

Mercy comes before Grace:

the definition of God's love

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

Lawlessness. It is the evidence of evil and the weapon used against us in the Spirit. As we look around us, we see it everywhere. It is the harbinger of biblical prophecy, and the force used to pull the plow of fear through the fertile soil of the hearts of man. The body of Christ, the church, knows the disdain God has for it and remembers the warnings we have been given in scripture of its effects in our lives. Many Christians look on in disbelief and disgust, as the very fabric of our faith is set ablaze by the flames of iniquity, accompanied by persecution to any who may speak against it. They find their focus turned to the fires of this world and not the Flame of the Holy Spirit.

Religion teaches to “accept them as they are and do not speak of the consequences”, “let them keep their lifestyles with no emphasis on the Word of God.” Teachings of capitulation in any arena where resistance may occur has created confusion in the church and apathy has resulted. The love of God has been replaced with self-righteous pity for the lost, expressed by many “Christians” as they stand observing from the windows of their church buildings, not daring to step outside and get involved. Promises of prayer are vocalized for every cry expressed both inside and outside the walls, but many do not fulfill these promises or even know how to biblically pray, as their bibles collect another day of dust. The calls of the Holy Spirit fall on deaf ears as they snuggle deeper into their misperceived security of their salvation, and move on to their next TV show, radio station, pod cast or social media post. This is lawlessness veiled in self-righteousness! No fear of the Lord!

Today, I am led to preach about God’s mercy, our need to recognize it, and its necessity in our daily life.

1. Mercy is the enemy of pride and the path to Salvation:

- To fall on God's mercy is to understand and accept one's hopelessness in both the physical realm and the spiritual realm without him, and surrendering one's will for his because of the revelation of his love.
- It starts by hearing the word of God with one's heart.
 - o **Romans 10:17** - "17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."
 - o It happens when one comes to the end of oneself, during, or at the end of dire circumstances. This is a true, personal realization of evil.

2. Mercy is the extended hand of God to all who will take it:

- It is the true representation of the love of God.
 - o **Psalms 25:6** - "6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old."
 - o **Psalms 51:1** - "1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."

Psalm 86- "Great Is Your Steadfast Love"

A Prayer of David.

86 Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy. ² Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God. ³ Be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all the day. ⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. ⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. ⁶ Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
listen to my plea for grace. ⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you,
for you answer me. ⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours. ⁹ All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. ¹⁰ For you are great and do
wondrous things; you alone are God. ¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. ¹² I give thanks to you, O
Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. ¹³ For great is your
steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

¹⁴ O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seeks my life,
and they do not set you before them. ¹⁵ But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. ¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to
me; give your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant. ¹⁷ Show me a sign
of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, LORD, have
helped me and comforted me.

3. Humility is a mirror to the soul and the posture of faith:

- **Proverbs 28:13-** “¹³ Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”
- Ignorance of the truth is the fertile soil where lies flourish.
- Apathy is the fruit of ignorance and the antithesis of freedom.
- Truth is the genesis of common sense.
- Common sense In Word and action, is the enemy of lies, hate, and destruction.

4. Repentance is evident by redemption and renewal:

- **2 Chronicles 7:14-** “¹⁴ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
- What fruit are we bearing?

5. Deliverance is freedom and our daily bread:

- **Matthew 15:21-28-** “²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ And he answered, “It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.”
- The bread is all blessings we receive in Salvation.
- Jesus tested her humility.
- The Canaanites were baal worshippers. They consistently tempted Israelites to worship their gods. The woman denounced other gods by calling Jesus “Lord”.
- She admitted her sin / station and repented.
- She pleased God and deliverance followed.
- **John 8:31-32-** “³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
- Freedom only comes from truth that is known / experienced.
- Spiritual warfare is to speak truth to lies As Jesus did to Satan when being tempted in the desert.
- We must understand the motives of the lies, and this requires action on our part. We must be “wise as the serpent but harmless as the dove”.

6. Devotion is the pivot point of the heart and faithful action:

- **Colossians 4:2-**"² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."
- We are expected to give to the world, what Christ has given to us.
- This must be done by word and action through active faith.
- Matthew 12:1-8- "**Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath**
- **12** At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³ He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶ I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."
- Mercy (God's Love) should always lead every interaction we have with others.

7. God's love (Mercy) shown through His church results in the manifestation of his Glory in this world.

- Man has plans with no purpose, God has purpose with a plan
- The world expects the law, but mercy is what saves the soul and wins the hearts and minds of the people.
- Revival is the culmination of these processes on a worldwide scale.
- Personal revival always supersedes group revival.

As you may have noticed by now, these points have followed the steps of salvation.

- Faith by hearing the Word of Jesus Christ.
- Revelation of God's Mercy and Love.
- Humility in accepting that you are flawed, sinful and powerless without God.
- Repentance that is evident by complete change.
- Deliverance is the truest form of Spiritual warfare.
- Freedom in the likeness of God.
- Devotion is the proving grounds of God's Faith gifted to us.
- The manifestation of God's Glory in our lives and the lives around us.

Religion teaches that Salvation is a "one and done" action, and our responsibilities are finished. Our responsibilities only begin with Salvation in fact! We must strive for a relationship with God so deeply that we surrender completely and moment by moment, just as we did at the moment of our Salvation! All of this is contingent on two things: 1. On our total dependence on the power of God, not our strength. 2. The devotion and obedient actions of the body of Christ to believe and speak.

Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "²²The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Apathy is pride and rebellion! It is to put personal interests ahead of God, thus placing yourself as God of your life like the world does, and to sit on the throne of your life. Apathy of the believer is what allows evil to rage to the point of a precipice. This is where we are now. No matter how bad it gets, God will reverse it through His obedient people to show His power and refuge. God reverses by revelation and revival in His people, and He will be glorified!