

“Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender Mercies blot out my transgressions,” Psalm 51:1.

Dear Covenant Family in Jesus Christ,

DISCOURAGEMENT, FEAR, BROKEN SPIRITS, AND HOPELESSNESS are some of the tools of the enemy to slow down the work of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of every Christian. If we look at just the conditions of the world – new pandemic viruses, warring nations, threatening of wars and conflicts, lying politicians, crime, inflation, UFOs, sickness and disease, inflation, robberies, national disasters, and shootings – we will miss the opportunity God has given us to stand tall and proclaim the name of *Jesus Christ* to the world. In recent days, the devil has again used Christians and churches to attack other Christians, churches, and ministry outreaches. This attack is breaking the unity of the Body of Christ just because a word or two are not exactly what we think is right or politically correct in our denomination. God is bigger than our little fellowships. God has called us to uphold each other in the UNITY of the Faith in *Jesus Christ*. Shame upon the Christians that have openly come against other Christians that are working in the Harvest Field for the LORD!

Where there is unity, there is power.

What did the Apostle Paul say? ***“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at nought your brother? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. For it is written, ‘As I live,’ saith the Lord, ‘every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way,”*** Romans 14:10-13; ***“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another,”*** [v 19], ***“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits,”*** [12:15-16]. Don’t give satan the opportunity to cast criticism upon the Body of Christ by the world through your condescending words against your brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Let your thoughts, words, and actions be the result of love for your fellow

man, both of the Body and the lost.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD’S MERCY – There are times that we will write words, or just let them roll off our tongue giving them little to no thought to their meaning and especially to their depth. Our lack of word knowledge may even be hurtful or a stumbling-block to others. There are times we really don’t know their true meaning much less their depth. The same goes for people. If we look at the Apostle Paul for example, some would say that he was Saul converted, or that he traveled preaching the Gospel of Christ, or that he wrote some of the New Testament Books, or that he was a troublemaker, or even that he was beheaded for his faith. While these are true statements, none of them even begin to touch the depth or entirety of his life, dedication, trials, sufferings, ministry, or influence in the known world, then and now. It would take a very large book written under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to fully describe who Paul was, but even then we probably would not understand the depth or fullness of his life and spirit.

Likewise, there are two such words that have a deeper understanding and depth than we give them. They are ***“Goodness”*** and ***“Mercy.”*** The other night, well it was early morning, while lying in bed between being asleep and ‘it’s time to get up,’ God dropped the phrase, ***‘Oh, the Goodness of God’s Mercy,’*** into my spirit. It stuck with me until I arrived at the office. As is my nature, my search started into the ***Goodness of His Mercy.*** Starting with the simpler portion, what is ***Goodness?*** By definition it is ***“the quality of being morally good or virtuous.”*** So we can be talking about someone who is ***ethical, upright, has integrity, principles, is honest, truthful, and has tender-hearted warmth compassion towards men, beast, or God’s creation.*** We could go on for the rest of the day talking about ***Goodness.***

It is much harder to define, understand, or fully comprehend the depth of ***Mercy*** as it relates to the nature of the LORD. In plain terms, ***Mercy*** is God’s ***pity, compassion, and kindness*** towards people. ***Pity*** has such a negative connotation in today’s society, but it is really defined as a ***tender, considerate feeling for others.’***

Jonathan Edwards, an 18th century theologian, stated that ***Mercy*** is when ***“God is pleased to show Mercy to His enemies, according to His Own sovereign pleasure. Though He is infinitely above all and stands in no need of creatures; yet He is graciously pleased to take a Merciful***

GOSPEL TRACT SOCIETY JESUS NEVER FAILS

NEW SIGNAGE – After years of our signs being vandalized and ravaged by age and Mother Nature, we now have a clean, clear, and respectable ministry image to present to the public, thanks to some help from wonderful friends of the ministry. It is important to show a clean, non-braggadocious image of God's blessings to the world from the clothes we wear, the cars we drive, the houses we live in, and the business (ministries) that employs us. After all, our humble Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills and is the source of everything we possess.



notice of poor worms in the dust." Looking more into the attributes of *'Mercy'*, Millard Erickson, a modern day theologian, states that God's *Mercy* is *"tenderhearted, loving compassion for people, especially His children, seeing them as miserable and needy in their sinful, guilty, and condemned state."*

That is a little head knowledge of *Mercy*, but a deeper understanding of *Mercy* can only come from looking at *Mercy* in the Hands of God. God does not owe us His *Mercy* and *Mercy* cannot be owned. He gives *Mercy* through His *kindness, grace, and love* to those whom He will, even though they do not deserve it. *Mercy* is an act of His *tenderness and compassion* for His creation. God is *Mercy* and all *Mercy* is from God! *"And [God] said, 'I will make all My Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the LORD before thee; and will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious, and will shew Mercy on whom I will shew Mercy,'" Exodus 33:19.*

The Hebrew's word for *Mercy* is *racham* and means *'to love, love deeply, have tender affections, pity, or have compassion.'* *"Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea,*

*our God is Merciful," Psalm 116:5. Kapporeth means 'ransom' and is associated with the "Mercy Seat of God," "There I [God] will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel," Exodus 25:22; and the Hebrew word Chesed means 'goodness - kindness - pity - mercifulness - benevolence - or compassion,' "With the Merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself Merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright," Psalm 18:25. Greek definitions are similar, *eleemon* means to have 'pity on, show compassion, to be Merciful,' *"Blessed are the Merciful: for they shall obtain Mercy," Matthew 5:7.**

One of the most difficult to understand but also the most deepest and precious attributes of God's *Mercy* is His *patience. Patience is God's Mercy in action.* It is not what God owes us, it is what He extends to all of mankind, and it is God's kindness and grace to those who do not deserve it. God is *patient in Mercy* to a sinful world by holding off (deferring) His judgment against man's rebellion and sin to a later time. It is not injustice, but rather giving His grace (*Mercy*) for today and holding off judgment until the end the *Age of Grace* when His Holy Wrath will be poured out on the whole world. We see His *Mercy* in triumph over the horror of sin.

God is seeking man's repentance before he is judged. *The Mercies of Jehovah – "It is of the LORD's Mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness," Lamentations 3:22-23.*

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good; for His Mercy endureth forever," 1 Chronicles 16:34.

"For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and

Merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him," 2 Chronicles 30:9.

We see God's *Mercy* at work when Adam and Eve sinned, "*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them,*" Genesis 3:21, instead of physical death for disobeying God's commandment, God gave *Mercy*. We see His *Mercy* when He delivered Noah and his family from the flood, "*But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee,*" Genesis 6:18.

For me, *The Holy of Holies* now takes on new meaning, "*And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the Mercy Seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the Mercy Seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee,*" Exodus 25:19-21. God desired to meet and commune with His people in spite of their sins. He still does today. The *Mercy Seat* that sat behind the altar that had been sprinkled with the blood of an innocent spotless slain lamb allowed God to communicate with a righteous priest.

The Mercy Seat was a precursor of Christ.

Christ is our Mercy Seat – our advocate to the Father.

To that end, the greatest act of *Mercy* was God the Father sending God His Son, the sinless Man, to the Cross of Calvary to pay for the sins of the world with His death, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His Mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*" Titus 3:5-6.

"*But God, Who is rich in Mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,*" Ephesians 2:4-5.

"*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*" 1 Peter 1:3.

Mercy – why? David asked, "*What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet,*"

Psalms 8:4-6.

"*How much less man, that is a worm? And the son of man, which is a worm?*" Job 25:6.

I am reminded of a time that I unexpectedly witnessed

an act of pure *Mercy*. I was working outside with a brother in the LORD. When we moved some material that was lying on the ground we uncovered a nest, group, gaggle, flock, or just a bunch of earthworms. They were not good for much of anything other than baiting a hook or feeding to a robin. When my friend quickly, but gently, scooped up the slimy little creatures and moved them to a safe grassy spot away from the construction area, that was *Mercy* in the flesh.

Mercy is always offered and triumphs over judgment, but the judgment comes when *Mercy* is refused or rejected.

The Mercy of Jesus - "*Be ye therefore Merciful, as your Father also is Merciful,*" Luke 6:36.

"*Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,*" Matthew 9:13.

"*When [Jesus] came out, saw much people, and was moved with Compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things,*" Mark 6:34.

"*Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had Compassion on thee,'"* Mark 5:19.

"*God's Mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation,*" Luke 1:50.

"*Through the tender Mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us,*" Luke 1:78.

The Mercy of the Body of Christ - "*Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained Mercy, but now have obtained Mercy,*"

1 Peter 2:10.

"*Howbeit for this cause I obtained Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting,*" 1 Timothy 1:16.

Truthfully, I have never given a lot of attention to the word *Mercy*, but when I did, I always thought of *Mercy* as an action of God, that is, until just a few days ago. *Mercy* is not only an attribute of God, but it is also a *Gift* from God through His Holy Spirit. Paul spoke of it in Romans 12:6-8, "*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy accord-*

MORE SEEDS FOR THE HARVEST FIELD are

being worked on right now. We are in the process of having *The Amazing Gospel Comic* translated into the Filipino language to be given to ministries around the globe that serve the shipping and cruise industry worldwide. We are very excited over this new open door to reach the lost all over the globe. There is a ton of work ahead of us, but somehow we will get it done, all to the Glory of God.

ing to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: Or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; He that ruleth, with diligence; He that sheweth Mercy, with cheerfulness."

Martin Luther believed that the Gift of *Mercy* and *Compassion* was a reflection of God's own nature characterized by love, kindness, and grace. Those who possess the Gift of *Mercy* have a natural response to the needs of others, both within and outside the church and are called to demonstrate God's love and care to those who are suffering in body or in spirit. People with this Gift focus on alleviating the source of pain, hurt, suffering, and discomfort of others, even animals, while offering comfort to them. Some people are called to be teachers, firemen, social workers, and so on. They are drawn to those in need. A fireman will run to the fire. A policeman will run to the gun fire. Those with the Gift of *Mercy* will run to those in need. They will cry with those crying, laugh with those with joy, and hurt with the hurting. It is more than *pity*, or *sympathy*, it is *empathy* for the true feeling, the deep wounds of the soul or body. They are truly and literally the hands and feet of God to the afflicted, down-trodden, and broken. This applies outside the church also, some take on the plight of the whales, abused animals, polluted waters, the abuse of our Earth, and more. *Mercy* is *Mercy* wherever you find it. People with the Gift of *Mercy* tend to be the first ones to reach out and act rather than just stand by and watch. Gifted people are especially sensitive to spiritual needs and quick to pray.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having Compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing," 1 Peter 3:8-9.

It behooves us, as the Body of the living Christ, to embrace *Mercy* as a lover. That we may be one in-Christ, speaking, showing, and living in His Love and *Mercy* towards others. To do so embodies the very nature of God our Father and ministers to others. To do otherwise isolates the Body of Christ and brings shame upon the image of Jesus.

The Ultimate Words of Mercy -

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"
Your Covenant Brother, in Mercy and Love,

Phillip Buttram

Phillip L. Buttram

Please remember the Gospel Tract Society, Inc in your Estate Planing. God Bless and Keep you!

THANK YOU for your prayers, get well cards, and sweet notes of encouragement. There is physical improvement in my body every day. As a little background to this issue, one year ago, almost to the day, we contracted with an outside vendor to print and mail the remaining "Warfare" letters to every church in the USA (several hundred thousand). Literally overnight my body came under physical attack with symptoms that ranged from clinical dysentery, severe sinus infection, congestion, coughing, heart palpitations, sweats, chills, skin rash, sleeplessness, no appetite, vomiting, and much, much more. For months I was sent from one doctor to another and to another and so on and at one point put in the hospital for more testing in an attempt to determine what was going on. They were running tests, scans, X-rays, blood draws, and changing medication almost weekly for nine months. We even had to cancel our fiftieth wedding anniversary trip so they could perform more tests for possible internal infection or hidden heart trouble. To the Glory of God, every test, let me say that again, EVERY test came back with negative results!!! Thank you Father. However, the symptoms continued until about the middle of September. Most of the church letters had been mailed out by that time, and the symptoms began to clear up - little by little. Throw on top my recovery the virus that I caught in January during our ministry trip to Florida. It has been a very trying year. I have lost 30 lbs., energy, and strength. HOWEVER, things have gradually gotten better. I must say that today feels like a normal day. I am on the mend, and I give all of the Glory to my Heavenly Father for His love, strength, power, and healing!!! This was nothing but a spiritual attack on my physical body. If you are going to drive a stake in the ground for the Kingdom of God, you had better get ready and just expect that the enemy will come at you in an attempt to stop the Word of God from going out into the world. But remember, he is a loser and he knows it. The battle is the LORD's, but the Victory is ours!!!

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," Philippians 4:8.

PRAISE THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST!!!