

October 27 Worship

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Be mindful of thy mercy, O Lord, and of thy steadfast love, for they have been from of old.”* Psalm 25:6

Opening Scripture- Jeremiah 31:7-9(page 679)

Opening Chorus- 93- The Wonder Of It All

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Sing aloud with gladness.

People: God is gathering the people!

Leader: From the farthest parts of the earth we come.

People: All who struggle; all who labor with new life!

Leader: Those who are weeping, God will console.

People: Those who get lost find a clear path home.

All: Let us worship the God who gathers us!

Hymn- 94- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Unison Prayer- Ever-calling God, we give thanks that you have gathered us into your church and graced us with your faithful presence. We ponder our history, ancient and still developing, and marvel at the many expressions of your church. Grant us the vision to be a part of a new reformation for the Church that will bring ever more joy and justice to the world. Continue to gather us, the diverse lot of us, into Jesus' vision and dream that your faithful people may be one in you. We pray as Jesus taught, saying....*Lord's Prayer*....

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 126(page 537)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Mark 10:46-52(page 879)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 90- Tell Me The Old, Old Story

New Testament Scripture- Hebrews 7:23-28(1047-1048)

Message

“God, Have Mercy”

If you have ever been in the south or had interaction with someone from the south, you will have heard the phrase; “Lord have mercy” said to you at least once in a conversation. It is generally used as an expression of amazement of frustration and was one of my father's most used sayings when he became tired of my antics or foolishness. This saying has become more common here in the north in the last few decades but it doesn't seem to have the same effect when spoken with a Yankee accent. There is something about a southern drawl that makes many sayings more understandable.

When we speak out and ask God for mercy, do we understand just what His mercy is? Usually, we equate mercy with God giving us either what we want or giving us our own way in something. In scripture, mercy describes a divine attribute of God's nature; “He is rich in mercy”(Ephesians 2:4), and “His mercy is great”(2 Samuel 24:14). Mercy is revealed in the actions God takes to relieve suffering and demonstrate His faithfulness and steadfast love. Mercy is such an exceptionally complex concept that several Hebrew and Greek words are used to express the dimensions of its meaning. Synonyms like compassion, loving kindness, favor, and steadfast love often appear in Bible translations to illustrate the idea of mercy. A brief biblical definition of mercy is; “The gift of God's undeserved kindness and compassion.

Last week, I spoke about God's grace. I don't think that it is possible to speak about grace without bringing up the topic of mercy. They are somewhat the same but yet quite different. Remember, I told you last week; “God shows both mercy and grace, but they are not the same. Mercy withholds a punishment we deserve; grace gives a blessing we don't deserve.” When we ask for mercy, we must keep in mind that we are sinners by nature and what we are asking for we do not deserve. In God's mercy, He shows leniency. He withholds punishment from sinners even though they deserve it: “But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are!” (Nehemiah 9:31). God's mercy also causes Him to give good gifts to those who are undeserving: “Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us” (Luke 1:78). Thus, mercy is related to grace.

The word mercy is found about 276 times in the Bible. This includes the word merciful. God being merciful basically means that, when we deserve punishment, God doesn't punish us, and in fact blesses us instead. Mercy is simply the withholding of a just condemnation. Throughout the Bible, God gives many illustrations of His mercy. God fully demonstrates His mercy for us in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ to us. Jesus taught us all about mercy in a parable. Please turn in your pew Bibles to page 853. Follow along with me as I read from Matthew 18:23-33; “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison till

he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' In this parable we read about God's mercy but there is a lesson in there that we tend to overlook most of the time. Mercy is not just a one-way street.

When we turn to God, looking for mercy, have we overlooked being merciful to someone else? Asking for mercy when we have not shown mercy is one sure way to discover just what we deserve from God. It is kind of like asking for forgiveness from God while refusing to forgive someone who has wronged us. While mercy and forgiveness are closely related there are differences that we may someday get into but we don't have the time today. Just understand that if we ask for mercy, we must be merciful just as asking forgiveness requires that we forgive.

Our Christian faith is unique in that God's mercy is shown through His justice. It is necessary for us to remember that just because we have accepted Christ and the Holy Spirit, and we have been forgiven our sins, past, present and future, there will still come a time when we all will stand before God and be judged. But I've accepted Jesus and I have been baptized and I go to church and do all that is expected of me why do I need to be judged? It is because we have all sinned and we will continue to sin despite having Christ. The difference will be that for those who truly follow Christ, He will stand with us and it will be recorded that He, Jesus has paid the price for our redemption. He has paid the fine, He has taken the punishment that we deserve. He did this on the cross at Calvary.

As Christ died for sinners, He also demonstrated God's righteousness; His death on the cross showcased God's justice. all the sin from Adam to the time of Christ was under the forbearance and mercy of God. God in His mercy chose not to punish sin, which would require an eternity in hell for all sinners, although He would have been perfectly just in doing so. Adam and Eve were not immediately destroyed when they ate the forbidden fruit. Instead, God planned a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). In His love God sent His own Son (John 3:16). Christ paid for every single sin ever committed; thus, God was just in punishing sin, and He can also justify sinners who receive Christ by faith (Romans 3:26). God's justice and His mercy were demonstrated by Christ's death on the cross. At the cross, God's justice was meted out in full, upon Christ, and God's mercy was extended in full to all who believe. So God's perfect mercy was exercised through His perfect justice. Praise be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- Jesus Christ, Son of David, have mercy upon us! So many days, we are like the blind beggar in Mark's gospel, sitting on the side of the road hoping to hear the sounds of your coming. We are like the Canaanite woman begging for the crumbs that fall from your table. We are like the woman who was sick for so many years who reached out to touch the hem of your garment. Have mercy upon us when we cannot see how we will make it, Have mercy upon us when we are sick and cannot get well, Have mercy upon us when life hardens our hearts and makes it difficult for us to love, to heal or to forgive, Have mercy upon us when persecution comes and when we are misunderstood. We come, confident that your promise to be with us always is true, confident that you are greater than the trials we face, confident that we are secure in the palm of your hands. We come to you today, like blind Bartimaeus who sat on

the side of the road to Jericho, knowing that you love us and have not forgotten our needs. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 227- Down At The Cross

Benediction- Go in peace, love and care for one another in Christ's name, Go in the confidence of people who have found mercy through him, keeping the commandments and letting go of all that binds you to the ways of this world, And may God come close to you and keep you safe; may Christ Jesus reward your faithfulness a hundredfold; and may the Holy Spirit be your help in time of need. both now and for evermore. Amen.