

The Theology of Mercy and Grace

Taught 08-15-2010, Sunday School

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Hanover Park, Illinois

Mercy of God

Definition

Mercy is God's goodness to those who are in **distress** and abject spiritual **poverty**.

- This is the emphasis in the Scriptures.
- What is abject poverty? Those who are totally destitute – those who are needy. (3rd world country) – Haiti, Gabon.
- God's mercy is one of tenderhearted compassion to those who are in abject spiritual poverty.
- God's mercy is totally unearned and undeserved. Mercy is rooted in God's character – it's part of God's character.
- Exodus 34:6
- Deut. 4:31

Displays of God's mercy (specific examples)

Generally

- 2 Samuel 24:14
- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Psalm 103:13 ("compassion" = Hebrew, racham which is one of the words for our English "mercy"), Deut. 5:10, Ps. 57:10, Ps. 86:5
- Exodus 3:7ff. (God's compassion upon His people Israel)
- Matthew 9:27-30, 35-36 (Jesus' mercy)
- Mark 1:41
- Matthew 14:14

Specifically

- Psalm 103:1-14
- James 5:11

Grace of God

Definition

Grace is God's goodness to those who are **rebels** (everyone).

- This is the thrust in the Scriptures.
- God's grace, like His mercy, is totally unearned and undeserved. We can't merit God's grace. Grace is unmerited. We can't work for it. There is nothing that we can do to deserve it. We don't deserve grace.
- Theologically we classify grace as 1. Common Grace and 2. Special Grace
- The primary context of God's grace in the Scriptures is the Gospel.
- So let's now focus on the Gospel.

Theological Observations on Mercy and Grace

Here is where the two definitions/emphases of grace converge:

The Gospel is for those who are in great spiritual distress and spiritual poverty and it is for those who are at the same time rebels of God who don't deserve anything.

1. It is the **Gospel** that displays the perfect, infinite mercy and grace of God in redeeming His chosen through His Son.
 - God's infinite mercy and grace is on display in the Gospel.
 - Look at the Cross, and there you will see mercy. And there you will see grace.
 - Think about this: the infinitely merciful God died for totally depraved bad men. The merciful God died for rebels. That's the Gospel.
 - Hebrews 2:17, 8:12
 - Eph. 1:5-8
 - Ephesians 2:1-10
 - Titus 2:11-13, 3:3-7
 - Romans 5:15, 21
 - Just and holy is Thy Name, I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am; Thou art full of truth and grace.
-Charles Wesley
2. The history of **Redemption** displays God's mercy. Go all the way back to the Garden of Eden and the Fall of man (Gen. 3:15) and then trace redemption through the OT to Christ and marvel in the infinite mercy and grace displayed in God's plan of redemption. The history of redemption is a history of mercy and grace.
 - Gen. 3:15 is a verse of great mercy and grace.
3. God is the **Author** of Grace.

- God initiates grace. We don't. God is the One who enlightens. God is the One who regenerates and gives faith to the One He has called. Salvation is totally by grace. It is not dependent on man's faith.
 - Even to the ones God calls and elects to be saved, He is infinitely merciful and gracious. It was not because of anything we did to be elect.
4. There is only one appropriate response to God's grace: **faith**.
- Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Romans 3:23-24
 - Rom. 4:16
 - The same grace that God gives freely is the same grace that saves us. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Practical Theology

1. **Embrace** God's mercy and grace.
 - Disciples still need infinite mercy and grace every day.
 - You will never come to the point where you don't need less mercy and grace from God. You were never created or meant to be independent of God.
 - You will always be totally dependent (abject poverty) upon the mercy and grace of God.
 - Because of these facts, daily see your need for God's mercy and grace.
 - James 4:6, I Peter 5:5
 - Beg God daily for mercy and grace.
 - Hebrews 4:16
 - The same grace I need for salvation is the same grace I need for sanctification. Theologically, I'm still being saved from sin. Jesus is still saving His people from sin. I need grace to be daily saved from sin.
 - I need daily grace from God to kill my sin.
 - I need daily grace from God to die to myself.
 - I need daily grace from God to love my neighbor.
 - Plead and beg God for this grace.

2. **Meditate on** God's mercy and grace.
 - This is part of embracing the Gospel.
 - Constantly evangelize yourself with the Gospel. Even as disciples, we need daily evangelization. We're still in desperate need of the Gospel. We're just as needy for the Gospel as we were before we embraced it. The Gospel of God is one of mercy and grace.

- Saturate yourself with the Gospel. Think the Gospel. Speak the Gospel. Live the Gospel. Be passionate about it. Let it drive everything you do. As you do these things, you will be confronted more and more with what mercy and grace is all about.
3. **Imitate** God's mercy and grace.
- We must begin with this: God is our **Model** of mercy.
 - How do we know how to be merciful? Look at God and look at the Gospel.
 - How is mercy and grace communicable?
 - True disciples of Christ have mercy and grace, because Christ is Mercy and Grace.
 - Because the Gospel is about God's mercy and grace, a Gospel-centered life, therefore, will display God's mercy and grace to others.
 - The **Gospel** must drive our mercy to others. Why? The Gospel **is** the driving force of mercy.
 - If we truly have embraced mercy and grace through the Gospel, we will then imitate God's mercy and grace by lavishing it upon others.
 - Just as we received mercy and grace lavishly, so must we be lavish in our giving of mercy and grace to others. This runs in direct opposition to our culture and even sometimes our mindset.
 - Imitate God in His impartiality in giving mercy and grace.
 - Extend mercy and grace to all men.
 - What does mercy and grace look like in Christ's disciples?
 - Recommend *Ministries of Mercy* by Tim Keller. Very gospel-centered. God is the Model of mercy.
 - The Gospel is adorned and magnified when we extend mercy and grace to men.
 - The Gospel must never be divorced from financial aid to the poor or from counseling a single mom or from helping a husband/father find employment. The gospel and mercy are inextricably linked. The word of mercy and the deed of mercy, work synergistically.
 - **Deliberately** and **creatively** extend mercy to all men.
 - Matthew 5:7