

## **The Need for Mercy**

“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). While we may ask for justice against others, we usually want mercy for ourselves. A dictionary definition of mercy is “kindness in excess of what may be expected.” This fits well with the New Testament term, which refers to the outward manifestation of pity. It assumes need on the part of the one who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of the one who shows it.

When it comes to forgiveness, God alone has the resources to offer mercy and kindness to us. He is the Father of mercies (2 Corinthians 1:3), and He extends it through His Son, Jesus. Our sin creates the need for mercy, as sin brings judgment (Romans 6:23). Those who come to Christ, who yield their lives to Him and submit to His will, can find God’s mercy, God’s forgiveness. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:3-4). The only way to God’s mercy is through the Son, and the way to the Son is submission.

Mercy, however, is not reserved for the alien sinner only. God’s mercy is needed by the child of God as well. Not one of us lives perfectly by the will of God. How many of us can relate to the parable Jesus told of the tax collector and the Pharisee, and say of ourselves, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (Luke 18:13)? John reminds us, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9). God’s mercy is not an excuse to sin, but in Christ, it is pardon for sin. It’s not cheap grace, as we must repent and return; it’s God’s love, without which none of us could exist.

God’s mercy should draw us to a close relationship with Him, seeking to please Him, to follow His will and to live in and for Him. It’s the foundation on which Christian living is based (Romans 12:1) and finds its purpose. Are you hurting? Has sin wreaked havoc in your life? If you come to God, He offers mercy.

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