2020 09 13 HAVING MERCY

Exodus 14:19-31. Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11,20-21. Romans 14:1-12. Matthew 18:21-35.

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­*have mercy – a cry of pleading, begging, don’t hurt me, don’t leave me! - this is a cry of pity – a counterfeit of all that mercy is pity comes from compromised emotions – a sort of easing of conscience.*

It is not the overwhelming wonder of God reaching out to us and offering us mercy.

Mercy which comes from total love and beauty and patience and --- well from and with everything.

“God loved us so much that He gave His only beloved Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Mercy reflected in the statement re the Romans practice of discarding unwanted babies – leaving them to die: “I saw you abandoned in your birth blood and discarded beside the road and I said to you ‘live’”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Mercy that resulted in God seperating ‘Himself’ from Jesus on the cross having become sin for you and me.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Mercy that gathers us to Himself as a mother hen gathers her chickens under the warmth of her wings and they sleep.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Matthew 18:21-35. (recap)

“Mercy and truth have kissed each other”[[5]](#footnote-5) but not in this story:

A great monetary debt was forgiven but it was not pasted onto forgiving a small debt and there was no peace because there was no mercy in the heart of the one forgiven much and the debt came back to him with a vengeance.

Mercy is not a static, cling to myself gift, it flows out from an overwhelmingly grateful person.

Our Lord Jesus said to forgive an infinite number of times and in another place he said to “pray for those who spitefully use you, bless them and do not curse”[[6]](#footnote-6). Surely this is the ultimate test of and outpouring of mercy – forgiving with such a heart of settledness in God that we can see, feel through the hurt of the insult or betrayal or being ignored – through the feeling of being wronged and yet still wanting good for the other person, even if they do not care or respond.

“God loved us – Jesus died for us when we wanted nothing to do with Him”[[7]](#footnote-7) “While you were still in your sins Jesus died for you.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Mercy and forgivness does not mean that we are fools and “cast our pearls before swine”[[9]](#footnote-9) i.e. Keep exposing ourselves for hurt, yes forgive, show mercy, take a chance but be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”[[10]](#footnote-10) This is a nervous statement from myself – “if someone hits you on the right cheek, offer them the left as well.”[[11]](#footnote-11) I struggle to express the, for me, difference between forgiveness and reconciliation – reconciliation takes both parties to be genuine and “Jesus did not trust himself to them because he knew what was in the heart of man.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

I see it as “love your neighbour as yourself”[[13]](#footnote-13) meaning “walk in their shoes, be as sensitive to their needs and frailties as you are to your own.” To be there for them but not to be in a place of hindering their repentance and coming to God by taking away their responsibility.

(Jan Alcott)

V35 Our Lord says to “forgive your brother from your heart.”

Now the heart may take some time to reach this point and it is wise to hold retorts and back slander inside our mouths until we allow Gods Presence to work within us. *Do not press ‘send’ on that email!.*

*I am equating mercy with forgiveness.*

In the Lords Prayer we are asking God “to forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Think carefully about praying those words unless we mean them – is there anyone who has hurt us that we have not turned the hurt over to God and asked God to work it out – not to ‘pay them back’ but to release them into Gods care to bring them to repentance and into His family with us.

Romans 14:1-12 READ

In v5b we come again to the genuineness of our attitudes “each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.” Yet not to step on anothers’ conscience – we are to be sensitive to where others are in their walk in life.

This relates to the attitude of each of us to other believers’ whatever stage of growth that they are in. It does not mean accepting wrong but in walking with them to grow in trust in God and living a life that chooses Gods ways before the standards of the world.

As a friend said at a recent meeting when we were discussion Pauls comments in Romans seven about the good that he wants to do but does not and the things that he does not want to do he does –“we are spirit beings living in earthly bodies – not earthly bodies reaching up to being spiritual”.

God in Jesus has brought us, restored our spirit new and clean in His presence. “You must be born again or you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Obviously as the person whom Jesus said this to pointed out that we cannot re-enter our mother stomach and be physically born again – but that our spirit died was disconnected from God through our choosing ways that that did not honour the God who created us but honoured ourselves.

We come to the cross of Jesus and are forgiven, made clean and receive the righteousness of God – we have the Spirit – the Presence of God in us and the Mercy of God can move from us to others.

May it be so – may we be blessed in finding all our needs met in God.

At Calvary

[The Collingsworth Family](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEA_enAU899AU899&sxsrf=ALeKk023yZHuTbcLPwq2pgYnGvy_t8OW9A:1599945597056&q=The+Collingsworth+Family&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLVT9c3NMwwzkkrt8wuW8QqEZKRquCcn5OTmZdeXJ5fVJKh4JaYm5lTCQC9XXsmLAAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjJrOPnxeTrAhUadCsKHSStA3QQMTAAegQICRAD)

Years I spend in vanity and pride  
Caring not my Lord was crucified  
Knowing not it was for me He died  
On Calvary

Mercy there was great and grace was free  
Pardon there was multiplied to me  
There my burdened soul found liberty  
At Calvary

By Gods words at last my sin I learned  
Then I tremble at the law I'd spurned  
Till my guilty soul imploring turned  
To Calvary

O the love that drew salvation's plan  
O the grace that brought it down to man  
O the mighty gulf that God did span  
At Calvary

Mercy there was great and grace was free  
Pardon there was multiplied to me  
There my burdened soul found liberty  
At Calvary

Oh and now I've given to Jesus everything  
Now I gladly own Him as my King  
Now my raptured soul can only sing  
Of Calvary

Mercy there was great and grace was free  
Pardon there was multiplied to me  
There my burdened soul found liberty  
At Calvary

Mercy there was great and grace was free  
At Calvary  
Calvary...

1. John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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