

# The Mercy of the Almighty

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## Contents

1. God is Mighty
2. God is Merciful
3. Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

## Chapter 1

### GOD IS MIGHTY

I don't know if you remember doing anything wrong when you were a child, but I recall getting my share of discipline when I was a young girl. Ask my father, and he will tell you that I definitely had a mind of my own! When I was just a little thing, I remember my big, strong daddy setting himself down so that he could look at me straight in my eyes. He gave me his full attention, and he wanted to make sure he had mine. My father didn't abuse me, but he did teach me the importance of obedience. What I remember the most about my punishments was looking into my father's face. Several times, as I looked back into his eyes, I saw tears. I knew my father was disciplining me because he loved me. I think God is the same way.

We have a big and strong God. He's powerful and awesome and able to help us when we need it. He's mighty, He's magnificent, He's marvelous – and He's our Father. He is also holy. He is everything that is pure and upright. Aren't you glad? I'm glad that my Heavenly Father is holy rather than unfair, abusive, or selfish. The thing about holiness though, if it allows anything unholy around it, it isn't holy anymore. For God to remain holy He cannot be close to anything that is impure, or it will taint who He is. Imagine a room filled with darkness. What happens when you turn on the switch? The light drives out the darkness. It is the same with His holiness – it will drive out anything that isn't pure. It is impossible for something that is unholy to remain in God's presence just as it is impossible for darkness to remain in a room full of light.

Moses was a man that had a desire to get near God. In Exodus 33, Moses asks this question, "Please, show me Your glory." Wow, what a bold request! He's asking to actually see God with his own eyes! God loves Moses with a deep love. He wants to give Moses his desire, but God also knows the frail condition of the sinful nature of man. God knows that the moment sinful flesh comes in contact with the glory of His image, physical death is the result. He agrees to let Moses look upon Him in His glory, but He can't let Moses see His face or Moses would instantly die. God tells Moses that He will hide him in a cleft in a rock and cover Moses with His hand. After God passes by Moses, God will remove His hand and allow Moses to see His backside. Moses got his desire – he saw God!

He is the Almighty God, but He also is a loving and merciful God. Moses, knowing God loved him, dared to ask to risk his life to see God in his holiness. When Moses saw God, God told Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion (vs. 19)." The Hebrew word that has been translated compassion is *racham*. *Racham* describes the strong and tender love that a parent has for their child. If you've ever had a child, whether by birth or adoption, you know the bonding love that I'm referring to. When that newborn baby is in your arms, there is something on the inside of us that says, "You're mine!" You will do whatever it takes to care for that child. It's a love that goes to the deepest part of our heart. God is using the word *racham* to convey the heart love that He has for us as our Father and our Creator.

The word *racham* is often translated "mercy" in the Bible. I don't often go into the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words, but when I do, it's because there is more to the meaning of the word than we understand in our language. When we think of the word

## *The Mercy of the Almighty*

“mercy,” we usually think of pity, sympathy, or grace. But when we read *racham*, God is revealing an amazing parental love that He has for us that comes from deep within His innermost being.

God’s desire has always been to be close with His children, but our sin put a barrier between God and us (Isaiah 59:2). God was on one side, and we were on the other. At one time, there was no way to cross that barrier. God is our life, so with that separation, we spiritually died. God is still our Father, and He still loves us even though we’ve strayed off into what is not pure, turning away from Him and all that is right. As a parent, one thing I’ve realized about myself is that when one of my daughters suffers pain, I feel it too. When they feel joy, I feel joy too. What touches them; touches me. I feel it deep inside my heart. God is our Father. We are His children that He deeply loves. Like any loving parent, God wasn’t going to let us go. He had to do something to get His children back in His arms again.

Yes, God is mighty, but He also delights in mercy (Micah 7:18). Like any loving parent, His joy is having us in His presence. The lamb on the front of this book is representative of you and me. The lion illustrates the strength and might of God as well as His mercy that allows us to come near to Him. God, our father, has made a way for His children to come back to Him.

## Chapter 2

### GOD IS MERCIFUL

Jesus gave us a story in Luke 15:11-32 to help us understand the heart of our Father. It's a story about a father and his two sons. The younger son wanted to leave home and live a lifestyle that his father did not approve of. The father knew that the lifestyle his son was choosing would eventually cause his son much pain, but he also knew that his love would never force one of his children to stay against their will. As much as the father hated to see his son turn his back on his home, the father allowed his youngest son to leave.

The young man went far away from where he belonged. He did things his father would never have allowed at home. Before long, the man's money was gone. In the place where he went, the man found that he couldn't make a good living because of a severe famine. He was reduced to struggling to try to meet his basic needs by getting a job feeding pigs. He had no food; the pigs were eating better than he was! He came to a point where he realized he was desperate and could not meet his needs on his own.

He remembered the man he once was. As a son, he always had his needs met by a loving father. He was surrounded by family who loved him and cared for him. It was where he came from; it was where he belonged. It was who he was. He wanted to return there. He wanted to be close to His father again. He wanted to know the warmth and peace of that place again. But he had turned his back on his father and his home. How could he go back?

But where else would he go? He couldn't survive in the land he had gone to. He knew there was only one place for him to turn his heart – back home. The man knew he didn't deserve his father's acceptance, but he hoped he could at least escape the death he was facing where he was. He probably thought about how hurt his father was when he left him. He knew his father had every right to be angry and want to punish him. The man decided to lower himself to the position of a servant, to slave to earn a place at the house.

In this next part of the story, Jesus will describe the fatherly love that God has for us. The father must have been diligently watching for his son, because when the son was still far away from him, the Father saw him and RAN. He ran toward his son, he grabbed him, hugged him, and kissed him. The son told his father, "I've missed it. I've made a mistake. I thought I could live apart from you, but I was wrong to ever leave you. Let me stay close to you and I will serve you forever." The father shouted with joy, "My son was lost, but now he is found!" He called to the servants to bring the best robe to put on his son, to bring a ring and put it on his hand, and to bring shoes and put them on his feet. There was food, there was music, and there was dancing. The father tells the older son, "Your brother has come home. We are celebrating because he is safe and sound." All of these actions tell us that the father never stopped loving his son. Having him home again was everything that the father wanted.

This story is about the love that God has for us as our Father. This story is about His mercy, a deep compassion that He has for us as His children. He wants us to be close to Him. God wants us to know that we have value and worth when we're home. He wants us to know the sense of belonging when we're with Him.

## *The Mercy of the Almighty*

There was only one way for God to get His children back home. The sin problem had to be removed. We needed to be reconnected to our life source, so we could escape spiritual and physical death. The only way death could be paid for was by giving the life of someone who was pure.

In Romans 5:12, we learn that sin had passed to every person through the first man, Adam. Here was our problem – we all were born with a sinful nature that was passed down through Adam. There wasn't any one of us that had life who could pay the price for sin and death, for we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23).

As our Father, God had to do something, whatever the cost, to rescue His children from suffering and eternal separation. There was only one way. He had to bring another Son into the earth that was pure and without sin. This Son would have to take the punishment of sin and pay the requirements of death with the life found in His blood. Jesus, God's Son, entered earth as one of us, grew up among us, and died our death for us. Once the price for death had been paid, sin was removed, and God could return us back to life found only in Him. Jesus was the first of many to be restored back to God when God raised Him from the dead. Because of Jesus, now life was available for anyone who would come back home to the Father.

With death defeated, our Heavenly Father takes our old sinful nature and puts His life into our spirit, and we are, once again, born of God (John 3:3)! Our spirit, our innermost being, is made new (II Corinthians 5:17). Now we can come back to our mighty and merciful God. So close, His Holy Spirit now takes up residence in our hearts. He is ever with us! Romans 8:15 tells us that within our spirit, we have a cry for God that says, "Abba, Father." Abba is a Hebrew word meaning "Daddy." Whether or not your earthly parents showed love to you, God has come running after you with His parental love. If your earthly mother or father has hurt you, forgive them, and receive the love that the "Father of mercies" has for you (II Corinthians 1:3).

James 4:6 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you..." You can be as close to God as you want to be. When we long to be with Him the way He longs to be with us, we will pull away from anything that isn't holy. What makes something unholy? It's simple - it's anything that isn't found in God. To know Him is to become like Him. We aren't perfect yet, and we won't be perfect until we are in Heaven with a mind and a body that have been changed. Like Moses was hidden in the rock, we are safe in God's presence because we are hidden in Christ. The more we grow in holiness, the more of His presence we will know in our life.

### **The Compassion of God**

God used the Hebrew word *racham* to describe His love for His children. "Mercy" is one translation of the word. Another translation of *racham* is "compassion." When the word compassion is used in the Bible, it describes a love that comes from the innermost part of a person. We see God as a compassionate father over and over in scripture. If you are a parent, think of your own child. Is there anything you wouldn't do for your child if they were in danger or in trouble? Think about how you want your child to succeed, to be healthy, and to have a good education.

Do we love our children more than God loves His children? No, we're not perfect, but He is. The word *racham* is seen in Isaiah 49:15 where it says, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I (God) will not forget you." *Racham* is also found in Hosea 14:3, "...for in You

(God) the fatherless find mercy.” As earthly parents we make mistakes with our children; but we have to remember, God is also their Father, and He will always be there to care for them and for us.

### **Compassion for provision**

Psalm 103 is a chapter that I treasure because the word *racham* is mentioned over and over in it. It is a song that David wrote about God’s love for His children. In verses 1-4, he lists some of the benefits that God has given to us: provision, forgiveness, healing, and protection. Verse 4 says that God, “crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” The word “mercies” is *racham*, describing the love of a father. Like any parent, God desires to show us His love by caring for us and meeting our needs. Since God’s love for us is a strong, parental love, then will He not care for us as any good, earthly mother or father would do?

In Luke 11:9-13 Jesus tells us that we should ask God to meet our needs. He compares our Heavenly Father to earthly fathers. Jesus says, “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?” Of course we would give our child food to eat if they were hungry. We understand the cruelty of denying a hungry child the sustenance that they crave as human beings. If there were anyone of us who refused to give their child food, our government would find the person negligent and put him or her in jail. The children would be taken out of that home and put into a home where their needs would be met. Well, is God negligent of His children? He knows our needs. He created us to require food, rest, covering, and shelter; and He has provided those things. If we, being earthly parents, have compassion to meet the needs of our children, how much more is God going to take care of His own (see Matthew 15:32-38)?

### **Compassion for forgiveness**

*Racham* is mentioned again in Psalm 103 in verse 8 where it says, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.” And in verse 12 it says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” God’s love is displayed when sins are forgiven.

If your child came to you feeling ashamed for doing something wrong, what would you do? A good parent would see true repentance and immediately want to restore that child. When we love our children, we don’t take pleasure in seeing them feel shame or guilt or fear; we want them to enjoy being together with us.

Psalm 103:13 says, “As a father has compassion (*racham*) on his children, so the Lord has compassion (*racham*) on those who fear Him (NIV).” Not only does God love us, but He also had a great love for His own Son, Jesus. God loves His Son the same way you love your children. Yet, because of His love for us, He gave His Son as a sacrifice to pay for our sin so we could be forgiven. They say losing a child is the worst pain a person can feel. It is a difficult thing, yet God gave up His Son to die for us. That’s an amazing, indescribable love. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

But what if we’ve already received salvation, and made the choice to disobey God? Is there still forgiveness for the Christian? I John 1:9 was written to the Church and it says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If we cannot receive God’s love and forgiveness,

## *The Mercy of the Almighty*

we are trying to stand on our own goodness. No one can do that. Psalm 130:3, 4 in the Amplified version says, “If You, Lord, should keep account of and treat us according to our sins, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You...” We can’t stand on our own, but we can stand upright when we surrender our lives to God’s love! “The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever!” Hallelujah!

### **Compassion for healing**

Also in the mercy chapter of Psalm 103 is a verse that says God “heals all your diseases (verse 3).” “ALL” it said; He heals ALL our diseases. Why? It’s because God our Father is merciful, compassionate, and loving toward His children.

If your child comes crying to you because they broke a bone, what would you do? Any good parent will immediately do everything they could to relieve the pain of their child’s suffering. What would you think of a parent that refused to help stop the suffering of their hurting child? I would call that abusive. If we, as earthly parents, could not stand by and watch our child be in pain, then why would we think our Heavenly Father would do any less? He did all He could for us by making the biggest sacrifice a parent could make – He gave His Son Jesus to take the punishment for sin. Sickness is a result of sin. When Jesus died to remove sin, He also paid to remove the effects of sin, one of which is sickness.

In Isaiah 53, it describes the sacrifice that Jesus became for us. It says that Jesus took the stripes of a beating on His back, so we could be healed. He took our sorrow so we could know joy. He took our shame so we could know peace. He took our fear so we could know love. He took our sickness so we could know healing! The blood of Jesus has paid for our healing. Why did Jesus take that beating? The Bible says at any time Jesus could have called angels to rescue Him from taking our punishment. Jesus took the stripes on His back because He knew the heart of our Heavenly Father. He knew that God wanted us free from the pain and suffering of sickness and disease. If Jesus suffered for us, we should believe God for our healing.

Jesus said that He only said and did what God wanted Him to say and do. He also said, “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father” because God was revealed in the life of Christ. Not only do we see God’s love at the cross, but we also see the compassion of God in the way Christ ministered on the earth (See Matthew 9:27-21, Matthew 20:29-34, Luke 17:11-19, Luke 7:11-17, Mark 1:40-45).

In Matthew chapter 14, Jesus had just learned that the king murdered His cousin and forerunner, John. His disciple went to get John’s body and buried it. Jesus was saddened by the death of John, so He withdrew from everyone to be alone. However, the people heard where Jesus was, they left their cities, and followed Him. In verse 14 it says that Jesus went out and saw the multitude of people. In the middle of His own loss, the Bible says Jesus was moved with compassion for them. A love from deep within His heart rose up in Christ for the people. What did He do? The Bible says Jesus healed their sick. Why? He healed them because the love in His heart moved Him to do so.

### **Compassion for Deliverance**

In Psalm 103:4 it says that God, “...redeems your life from destruction.” Several times in the life of Christ, we see how the compassion of Christ brought deliverance to those who were bound by the devil (see Mark 5, Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 17:14-18). Those who were bound cried out for mercy, for love to set them free. In these examples,

## *The Mercy of the Almighty*

people were delivered from demonic possession, but there are many other ways that people need to be delivered.

There are people who are bound to addictions, substances or sin that have control over them. They want to be free, but there is a strong pull that they can't get away from on their own. This is illustrated in the book of Exodus when the people of Israel were leaving the slavery of Egypt. Over and over, plague after plague, the Pharaoh would let the Israelites go, but then would pull them back to Egypt. This is symbolic of the hold of sin and addiction in the lives of people.

Finally, because of the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea, Pharaoh let God's people go. The Passover represents the work that Jesus did on the cross. His blood breaks the bondage of slavery to sin. We can't break free of bondage on our own, but through Christ we are set free! The crossing of the Red Sea represents the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Bible says that yokes and bondages are broken through the anointing, or the work of the Spirit of God in our lives. When we reach the end of what we can do, God's grace goes beyond our limits and brings us to victory! Freedom! God wants to redeem our life from destruction. Hallelujah!



## **Chapter 3**

### **Mercy Triumphs over Judgment**

In Luke 10 there is a parable that Jesus told about compassion for forgiveness. The story is about a man that was traveling from one city to another. Along his journey, he was mugged by a group of men who beat him and took his belongings. He was left there to die, wounded and bleeding. This wounded man is representative of a person who has sinned and has known the painful consequences and shameful reproach of sin. A church leader comes by. When he sees the hurting man, he crosses over to the other side of the road, keeping his distance, and doesn't stop to help the wounded man. After awhile, another church leader walks by, again keeping his distance and walking by. These church leaders represent believers, even church leaders, who care more about themselves, their reputations, and their advancement than they do for the people who are hurting and dying around them. The two church leaders came by the wounded man at different times. If they had stopped to help the man, no one would have been aware of it. Unfortunately, there are some who will only choose to help restore someone who is wounded from sin when it builds up their own position. A third man walks by in Jesus' parable. This man is a foreigner, a person that the church leaders despised. He spots the wounded man on the side of the road. The Bible says he "had compassion (verse 33)." There was love in the foreigner's heart for a hurting person. He came near to the bleeding man. He cleaned and bandaged the wounds. The foreigner picked him up and took him to a safe place where he could be healed and restored. The foreigner represents the person who will reach out and touch those who have known the devastating consequences of sin.

James 2:13 says, "...mercy triumphs over judgment." People are looking for love and acceptance. It's the goodness of love that draws people to God and to you (Romans 2:4). Christians who are critical of others will unknowingly drive people away from them and away from God. When individuals know within them there are impure desires and thoughts, instead of running to God, they run away from Him. They don't feel that they have a place in church. They don't think that the people there will value them.

That's why it is so imperative that Christians go outside the church to find the ones who are hurting and dying in their hearts. Love will compel us to seek and save the lost like Jesus did. Compassion will cause us to help restore the backslider to the grace of God. Knowing God's love will build faith for provision, forgiveness, healing, and deliverance. Love gets results!

**If you would like to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, pray this prayer from your heart:**

*Father God, I thank you for loving me with a great love. I thank You for giving up Your Son to death so that I could know Your life. I choose to turn from my own way so that I can walk closely with You. I know that You raised Jesus from the dead, and I choose to make Him my Lord. Thank You that I am now born again, and I am Your child! Forever I will be with You in Heaven. Amen.*