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THE MERCY OF GOD Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Romans 11:30-36**.
For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, **31** so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. **32** For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. **33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! **34** For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? **35** Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? **36** For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

B. One more lesson in the above passage. Xians are people who have received mercy as to be saved.

C. My favorite "working definition" of grace and mercy is:
Mercy is not getting what you deserve; grace is getting what you do not deserve.

D. Jesus said that the merciful will receive mercy (Mt. 5:7).
"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

I. **MANKIND'S NEED FOR MERCY.**

A. It goes without saying that everyone is lost because of sin (Rom. 3:10,23).
(Rom 3:10) as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
(Rom 3:23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

B. Our sinful condition is not a pretty picture:

1. We are dead in sin (Eph. 2:1).
And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
   a. Trespasses are a violation of the law.
   b. Sin is to miss the mark, a failing to live up to expectations.
2. We walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
3. We walk in the lusts of the flesh and the mind (Eph. 2:3).
Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

C. If God were to give us what we deserve (justice), we would be eternally condemned (2Th. 1:6-9).
For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

D. Notice the hopelessness of those without Christ (Eph. 2:12).
remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

II. **GOD'S CHOICE TO EXTEND MERCY.**

A. Two very powerful words in scripture are, "But God...".

B. God is rich in mercy. His great love for mankind caused Him to act in our behalf. Mercy is love aimed at someone.

C. Don't make your love nebulous and unfocused; aim it at somebody. Start with your enemies; the very people you can't stand, because that's what God did! (Rom. 5:8,10).
But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us… **10** For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

D. God's mercy teaches two important lessons:
   1. Mercy is something done in love, for another. Mercy is NOT a feeling (Lk. 10:30-37; esp. v37).
      (Lk 10:37) And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."
   2. Mercy knows no limits (Lk. 10:29). Do we try to put limits on our love?
      But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

E. Look again at Eph. 2:4.
   But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
   God could show mercy because he had great love. People who do not love will not show mercy.

III. SAVED, NOT BY DEEDS DONE, BUT BY MERCY.

A. Scripture text: Titus 3:4-7.
   But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, **5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

B. God has intervened in our behalf, showing His great mercy, which allows us to be saved.

C. The ASV translates "washing" as "laver" which adds a more vivid description. As the OT priest washed in the brass basin, we are washed in the baptismal, to be able to perform priestly duties.

D. Verse 5 is unmistakably baptism due to the references to washing and renewing by the HS (Ac. 2:38; 5:32; 22:16; Jn. 3:3-5).
   (Jn 3:3-5) Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **4** Nicodemus said^ to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" **5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
   (Ac 2:38) And Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
   (Ac 5:32) "And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."
   (Ac 22:16) 'And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

E. Responding to the mercy of God in obedience results in our purification by grace (Ti. 3:7; Eph. 2:5).
   (Eph 2:5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
   (Ti 3:7) that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

IV. GOD'S GRACE AND WISDOM.

A. See Rom. 11:30-32.
   For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, **31** so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. **32** For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

B. Let me paraphrase these verses; *"Because of the unbelief of the Jews, you Gentiles were saved. Now, may it be that through your salvation Israel will come to know Christ."*

C. Israel's hardness is only "in part" (11:25), which means that individual Jews can be saved. God has included "all in unbelief"--Jews and Gentiles--so that **all** might have the opportunity to be saved by grace.

D. God chose the Jews so that the Gentiles could be saved. God's promise to Abraham was that "in you all families of the earth *will* be blessed." The tragedy was that Jesus came unto His own people and they rejected Him (Jn. 1:11), and so the gospel went to the Gentiles.

E. Our sovereign God has mercy to all!

V. PRAY FOR AND DESIRE MERCY.

A. Xians are to pray to God and obtain mercy (Heb. 4:16; Lk. 18:13).

(Lk 18:13) "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
(Heb 4:16) Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

B. Practicing mercy overcomes condemnation and judgment (Jas. 2:13).
For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

C. Jesus has asked us to be merciful. He desires compassion not sacrifice. Do we strive to be merciful, or do we require justice? (Mt. 9:13; 12:7).
(Mt 9:13) "But go and learn what *this* means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
(Mt 12:7) "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

D. Mercy is one of the weightier matters of the law (Mt. 23:23).
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.
Justice when necessary, and mercy always.

E. To forebear means to relax or loosen; to delay punishment. Let your forbearing spirit (mercy) be evident to all (Phil. 4:5).
Let your forbearing *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Realize who you are; a person who has received mercy. Let's begin to show greater mercy in our relationships.

B. Jesus is the great rock of our salvation. Is He your cornerstone of salvation or stumbling stone of offense?

C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.