

## Practical Godliness

### Lesson 2 | Grace and Mercy



Few things are more profound than the thought that all our sins can be forgiven and those who endure to the end shall be saved (**Matt 24:13**). How are our sins forgiven? How does a Lamb take away the sin of the world (**John 1:29**)? I will give you a hint, the process of the removal of sin from this earth and our earthen vessels (our body temples) revolves around a practical and Biblical understanding of grace and mercy.

<sup>19</sup> And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be **gracious** to whom I will be gracious and will shew **mercy** on whom I will shew mercy. **Exodus 33:19**

The first realization a Christian must have of the God of the Bible is that our Heavenly Father is both gracious and merciful and that these characteristic traits are 2 entirely different traits and should not be used interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, **merciful and gracious**, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... **Exodus 34:6-7**

At an earlier period God had announced Himself to Moses, in the glory of His self-existent and eternal majesty, as "I am" (**Ex 3:14**); now He makes Himself known in the glory of His grace and goodness-- attributes that were to be illustriously displayed in the future history and **experience of His bride, the church**. What experience is the bride to have with her husband-to-be? The answer lies deeper in the sanctuary and the Jewish wedding ceremony where grace and mercy are further described.

The second thing a Christian must learn in understanding how to live like Christ, who was the epitome of practical godliness, is what the definitions of these 2 words are and what God expects of us in also being merciful and gracious to those God places in our lives.

<sup>6</sup> But one in a certain place testified, saying, **what is man, that thou art mindful of him?** or the son of man, that thou visitest him? <sup>7</sup> Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: <sup>8</sup> Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. <sup>9</sup> **But we see Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; **that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.** <sup>10</sup> For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. **Hebrews 2:6-10**

1. This passage in Hebrews depicts one of the clearest pictures of grace and mercy in the entire New Testament of our Lord and Savior. Verses 6-9 show the descent of the Son of Almighty God lowering himself to that of something lower than even the angels, that of a man, born in the likeness of his brethren and tempted in all points like we are (**Heb 2:14-18**) for the suffering of death (**Heb 2:9**) bearing

the wrath of Almighty God (**Matt 26:39-42**) so we who live our lives unto godly repentance and faith in Jesus do not have to. Now, what is significant about this passage is what it reveals about **grace and mercy**.

2. **In verse 9**, the arrangement of the verse shows that Jesus, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. Question. Why was it grace in the eyes of God that His only Begotten Son should taste death for every man? Worded differently, why did Christ find grace in the eyes of His Father for enduring the suffering and death of the cross (**Heb 12:1-2**)? Why was it grace in the eyes of God that Jesus should taste death? We must understand the Biblical definition of the word grace in order to understand the gravity of what is being said here. In the Bible the term “found grace” in Greek is the same as saying to *find approval or acceptance*. It’s like the sacrifices that Abel and Cain offered. Like Abel’s lamb, the sacrifice of Christ’s life was an acceptable payment for the sins of the world.

3. **In verse 6 and 10**, we read “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him... For it became Him!” What was asked of Christ that he visited man and it became him [Jesus Christ] “to make the captain of our salvation...” Here the **mercy** manifests itself as what Christ became for us so that we may be withheld something that we do deserve and that is the second death (**Rev 21:8**). In Genesis and Leviticus there has been taught through all these ages the very truth which we find here taught in the second chapter of Hebrews—the truth that man has lost his inheritance and is himself also in bondage. And as he himself cannot redeem himself nor his inheritance, the right of redemption falls to the nearest of kin who is able; and Jesus Christ is the only one in all the universe who is able. Redemption cannot be achieved without grace or mercy. It was **grace** for Jesus that He should in our place and it is the **mercy** of Jesus that we do not have to endure the same because He is the captain of our salvation and that was His decision to make – we serve such a good God. Those who reject the grace and mercy of God are rejecting their own redemption and therefore it is eternal life to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent (**John 17:3**).

4. **In verse 10**, “perfect through sufferings”, Christ could not be a perfect sympathizer unless He bore our suffering (a symbol of His grace and mercy toward us). He did not look at sin from the distance of heaven, but He walked and lived in the midst of it. He knows all shapes of suffering: sickness, disease, poverty, need, friendlessness, hopelessness, desertion. You cannot cast human suffering into any shape that is new to Christ. In Him there is every pang that tears the heart, every grief that forces tears from the eyes. Everything that is inevitable to flesh and blood, to hearts that break, to eyes that cry, and spirits that are depressed and burdened, Jesus knows.

### Thought to ponder:

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death, which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. “With His stripes we are healed.” (**Isa 53:5**)

What does all this mean? How does such a profound lesson on grace and mercy become practical in our daily lives? If you haven't figured it out yet, grace and mercy together are depicted by one thing: **The Blood**. It is the blood AND life of Christ that was the cost of sin, the just requirement of the law (**Rom 8:3**) and required as an atonement (**Rom 3:25**) to take our place in the judgment so that those who are in Christ have been removed from the condemnation of the law (**Rom 8:1**) and purified by the blood of sprinkling (**Heb 12:24**).

In 1901, a statement was written in a newsletter called *The Review and Herald*:

*“Christ planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection, it is enough, He said, the atonement is complete.”*

The only way to complete the atonement, concerning the full payment of sin, was to legally satisfy the demands of God's eternal law with an eternal payment, an eternal covering, an everlasting gospel – where it was the **grace** of God that Christ tasted death for every man so that we may find **mercy** in the eyes of a just and holy God and be saved.

## Grace is best understood when juxtaposed next to Mercy

- **Mercy** is to be withheld something we **do** deserve (**Ps 6:2**).
- It is mercy for us that we do not have to painfully die for our sins (**Ps 89:1**).
- **Grace** means to receive something we **do not** deserve (**Rom 5:2**).
- It is grace for us to receive forgiveness and pardon from our sins (**Eph 2:8**).
- Therefore, it was grace for Christ to die in our place for our sins and bare the wrath of Almighty God and pay the ransom that no sinful man could pay and offer the atonement that no mortal could provide. Christ did not deserve to die, therefore He found grace in the eyes of God the Father in his sacrifice and offering (**Eph 5:2**).

