

21.09.2019 TO LOVE MERCY

“Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion” Psalm 112:4, 5

Definition of ‘Mercy’: compassion or forgiveness shown towards someone whom it is within one's power to punish.

Since God is a God of mercy, all who are His children by adoption must also be merciful. The word ‘mercy’ when referring to God, is also described in the Bible as ‘goodness’ (e.g. Exodus 34:6) ‘compassion’ (e.g. Mark 5:19), ‘kindness’ (e.g. Ruth 2:20), ‘loving-kindness’ (e.g. Psalm 17:7), ‘pity’ (e.g. Matthew 18:33).

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” Exodus 34:6, 7

“I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.” Hebrews 8:12

Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed. Psalm 85:10

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you? To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Proverbs 3:3

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

Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is also merciful. Luke 6:36

The steps of a good man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way...he is always merciful, and lends and his descendants are blessed. Psalm 37:23, 26

Kingdom Priorities

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33

A Christian who has the mind of Christ is not focussed on himself. Like Christ, his main purpose is to do the will of God and be a blessing to others. He is not anxious about food, clothing and shelter because he has complete trust in God to provide (Matthew 6:31, 32; Luke 12:29-34).

“I have come to open to you the kingdom of love and righteousness and peace. Open your hearts to receive this kingdom, and make its service your highest interest. Though it is a spiritual kingdom, fear not that your needs for this life will be uncared-for. If you give yourself to God's service, He who has all power in heaven and earth will provide for your needs.” Jesus does not release us from the necessity of effort, but He teaches that we are to make Him first and last and best in everything. We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure that would hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord.

Jesus, while He dwelt on earth, dignified life in all its details by keeping before men the glory of God, and by subordinating everything to the will of His Father. If we follow His example, His assurance to us is that all things needful in this life "shall be added." Poverty or wealth, sickness or health, simplicity or wisdom—all are provided for in the promise of His grace.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing p. 99*

Compassion Fatigue

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. John 7:38, 39

All around us, we see great need – spiritual, material, physical need. If our hearts are touched by the love of God, we want to alleviate such need. But the need is so overwhelming that it may overwhelm us and we may develop ‘compassion fatigue’.

Paul tells us *“let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:9, 10* and again in 2 Thessalonians 3:13 *“do not grow weary in doing good.”*

How shall we not grow weary in doing good? Only by allowing the Spirit of God to use us in service for others as described in John 7:38. His power is available to us to minister to others and when we are indeed weary, we can go to Him and rest by casting our burden of weariness upon Him.

‘Each one must have the Spirit of Christ, which is that of burden-bearing. He devoted His life to the service of others. But His own burdens He carried to God. He did not ask others to carry them for Him. Even so it should be with us. If every one in the house of God, to say nothing of the world, acted according to this plan, how easy it would be to get on! There would really be no burdens for anyone to bear. Each one thoughtful only of others, studying their burdens, that he might help them, would find his own burdens carried in turn by others. The only burden that anyone would then carry would be Christ’s burden, which He calls us to take, because it is light. Let us learn of Christ, who bore the burden of the world, and asked none to share it with Him; yet He found it easy and light. When we try to unload our burdens on others, we are always in trouble, always heavy-laden; but when we are wholly devoted to bearing the burdens of others, we find them light.’ *EJ Waggoner: Studies in Galatians (Galatians 6:1-10)*

Generosity

When God our Saviour revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Titus 3:4-6 (NLT)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. Philemon 1:6

True Christian generosity arises when we recognise the generosity of God and submit ourselves to Him. We recognise that of ourselves we cannot be generous as God is, so we allow His Spirit to make us generous.

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing... And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 8:1-3, 5

God is saddened when He sees His children refusing to be generous. It means that they either have not understood His grace, or that they understand it mentally but refuse to let God’s Spirit make it real in their lives by faith. They are either too selfish to be generous or they lack faith to believe the words of Christ... *“Freely you have received; freely give” Matthew 10:8* and *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Luke 6:38*

The sin which is indulged to the greatest extent, which separates us from God and produces so many spiritual disorders, and which are contagious, is selfishness. *EG White: Maranatha p. 109*

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Peacemaking

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Matthew 5:9

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

'Christ is "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. **Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.** *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing p. 27*

For Reflection:

Am I a peacemaker?

Or do I encourage unhappiness and envy and discord among my brethren by my words and attitude? (Read Leviticus 19:11-17 for a list of things that destroy peace).

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:15

A Voice for the Voiceless

Very few of us will be led by the Spirit to be peacemakers and a voice for the voiceless on the world stage. Instead, most of us, if we are willing, will be used by the Spirit to influence the communities in which we live and work and worship.

God is keenly interested the plight of the voiceless in our societies – the poor, the oppressed, the powerless.

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. Luke 1:51, 52

A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Psalm 68:5, 6

The Lord executes justice for the oppressed; He gives food to the hungry. The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down. Psalm 146:7-9

In all times, God has called His people to care for the poor, the oppressed, the powerless and the stranger as He does:

*God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. **Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.** Deuteronomy 10:17-19*

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen:

To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.” Isaiah 58: 6-7, 9-11.

The Consequence of God’s Mercy to Us: the revelation of God’s grace, patience and long-suffering in our lives encourages others to believe in Him

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, **for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.** 1 Timothy 1:15, 16*

But I obtained mercy for the reason that in me, as the foremost [of sinners], Jesus Christ might show forth and display all His perfect long-suffering and patience for an example to [encourage] those who would thereafter believe on Him for [the gaining of] eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:16 (Amplified)
