two points there. The reason why you do not have to worry about people suing you and taking things away from you is because you can afford it. You have God as your Father. The reason why you can take a slap when people slap you is because you are not concerned about your own life. God is preserving your life. You know that if that fellow keeps punching you while you do not react negatively, one fine day your big Father God shows up and it will be a different story for him. So all the Father asks of you is to look to His bigness. Leave your life, your reputation and your name and everything in His hand if you are willing to allow Him to preserve your life. Do you realize that He can preserve our life better than we preserve our life?

Let us say that Joshua who punched me is not a believer and I punched him back. I am not aware that Joshua's friends are thugs. I am punching him back to preserve my life and to protect myself. However, do you know that in doing so I am actually endangering my life? Lets say Joshua knew a few top-notch gangsters and I only see Joshua. He punched me first and I punched him back. Suddenly gangster friends of Joshua surround me. Thus, to take action against Joshua just to preserve my own life is putting my life at greater risk.

However, if you are conscious that God is the one who preserves your life and that He will take care of Joshua, then you know that you do not have to slap back. The next time your reputation or whatever is at stake remember Jesus lives in you. Self-preservation is a lower form of human activity. Self-sacrifice and the willingness to

let go is the divine nature that God has imparted into those who are born again. So Jesus says somebody slaps you its O.K. because you can take it. You are strong. You can put up with the weak. Whoever compels you to go one mile go with him two. Give to him who asks you and to those who borrow from you do not turn away because God wants you to show love and mercy. He continues later on in the passages He says love your enemies - and that is the highest call for our life - and do good continually.

The whole story of Matthew chapter 5, 6 and 7 is based on the fact that Jesus wants us to walk in the realm of mercy and love where God dwells. Why mercy and love? Firstly, only mercy and love can eradicate evil. Lets say that fellow slapped you and you slapped him back. Have you eradicated evil? You have only punished the evil. Then you got to wrestle with your own conscience that you have become evil to overcome evil. It is impossible to eradicate evil any other way. Think about God. God is sitting on His throne in heaven and the goal of God is to eradicate evil not just to punish evil. Because we are so small, we are only thinking only of our little problem. God has to think about the universe. He is not interested in continuing evil. He is interested in removing all evil. When you look at the bigger view from God's point, we understand how we stop the progress of evil in our little relationships here and there. Do not look at evil from the worm's eye view. Look at it from God's point of view. To eradicate evil we need to show love and mercy.

Salvation

Why do we have to show love and mercy? Why not we repay evil for evil, judgment for judgment, fight for justice where you think justice should be meted out instead of leaving the matter in the hands of God? Why does God want us to show love and mercy? It is because God wants to save the evil people. If God is interested in punishing people and bringing them to justice, He could right now kill off every evil person. Lets say somebody punched you and you punched him back and killed him. What have you done? You have become a bigger evil. You have avenged yourself but you have not saved that person. You have allowed that person to die in his evil. There is no salvation for that person. God is not interested in just punishing the wicked. God is interested to save evildoers and turn them into good people. That is where the greatest glory comes. If we use any other method other than loving these evil people, we would never succeed in changing the evil person to a good person.

Many of us in the process of life may have done wrong things or made mistakes in our lives with regard to other, and in the eyes of other people we were bad to them. However, as we grow in life, we learn how to express ourselves better in a more loving way and thereby redeem our image in the eyes of people. What happen if we were never given a chance? Think about Saul one of the greatest apostles that lived. When he heard about the Christians he was mad against them. In the book of Acts 8:1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 9:1 Then Saul still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to persecute, to kill and to destroy the Christians. He was like a wild man. What happen if God had punished him? What happen if justice had been shown? There would have been no apostle Paul. We would have seen justice served. I mean when Saul was a bad man and he broke up families. Saul had plotted against the

church; that man has plotted and killed many Christians. What does the church gain by asking for justice and killing all the evil? Nothing.

God is interested in the salvation of sinners. He requires us to show mercy. Paul says in I Tim. 1:13 Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. No one would have known he done it ignorantly because God sees the heart that no man can see. We think that some wrongdoers ought to know what they are doing, but in fact, they do not really know. Paul obtained mercy because he was ignorant. If God have not shown love and mercy to Paul the church would not have seen I Cor. 13. Paul was one of the few men who knew the greatest love because he who is forgiven much loved much. He knew he did not deserve it. He knew that he deserved to die for all the wrong things he had done to the people of God. In other passages, he said that he was the chief of sinners. He knew that what he received was mercy. He that is loved much will love much. This same man wrote one of the most beautiful poems of love in I Cor. 13.

God is interested in salvation. The reason why He asked you to love people who hurt you; to love your enemy; to show mercy is not that He does not care for your life. He does but He is asking you this one favor. Can you for a moment of time not just think about yourself and all that you are? Think about the other person who is causing all these things. Do you want that person to be saved or not? If you want that person to be saved, you must show love and mercy. If you decide that you do not want that person to be saved, I am sorry for you. You are not acting like God. Are we just interested in punishing evil? Or are we interested to save those who are evil.

In every human being, there is a spark of goodness. If they have been brought up correctly, influenced correctly, guided correctly, we may never know how great a benefit to humankind that person could have been. However, maybe you could be the key to those people. Even the world knows how to do good to those who are good to them and do bad to those who are bad to them. If you act like the world, what difference is there between the world and you; between the people of God and the people who know not any god? Since we know God, we are the people who should show love and mercy where justice is required. Where judgment is required, we withhold judgment and we show love and mercy so that the person can be redeemed and saved. That is all God requires of you.

God is interested in redemption and in salvation. Are you interested in the same thing He is interested in? If you are show love and mercy to everyone good and bad, you will be an instrument for God to bring salvation and mercy. Who knows what good all those people could do when they come to know God. Who would have dreamed that the person who had murdered, killed, and threatened the church would become one of the greatest apostles of the New Testament age and sacrifice even more than all the other apostles to bring the gospel to other men? Who would have thought that this thing could have happened?

Glorification

By glorification, we mean the revelation. Much of the world and sadly many Christians have the wrong image of God. They think of God as the big man upstairs with a stick all ready to hit them and punish them. The Bible has always shown that

although God has to judge; God has to bring forth judgment; that behind all His judgment is a heart full of love. Whenever He has to judge, you can find that He is grieved. Now if God really enjoy punishing people why then did Gen. 6 says He grieved in His heart. The Hebrew word for the word grief is the word sorrow. God was sad. God was sorrowful. He felt sorrow. Yet, Almighty God felt sorrow when He had to judge. The highest revelation of God is not the revelation of God as judge. The highest revelation of God is a God of love. That is why every other religion managed to somehow come to the revelation that God is a God of justice and a judge. All religions teach some good. Look at the concept of God in all religion. It is the concept of God as a judge. He as a good judge will be fair. However, you will never find in any religion of the world the concept of the God of love. The highest revelation of God is not that God is a judge; that He is a fair God and a righteous God. That is the revelation that even unbelievers and philosophers can come to.

However, no philosopher could come to the highest revelation that God is a God of love and a God of mercy. This revelation of a God of love and mercy came only when Jesus Christ revealed that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Look at it this way God did not have to send His Son. He could have created a new species. Why should He continue to work with humankind? He had the power to create. God could have just wiped this world off. However, God saw how weak man was; how deceived they were by the enemy without realizing it; how blind they were to the spiritual world of darkness where the devil is trying to kill all of them. God also said there is no way I could save them if I can't find one righteous and sinless person in their midst to make sacrifice. Even if I can find one, would he be willing to sacrifice for the rest of humankind? God looked high and low, far and wide, there was no one. Therefore, God said He was willing to allow Jesus Christ the Word of God to come to live and die for us because He loved us. He wants us to be saved. While we were enemies of God, God loved us and send His only begotten Son to die on the cross for us. That is the highest revelation that we ever seen.

For the first time, even the angels saw something they never saw before. Angels were created before men were created. They have seen God; they know God. Lucifer once upon a time was an archangel before he fell. Even then, no angel has ever seen how much God could love. When they saw how much God love even His fallen creation called man, even the angels could not comprehend this high revelation. The greatest revelation of God is that God is a God of love. That is why when you and I are confronted with a situation where we could exercise love or exercise revenge, when we choose to exercise love we are bringing the highest glory we could to God by allowing people to see the love of God in our life. The highest revelation we bring to the world is not the revelation of justice, and judgment and fairness although all those things are part of Christian life. The highest revelation we bring to the world is that God is a God of love. Yes, He is a God of justice and sin has to be punished but He is saying He would rather take the punishment Himself so that we can be free.

In all the highest points of Israel in the highest revelation of God you never see them showing God as a God of judgment. In the highest point of Israel all their worship revolve around the fact that God is good and His mercy endures forever. That was sung in the time of Solomon; that was sung every time there is a temple sacrifice. The

love of God is the highest revelation of God. When God reveals Himself as a God of mercy and love, you see the highest revelation.

Glorifying God on this earth is not just a matter of witnessing. Now witnessing has to be done with love. We do not go to the streets and tell people in a very fierce tone that if they do not accept Jesus now, they are going to burn in hell although that is the truth. If there is no love in our hearts for them, we did not bring the highest revelation. The highest revelation is a message of love. Love compels us to warn them to come back to God to avoid the devil's snare to trap and kill them. The highest revelation that you can bring to them is a revelation of love. You speak the message of the Good News and you act out the message.

If we Christians do not act out in love and mercy, we are not glorifying God at all. If we Christians just act in fairness and justice, we have not really glorified God yet. Even out there in the world unbelievers could reach that revelation. However, if we Christians begin to act in love and mercy that the world can not understand, can not comprehend - they say this is something that they have never seen before - then we are glorifying the God of love and mercy.

Forgiveness, love and mercy are the attributes of the new creation. That is why if you and I want to really glorify God with our life to our family, friends and the people around us who don't know God, we need to keep showing them love and mercy. You need to keep showing them that you love them. You got to keep showing mercy to them. That will glorify God. In the end, there is eradication of evil through love and mercy. There is salvation of evildoers by love and mercy. There is glorification of God Himself through love and mercy. That in the end is our prime goal on this earth. This is the Good News the gospel of Jesus Christ and our highest message to people is that God is love. If you find love, you will begin to find God. This love must be Agape love and not human selfish love but the true love of God. It is the goal of God to eradicate all the curse of the law; to eradicate evil from this earth. It is the goal of every Christian that we should eradicate the curse of the law; eradicate poverty; eradicate sin and sickness; eradicate spiritual darkness. We need to continue these goals in our life. Whenever you have the opportunity to eradicate evil through love and mercy you should. This is the highest call for God. So the mercy of God from the philosophical and theological point of view need to be shown by God and by us because it is the only way to:

1. Eradicate evil;
2. The salvation of the evildoers and to;
3. Glorify God by revealing His love and mercy in all His fullness.