

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What books says, "Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them"?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Gedaliah's - Jeremiah 41:4-5

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Mercy

Mike Rosser

If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice in eternity. That is a justice none should desire.

Those who seek to meet God without His intervening mercy should first be introduced to the men of Beth Shemesh in 1 Samuel 6:10–19. They were harvesting wheat in their fields when the ark of God came to them by way of the Philistines. Perhaps because they desired to know if the Philistines had tampered with the holy contents, they removed the mercy seat, peered into the ark of God, and perished! Not only had they touched the ark, which by itself carried the death penalty (Numbers 4:15), they also came face to face with the perfect law of God inscribed on the tablets of stone. When mercy is removed, blind justice prevails. The stunned survivors in Beth Shemesh responded, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Samuel 6:20). The question is rhetorical and the answer is obviously, "No one!" Not without God's mercy, that is.

What are we describing when we speak of God's mercy? The Hebrew word most often translated mercy in the Old Testament is *cheded*, which simply means kindness, or

loving-kindness (Psalms 62:12). Another Hebrew word often translated mercy is racham, and it speaks of God's compassion and pity (Hosea 14:3). A third word for mercy is chanan, and it describes "one who bends or stoops in kindness to an inferior; to favor, bestow" (Strong). See Psalms 4:1; 6:2; 25:16. In the New Testament, the Greek word eleos is translated mercy and is defined as "the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it" (Vine). Eleos speaks of a "God, who is rich in mercy ..." (Ephesians 2:4). The verb form eleeo clearly shows the active nature of mercy. Two blind men following Jesus cried out saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us" (Matthew 9:27). They weren't seeking simple pity. They wanted to see! And He opened their eyes. The woman from Canaan came seeking healing for her daughter. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed" (Matthew 15:22). The disciples, considering her a nuisance, encouraged Jesus to send her away. She begged Jesus, "Lord, help me!" (v. 25). He did not disappoint her. Her daughter was healed.

Mercy is more than mere pity. While it is true that mercy begins in the heart of God, it does not end there. His kind and loving heart leads Him to extend a helping hand. God saw the oppression of His people, heard their cry, and responded by coming "down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:7, 8). Pity can occur from afar. Mercy must find its way to the scene. Television images of starvation, suffering, and death can make us feel sorry for people. Mercy leads us to do something about their pitiful condition. "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son ..." (John 3:16). God acts because He cares. Mercy joins attitude to activity. Why does God "pardon iniquity" by "casting all our sins into the depths of the sea?" Because He "delights in mercy" (Micah 7:18, 19). Mercy, in

all its kindness and compassion, describes the very heart of God. One glimpse of Jesus on the cross should remove any doubt about the reality and depth of God's mercy toward mankind.

Mercy is not confined to the attitude and activity of God. Those who would be children of God must model His mercy. The parable of the Good Samaritan identifies the one who helped the victim as, "He who showed mercy on him." Jesus challenged the lawyer to, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:36, 37). Again, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). We are called not just to show mercy but to love mercy. It is the attitude of gratitude behind the action that makes it truly merciful. The merciful do not just feel sorry for the suffering, they comfort them. They refuse to return evil for evil, but offer a blessing instead. They will not merely lament the fact that people are lost, they reach out to save them! "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Are we responding to the challenge?

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