

No Greater Mercy

John 15:13; Ephesians 2:4-9

Just as there are seven colors to the rainbow, so there are seven hues of color in the rainbow of God's love. [Expressions of God's love]:

1. **Compassion** is the *sympathy* of love (Luke 15:20).
2. **Kindness** is the *tender care* of love (Titus 3:4).
3. **Grace** is the *undeserved favor* of love (2 Cor. 8:9).
4. **Mercy** is the *forgiveness* of love (Eph 2:4).
5. **Patience** is the *long suffering* of love (1 Cor. 13:4).
6. **Sacrifice** is the *free offering* of love (Eph. 5:2).
7. **Friendship** is the *fellowship* of love (John 15:13).

Since these seven attributes are all part of God's love, we could also say...

- There is no greater COMPASSION than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater KINDNESS than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater GRACE than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater MERCY than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater PATIENCE than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater SACRIFICE than Christ laying down His life...
- There is no greater FRIEND than Christ laying down His life....

Just as there was no greater love in Christ laying down His life, there has been no greater mercy extended than when Christ died for lost sinners.

I. **The PLENTIOUSNESS of His mercy** (Eph. 2:4— *"But God, who is RICH in mercy, for his GREAT love wherewith he loved us..."*).

➡ **"Rich"** indicates the inexhaustible supply of God's mercy.

- A. David prayed in Psalms 69:16, "*Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.*" If anyone knew about God's "*lovingkindness*" and "*the multitude of [God's] tender mercies,*" it would have been David. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. David deserved to be stoned. Yet, God, in "*lovingkindness*" and tender mercy, put away David's sin.

- B. God offers not just kindness, but “**lovingkindness.**” He offers not just mercy, but “**tender mercies.**” Everything is superlative.

A boy in Sunday School was asked the difference between kindness and loving-kindness. He answered: "If I ask my mother for a peanut butter sandwich, and she gives it to me, that is kindness. But if she also puts jelly on it, that is lovingkindness!"

II. The PROMPTING of His mercy.

- A. What prompts God to act on our behalf? Not our turning over a new leaf or us trying to be a better person.

➡ Ephesians 2:4—“**But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins...**” What was our condition when God intervened? “**...we were dead in sins...**” But God began to move—What moved Him? It was His great love and rich mercy responding to our miserable condition.

- B. The **difference between mercy and grace.** While God's grace reaches out to man, it does so for a different reason than His mercy does.

1. It is **our sin and guilt** that prompts the grace of God. When God sees us as guilty and deserving of judgment—it prompts His grace. Even though we don't deserve it, God doesn't to leave us in our sin. **Grace gives us what we do not deserve—Love and salvation.**
2. It is **our misery** which prompts His mercy.

Parents know how this if you ever had a child who suffered from a severe ear ache—He is helplessly in pain and miserable. How does that affect you as a parent? It stirs your mercy, and you and try to relieve his misery. That is what Paul says has prompted the mercy of God—our misery because of sin (see vs. 1-3).

- We are dead in trespasses and sin (v. 1). Helpless
- We are corrupt and on a downward course (v. 2).

- We are molded by the world around us (v. 2).
- We are dominated by Satan (v. 2). There is a spirit which works in us, Paul says, which prompts us to disobey.
- We contend with *“the lusts of our flesh”* (v. 3 cf, Gal 5:16). The result is that we hurt others around us. This creates heartache, despair, rejection, discontent, disillusionment, frustration and the miseries of life.
- BUT GOD in the richness of His mercy has intervened in our misery (v. 4).

III. **The PARDON of His mercy.** *“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him”* (Dan. 9:9)

➡ Micah 7:18: *Who is a God like unto thee, that **pardoneth iniquity**... he retaineth not his anger for ever, because **he delighteth in mercy.***

ILLUS: Shortly after sunrise on January 2, 2000, a noose was placed around the neck of 17-year-old Morteza Moqaddam. He killed a fellow Iranian in Tehran on December 13 after a quarrel about smoking in public. A large crowd had gathered for the execution. With hands cuffed and tears streaming down his ashen face, the teenager waited for the signal to end his short life. To his utter surprise, the victim’s father, Ali Mohebbi, exercised his privilege under Iran’s Islamic legal system and granted the killer of his son forgiveness. Just seconds before he was to be hanged, he was extended mercy instead of justice. State-run television ran footage of the teenager repeatedly thanking the father whose son he killed (*Houston Chronicle*, 1/3/00, p. 8A).¹

➡ Like this young man from Iran, we are all guilty of sin and worthy of spiritual execution. *“But God, who is **rich in mercy,**”* sent His Son to die in our place and we can be saved through Him.

IV. **The POURING OUT of His mercy** (Titus 3:4-6).

¹ Raymond McHenry. In Other Words. Volume 10. Issue 1. Winter 2000. pp. 6-7.

In 2008, a group of terrorists went on a three day killing spree through the city of Mumbai, India. 173 people were killed and 234 more were badly injured.

Among the terrorists was 22-year-old Mohammad Ajmal Kasab. He was filmed walking through Mumbai's railroad station wearing a knapsack and carrying an AK-47.

Kasab, the lone surviving terrorist, admitted to taking part in the attacks. In May, 2010 Kasab was found guilty on more than 80 charges, including murder. He was sentenced to death by hanging. India's Supreme Court later upheld the sentence.

In 2012, Kasab appealed for mercy. He pleaded that India's president spare his life.

What do you think? Would you grant mercy to someone who had done what Kasab did? Suppose your mother or your sister or one of your children were among the 173 people who died that day?

Kasab was executed on November 21, 2012.

JUSTICE VERSUS MERCY

Some crimes are simply too heinous to overlook. Justice demands criminals pay! Injuries like these cannot go unanswered.

What does this mean about God's mercy? God is both completely just and totally merciful. How can God's justice and God's mercy be reconciled?

- A. **In justice, God must punish sin.** God hates our sin, and He must judge it. He hates our gossip... He hates our lies... He hates our thankless attitudes... He hates our selfishness ... He hates our angry thoughts. And—in justice—He must judge it.

➡ *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins..."* Jesus Christ, God's Son, came and took the punishment we deserved for our sin. As Jesus hung dying on Calvary's cross, divine justice was poured out upon Him—Jesus died our

death. He suffered our punishment. He paid our debt. By Christ's sacrifice, God's justice has been satisfied.

- B. Because God's justice was poured out on Christ at Calvary, God's mercy can be **POURED OUT** on us when we receive Christ as our Savior.

➔ Read Titus 3:4-6— *But after that **the kindness and love of God our Saviour** toward man appeared, 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 Ghost; Which **he SHED ON US ABUNDANTLY** through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

- C. God's great mercy does not come to us in drips and dribs. It does not come drop by stingy drop. It does not trickle down from heaven into our lives. God's mercy is "**shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.**"

- Have you ever been soaked in a drenching rain—that's a picture of being saturated by the pouring out of God's mercy.
- Have you ever seen one of those happy celebrations when a team wins an playoff game and a player douses the coach with a keg full of Gatorade. That is what God does with His mercy—He pours it out and drenches us with it when we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior!

➔ Our guilt and shame are gone, carried away by the flood of God's mercy, mercy poured out upon us. There is no greater mercy, no greater love than his.

SUMMATION: You have a choice. You can receive what you deserve—Eternal judgment for your sin in hell. Or, you can receive mercy by accepting the payment Jesus made for your sin on the cross and be saved.

If you have received God's gift of salvation, you've experienced the mercy of God. Having received mercy, you should also extend it to others. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Luke 6:36

*"But God, who is **rich in MERCY**, for **his great LOVE** wherewith he loved us, **Even when we were dead in sins...**"*

THANK GOD FOR HIS LOVE AND MERCY!