

"The Mercy of God"

When our sins finally catch up to us, we realize how much we need the mercy of God. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring the compassion and mercy of God.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures open up for us the nature and heart of God our Father. We can see His compassion and mercy towards those who love Him. We can see His plan for the ages in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who lovingly and compassionately gave Himself for our sins. Remarkably, 2 Corinthians 1 and verse 3 calls God the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort." Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

The idea of mercy includes a compassionate desire to provide for others what they need and cannot provide for themselves. I can think of many spiritual blessings that God gives to us, blessings that we can only receive from Him. By God's mercy and grace we are saved, we become His children, and we're given an inheritance in heaven, and we're privileged to spend an eternity in heaven with our Father and the Lord Jesus. God always wants to bless those who love Him and keep His commandments.

God instructed Moses and Aaron in how to bless the people of Israel. He told them to say to the people in Numbers 6:24 to 26, "The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace." Ah we're blessed beyond measure. The Lord is not only merciful; He delights in showing mercy to us. The pagan gods of ancient times were fickle and didn't show the mercy and grace of the God of the Bible. But we're blessed to know the compassion of the true God who created us. We're thankful for all that He's done for us to lead us to everlasting life.

Now we offer this study on the mercy of God free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We will now worship in song. We'll read from Micah 7:18 to 20, and examine the mercy of God.

Our reading today comes from the book of Micah chapter 7 verses 18 to 20. Michah is a prophet who recognizes the unchanging love and the unfailing mercy of the God of heaven.

Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity
And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights in unchanging love.
He will again have compassion on us;
He will tread our iniquities under foot.
Yes, You will cast all their sins
Into the depths of the sea.
You will give truth to Jacob
And unchanging love to Abraham,
Which You swore to our forefathers
From the days of old.

That's the God we serve. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your unchanging love and for Your mercy even when we sin. That You care about us and that You do not keep Your anger forever. Help us Heavenly Father to be penitent of our sins. To love You and to do what is right. In Jesus name, Amen.

We have a compassionate and merciful God, for which we must all be very thankful. We have a God who sees and a God who cares. Psalm 25 verse 10 says, "All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies." God's lovingkindness refers to the mercy and compassion that arises from His covenants with men. God's lovingkindness is part of His loyalty to His people. Psalm 145 verses 8 and 9 say, "The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works." God truly is merciful in all His ways, and we're grateful that He loves us so much.

Psalm 103 verses 8 to 14 say that, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. 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 rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."

Now sin offends the Lord, but the Lord knows all our weaknesses and has compassion on us. When we return to Him, He doesn't remain angry toward us. Mercy means that God treats us kindly even when we don't deserve it. God is kind, not because we're so good, but because He is so good. His love is more than abundant toward those who draw near to Him.

Though the people of Judah sinned against God so grievously that God destroyed Jerusalem, God promised a day of mercy, forgiveness, and joy. Jeremiah 33 verses 8 to 9 say, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me. It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it."

Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:21 to 25, "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. 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. The LORD is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him."

God is always compassionate to those who turn to Him penitently and lovingly. God has compassion for us in this life and wants to bless us in the ages to come. Ephesians 2:4 to verse 7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God's mercy never ends for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is our Savior and He is in the saving business. He said in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Oh yes, Jesus knows all our weaknesses and sins but He loves us anyway and He opens His heart to those who will come to Him lovingly and obediently. John 2:24 to 25 says, "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew

what was in man.” Oh He knows all about the good and bad about you and me, but He still loves us and He wants us to live with Him forever.

Paul understood all the flaws that people possess, but He also knew what God wanted for them. Titus 3 verses 3 to 5 says, “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.” God’s compassion was willing to forgive and wash away sins. God could make a new people out of us.

Titus 2:11 to 14 explains, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” He wants you saved and reborn to a new way of life.

Paul understood God’s mercy in a very personal way. He said in 1 Timothy 1:12 to 16, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (and then Paul says) among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”

Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church, blasphemed Jesus Christ, was violent and insolent, and put people in prison, calling for their deaths. In spite of this, God saw in Saul of Tarsus, who acted ignorantly, a devotion to what he believed. And God wanted that devotion for the cause of Christ not against it. Saul became Paul, the apostle. God rescued him from sin and made a great servant of Christ out of him. God showed him mercy. His grace and love for Saul was more than abundant. God’s love for us all is more than abundant, even though we may be the chief of sinners ourselves. If God could show mercy to Saul who didn’t deserve it, He can show mercy to us. His perfect patience and grace allows God to save sinners, even you and me.

God’s mercy prompts people to repent and to turn to Him. Both Judah and Israel had turned away from God to follow idols, but God still loved them and had an open heart for those who would return to Him. King Hezekiah opened the door for those who wanted to return to God and keep the Passover. Hezekiah’s message found in 2 Chronicles 30 verses 6 to 9 says, “The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, “O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria. Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see. Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you. For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons

will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.”

God is compassionate to those who love and follow Him. He loves everyone, but He especially blesses those who love and obey Him. David wrote in Psalm 103:15 to 18, “As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, (it doesn’t exist) And its place acknowledges it no longer. But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children’s children, To those who keep His covenant And remember His precepts to do them.”

God’s mercy leads us to be merciful. Proverbs 21:13 says, “He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.” We must learn to treat others with compassion and mercy. Colossians 3:12 to 15 says, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” And when we show mercy to others, we reveal that we’re like the Lord. Some people can only find fault with others; they slander and accuse and often ignorantly. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 6:35 to 36, “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Oh, the more we show mercy to others, the more we become Christ-like. We must remove ourselves from sin, yes; but we must help others to come to Christ by showing them compassion.

James 2:12 to 13 says, “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.” We will be judged by the same standard that we use to judge others. If we fail to be merciful to those who sin against us, we won’t enjoy the mercy of God. While we must speak harshly against sin, let’s show compassion to the sinner and urge him to repent and obey. We should help people come to the Lord and to remain faithful to the Lord.

Jude 21 to 23 says, “keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” The merciful want everyone to be right with the God. Does God’s mercy work within you? Is it making a difference in your life? And are you merciful to others.

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father help us to understand how great Your mercy is towards us and to be merciful toward others. Because You have loved us and been merciful. And Father we’re thankful for Jesus who died for our sins. Help us always to love You and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; “But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword.” Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isaiah chapter 1 verses 18 to 20). The people in Isaiah’s day strayed, but the Lord was merciful and wanted to turn their hearts back to righteousness. God was willing to forgive; and He said in Isaiah 43:25, “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions

for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.” God doesn’t want to be angry at us. And He takes no pleasure in punishing sinners.

Isaiah 55 verses 6 to 7 says, “Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.” God’s mercy is great for those who seek Him and will repent. God can forgive you of all your sins and iniquities.

And God is waiting for you. Place your trust in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess the Lord Jesus to be the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. Peter told the guilty souls at Pentecost, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2 and verse 38). Now if you lovingly obey, God will graciously forgive you just as He did them. Why not do what they did? Obey the Lord today!

Well we hope that today’s study about forgiveness and the mercy of God has helped you to see it’s value and to turn away from the sins of men. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office and you can call us toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there’s a schedule of our programs and a map of churches that are in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH on YouTube anytime! We ask that you subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry” and then when you watch be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And we have more than one. And we have them being graded almost every day. Now is you get ahold of us don’t worry, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you draw close to God. That’s our goal.

We ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. Oh I tell ya you need a church family. And if you can attend, don’t neglect worshiping at church. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. And if you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.