

"TO KNOW HIM IS TO LOVE HIM"

5. Attributes of God: His Mercy

God's attributes are not discrete aspects of who He is. We have seen that they are an intricate woven tapestry. Each one connected and infused to the others.

(NKJV, Psa 100:4), "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations."

(NKJV, Psa 100:5)

The reason we should give thanks, praise, and blessing to God is because He is merciful. The mercy that He extends to us is everlasting. Once given, it remains forever. There's no "date of expiration" on the mercies that the Lord gives us.

What is Mercy?

Mercy is not receiving something that is deserved (in a negative sense). It is the withholding of punishment and judgment. It can also sometimes be the withholding of consequences.

(NKJV, Exo 34:6), "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Grace (receiving something that is not deserved – in a positive sense) is the flipside of the same coin. Both mercy and grace are components of God's goodness.

God's goodness is constant, but our perception of His Goodness changes.

The word variations of "mercy" appear nearly 270 times in the Old Testament while appearing only 60 times in the New Testament. In contrast, variations of "grace" appear 40 times in the Old Testament but 110 New Testament. This illustrates God's unchanging goodness. In the context of the law, we look at God's goodness as primarily mercy. His law is broken and atonement is required. But after the cross, we view God's Goodness mostly in the context of grace. God always demonstrates His

goodness in mercy and grace, He never changes. It is our perception of His goodness that has changed.

God's Mercy is intricately intertwined into His other attributes.

(NKJV, Psa 103:8-9), "The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. [9] He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever."

God's patience in delaying judgment of sin demonstrates His mercy.

(NKJV, Psa 103:10), "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities"

God's reduced punishment for sins demonstrates His mercy.

(NKJV, Psa 103:13-14), "As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. [14] For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

God's pity on who we are demonstrates His mercy.

(NKJV, Psa 103:15-19), "As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. [16] For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. [17] But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, [18] To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them. [19] The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all."

God's plan for our temporal lives demonstrates His mercy. It is God's mercy that puts a limit on our lives. Our physical death means an end to our struggle with sin.

Group Discussion

- Mercy implies that atonement has been made (by one party or the other). When you extend mercy to another person, what is given in atonement? (either by you or the other person)
- Jesus said in Mat 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." What are some things that can help remind us to be merciful?
- Would you rather extend mercy or receive it? Why?