

THE MERCY PRAYER

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02/29/16 - How do we balance a merciful and just God?

The prayer most often prayed in the Bible is the prayer for mercy in one form or another.

Lord have mercy . . . Lord have mercy on me . . .

If you went to the best atheistic reason for God not existing, it would probably be the concept of evil in the world. The cross sufficiently answers that . . . there is suffering and God even experienced it Himself. Dictators misusing their power and people are dying as a result, there's a sense of injustice.

This concept laced through prayer. Why is this the most prayed prayer? Because God is most merciful. Psalm 119:132 - "Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name."

Psalm 119:174-176

I long for Your salvation, O Lord, And Your law *is* my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise You; And let Your judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.

This is emphasis on the Law!

Isaiah 54:10

For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.

03/01/16 - God's mercy stops the consequences we deserve

In the gospels - blind men come to Jesus asking, "Lord, have mercy on us".

"Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior" [song]

It's the prayer Jesus ***always*** responded to.

every time someone said, Lord have mercy on me . . . Jesus stopped.

Why Is This The Most Prayed Prayer?

1. It reveals the truth about us, about our human condition.

We all sin

We all did something outside God's will. Now that we've done that, we can't believe what we just did and now we're watching the consequences of our own sin play out in our own heart, in the lives of others, and our own response when we see that is "God have mercy on me." We ask God to stop the chain reaction of what we've done.

Mercy - I have consequences coming on me because of my sin and I'm asking You to lessen that, to stop that, to step in and let it not be as bad as it could have been. Maybe God will rescue me from the consequences.

Don't believe it? Try asking Him next time you sin and see if the consequences isn't less than what you might have expected.

David - Bathsheba (Psalm 51)

After all David did, he didn't lose his relationship with God.
Not everybody found out about David's sin.

In the same way, he shows mercy to Adam and Eve. God is still with them.

We all suffer

Pain is something God desires to alleviate in our lives.

The suffering can be lessened. God is merciful in the midst of suffering.

We all sin and we all suffer and . . .

We all suffer because we sin

1 Cor. 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

We all sin to alleviate our suffering

Why do we sin?

Temptation is a traumatic experience. The reason we choose to sin is because we try not to sin so we choose to sin in order to alleviate the temptation to sin.

God's mercy is available before we sin — (during the temptation).

It's almost like the closer you get to God the more you desire mercy.

03/02/16 - Mercy for ourselves, but justice for others?

If it's the most prayed prayer in scripture, why weren't we taught to pray it?

It reveals something about ourself and God and His character.

Exodus 33:19

Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

God is saying I'm going to tell you something about Myself. In the passage, He reveals four things (which is the definition of mercy)

God's Mercy defined — The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love.

Jonah's anger. He wanted God to get the Ninevites. Later, Jonah says, I knew you were merciful, compassionate, gracious and slow to anger.

Any judge who is known for letting people off the hook has a bad reputation.

God is a good judge with a bad reputation.

God can pardon anyone He chooses.

It's good news if we are repeat offenders.

The Prayer (for mercy) reveals (for the person who has sinned) If you know the character of God you can go to Him for mercy. He delights to show mercy.

Psalms 119:132. The fact that so many people are asking God for mercy is a result of knowing who God is and who He wants to be known as, as a merciful judge.

A.W Tozer says that God's mercy isn't about us, it's about God. His mercy would always be true even if we didn't ask for it. It's human sin and humans suffering that call forth His mercy. So when we say, "have mercy on me", what we're saying is **"God reveal to me and the world a part of Yourself that would be hidden and glorify Yourself in a way that others would not be able to have seen if it were not for my sin and suffering."** When we sin, we allow room for God's mercy to be demonstrated. But not with the idea of sinning intentionally.

Our brokenness reveals the beauty of God's presence.

Mercy shows up in our sin when we ask for it.

What about repetition? He's not against repetition, He's against vain repetition.

Example of when you've seen God's character revealed by His desire and His mercy.

Theatre shooting in Colorado. All he could do was pray for mercy.

03/03/16 - Recognizing the needs for God's mercy

Psalms 136 - "His mercy endures forever" is repeated 26 times. They were singing this in worship with the intent that they would remember this phrase when they were alone.

The closer you draw to God, the more you ask for mercy.

In order for it to be the most prayed prayer in our life, we have to practice it so that it becomes every response.

Much like muscle memory (in basketball), so that we can reflexively shoot, we do the same in the spiritual.

03/04/16 - King David and the "Mercy Prayer"

We think of the God of the OT as a God of judgement and the God of the NT, the God of mercy.

The prayer for mercy is prayed more in the OT than the NT.

King David prayed it most (as recorded in the scriptures)

Psalm 57:1 (written when he's fleeing Saul - in the cave)

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until *these* calamities have passed by.

"in the shadow of Your wings" takes us back to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies [angels on both sides of the mercy seat] — in the Tent of Meeting (not the temple — it wasn't built yet).

Angels wings cast shadow

This psalm is before Bathsheba. It's because of what's happening in the cave that he's calling for mercy. People are coming to him and offering to comfort him. They're actually hurting him. [much like a crisis in our lives when people come, wanting to help]. He's praying for mercy because of the people around him.

David flees from the cave to Gath (which is Goliath's hometown carrying Goliath's sword) — he flees from fear to fear. From one place from lack of safety to another

place from lack of safety. He's now in the camp of the enemy — Philistines. Starts acting crazy.

Psalm 56

Prayer for Relief from Tormentors

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove in Distant Lands."

[a] A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound *me* all day, For *there are* many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

Question is asked: Why doesn't God just give us mercy? Why is it the most prayed Prayer? Why do we have to say it?

It's a statement of relationship. I know who You are . . . we acknowledge who God is.

In a husband/wife relationship when we frequently say "I Love You". When we pray for mercy, it's like we're saying "I know you love me". We're saying to God, "I know you are merciful"

Lord, have mercy on me . . . we are stating to God "I know You love me".

When we live loved, we know it pleases God (delights His heart) when we live loved. We have embraced that God wants to be merciful.

Shouldn't we respond to our sin the same way David did? We want to punish ourselves when God's trying to stop punishing and be merciful.

03/07/16 - Justice, mercy, and grace in perfect harmony

Project 127

Comes out of the concept of mercy

An initiative to empty the foster care system in Colorado

From James 1:27

Mercy is a complement to God's justice. Mercy makes way for God's grace. They aren't competing with one another, they are working together.

Justice - that which is the way things are supposed to be.

We long for justice in society, but do we long for it in our own lives? We'd rather have mercy.

Psalm 103

The Lord *is* merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve.

Grace - receiving what we don't deserve. Before we get grace, God has to give us mercy. God chooses not to give us what we do deserve.

First, God chooses not to give us what we deserve (justice), but then makes the way for mercy, receiving what we don't deserve.

Does justice ever "win"?

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

If we get justice, doesn't mercy have to cease?

Woman caught in adultery. The Law said she should be stoned.

Pharisees brought her to Jesus. They knew his reputation for being soft on sin — They knew what he most likely would do trying to trap him.

When he bends down, the focus is on Jesus, not her. Her shame is lessened in the moment. [Mercy!]

God's justice is being met with Jesus on the cross. He offers mercy to everybody.

The Orthodox Cross — "3 bar cross"



There are two more lines — one where the sign "King of the Jews" was placed and the diagonal on the bottom which is said to represent mercy because there were two thieves and one of them said, remember me and God's mercy was available through Jesus.

03/08/16 - God's mercy in disguise

Viewing pain and suffering as God's mercy.

The emotions involved. For men, it can be looking soft.

Jesus was far from being soft and yet he was incredibly merciful.

Luke 17:11-17

Ten Lepers Cleansed

Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who

were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up *their* voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” So when He saw *them*, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

Ten lepers cry out, “Lord have mercy on us”

This story teaches us many lessons:

Faith- Jesus said go and as they went, they were healed.

When God says something to you, just move in that direction and you will see what He is talking about.

True Acceptance - the one who came back was a Samaritan.

Even if he’s cleansed at the temple, he’s still an outcast and he wants to be received by Jesus himself.

Gratitude - Tell others thank you.

How did these men know they were healed? Could it be the pain is now returning to their bodies?

When they say have mercy, they’re asking for healing but with the healing comes pain.

Mercy involves pain.

A single person wants to get married and asks for God’s mercy. God provides them with that spouse and now they have the love of their life but now they’ve given themselves to the pain of losing that spouse.

C. S. Lewis - called it a severe mercy. Sometimes when God’s mercy shows up in your life it can be painful and that will cause us then to not draw near to Him, thinking something went wrong.

The leper recognized that the pain was the mercy. The other nine (were Jews) were experiencing the pain but didn’t realize the mercy would be painful.

The Samaritan’s double-pain (being healed and being an outcast in society), was probably his motivation in going back.

We look at suffering as something outside the will of God but sometimes it can be inside the will of God. Jesus on the cross was fully in God’s will — suffering.

Paul - give thanks in all things — even the pain because we don't want to miss out on a chance of coming back and being grateful for what He's doing.

03/09/16 - Two probing questions Jesus asked

Kyrie Eleison (Greek) Lord, Have mercy

Kyrie Eleieon (sp)(Greek) oil/medicine

Mercy sounded like medicine

So it may have sounded like “Lord, Have medicine on me.”

Blind men probably heard the play on words.

Matthew 9:27-31

Two Blind Men Healed

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See *that* no one knows *it*.” But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

When Jesus asks, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” He is asking them if they believe because asking for mercy requires faith.

There is more of God I can have if I believe He wants to give me more even though the work on the cross is done

Do you believe that God can lessen the consequences of sin?

“I believe, help my unbelief”

God wants to intervene on our behalf.

The blind men then go and tell everyone — after Jesus asked them not to. The word got to the next community. . . .

Matthew 20:29-34

Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight

Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!” Then the

multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Seems obvious that they would want them to be healed.

You must want what your wants lead to.

could it be?

If you want God to do something in your life then you must want a different set of circumstances.

They no longer wanted to be beggars.

They want to get a job

They want a different path in their lives.

Do you really want to see?

When we want God's mercy, we have to be ready for what comes with that.

When we get the mercy, (God lessens the pain in our lives) do we still want less attention from others (which we were getting as a result of the pain)?

3/10/2016 — Receiving mercy turns to bestowing mercy

Strings attached.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed *are* the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 18:23-35

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet^[d] and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'^[e] And he would not, but went and threw him into

prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Jesus told this on the heels of Peter asking how many times we need to forgive someone?

Do we have obligations to fulfill in order to receive mercy or once we receive mercy do we have an obligation to fulfill?

If we're going to ask for mercy, we should be simultaneously prepared to offer. God expects us to be for others what He is for us.

The King in this story had the right to demand the debt be paid and gave up the right.

Mercy says I'm going to let go of things I have the right to in this world just because that's what God has done as well.

Knowing that God, when he gives me mercy expects me to be merciful, it motivates me then to want to know mercy more,

We learn to pay more attention when we receive mercy.

What does it mean to love mercy?

Micah 6:8

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?

Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly . . . loving mercy makes pursuing and appropriating it more delightful.

I love what happens when God lessens penalties (and suffering).

You want others to enjoy what you enjoy. When we receive it (mercy), we want to turn around and encourage others to experience it also.

3/11/2016 — "Lord have mercy" should be our daily request!

Do we make prayer too complex?

We make how, when, why, etc. too complicated.

When you ask the average Christian, “How’s your prayer life?” they respond with 5 minutes yesterday, 10 minutes today . . . we measure our relationship with God in minutes.

Do we pray without ceasing?

The question is, “did I ever stop praying, not did I start?”

What are we saying when we pray “Lord have mercy.”

We’re saying, “God be to us who You say You want to be. You have revealed yourself as being compassionate and gracious and slow to anger and so we’re going to trust You and ask You to be exactly what You said You want to be.”

Remember all the “just” (s) in prayer? [“be with”]

The phrase “In Jesus name”

Lord have mercy is in Jesus name.

Instead of ending our prayers with “In Jesus name - Amen”, there’s a bigger idea behind that. The spirit behind it is that we’re asking Jesus for something he already wants to give. It’s something Jesus wants to give his name to.

The greatest consequence of sin is life away from God. It’s not the end of His mercy, Jesus showing up on the cross is the lessening of our consequences. It’s not the end of His mercy, it’s the beginning. He wants to lessen more than the other consequences of sin in our life as well.

Father, teach us to pray. [Lord’s Prayer]

God would suggest, Lord have mercy.

Knowing that God wants to extend mercy gives us confidence as we go to the throne room of prayer. It creates a boldness to our prayers.

Gospel is what happens when you encounter Jesus. [our testimony]

The Mercy Prayer is for those who sin and those who suffer; for those who suffer because of sin and for those who sin to alleviate their suffering. Lord Have Mercy