

## **Mercy**

### A Short Consideration on the Principle of Mercy

‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ Romans 9:15, Exodus 33:19.

Thus saith the LORD.

In declaring such a thing Jehovah states clearly that the will to bestow mercy is his and his alone. If mercy could be claimed, or grasped, or taken to oneself upon the merest desire for it – as if it were something offered – then it would no longer be mercy in the true sense of the word.

The mercy of God, which he bestows, can only be mercy if it is sovereignly given; and the characters who rightly receive it are, first, those who don’t deserve it – and *know* they don’t deserve it; and secondly, those who nevertheless in faith seek for it. In fact, the seeking from a helpless state after One who is able to bestow mercy, if he will, is the only ground upon which mercy can be hoped for and rightly found; any other element added disannuls mercy.

If the Lord were in any way indebted to a poor helpless creature to show mercy, then mercy would no longer be mercy; it would to some degree be debt. But the one being sought for mercy is under no obligation so to be; for in that it is solely of his own will – for reasons found only within his own nature and character – then if bestowed it will be true mercy indeed.

The leper came to Jesus in a real seeking after mercy with these words, ‘If thou wilt, thou canst...’: the bestowing of the mercy was completely the prerogative of Jesus to perform if it was his will to do so – and for no other reason. The leper brought no other plea but pure undeserved mercy; brought no reason at all as to why he thought Jesus *should* be merciful – which would have meant that Jesus’ bestowing what the man needed would no longer have been mercy – and so he just pleaded and waited. All the will to be merciful was on Jesus’ part. The leper knew that Jesus *could* be merciful – why else would he have come! – but was he willing? That was the question in the leper’s mind. As one filthy, unclean, and under the law, he had no hope of mercy from anyone, but from One he believed to be

God. So it was pure mercy the man craved, and Jesus of Nazareth being who he was – Jehovah in the flesh – bestowed upon the man that for which he pleaded; as indeed Christ will to all who come to him in such a way; for mercy is God’s delight, and all that call upon him for mercy will surely receive it! for he said, ‘I will’; and ‘him that cometh to me [in such a way] I will in no wise cast out.’ Matthew 8:2,3.

And how could he cast them out, for he is the merciful God, full of mercy and compassion, and only those who seek to introduce an element of merit in their cry will be ignored and receive nothing – not that they truly want mercy anyway.

But how many there are today who think they have received mercy simply because they have asked for it under the guise of ‘the sinner’s prayer’? Having made a commitment, or sincerely prayed to be forgiven based on, say, 1 John 1:9, they believe that as soon as they’ve said the words then God has immediately heard, answered, bestowed mercy, forgiveness and salvation. But there has been no thought or expectation that the Lord must reply! It is all presumption and terrible delusion to think that the prayer for mercy doesn’t actually need answering.

This would be like hearing the leper say to Christ, ‘If thou wilt, thou canst...’, and immediately going his way rejoicing that, because he’d asked – and, yes, asked the right Person – he’d obviously been healed! No one who witnessed the scene would conclude anything other than that the man was a fool to think such a thing, for Christ had not answered, and it was quite obvious that the man’s leprosy remained.

But this is how it is with masses in the churches. Just pray for forgiveness, don’t worry about receiving replies or, yes, actually *seeking* for mercy, just say a prayer, believe, and go on your way in the full assurance that God has heard, forgiven, and saved. No need to worry about scriptures like, ‘And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean’; just forget about the woman who asked mercy of Jesus, but ‘he answered her not a word’, so she kept pleading till she heard, ‘O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ How can these who claim instant salvation upon the muttering of a few words ever cry with David, ‘Be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I be like them that go down into the pit’? They cannot.

And the reason they cannot is because many of them are poisoned with this proud idea that they have some sort of free will, and that when they feel like it they can call upon the Almighty in the supposed light of many-a-text of scripture and receive instant salvation. But it is not of him that willeth, nor, we may say, of him that prayeth, but of God that showeth mercy. It is then God's will which is at work, for his is the only will that is free.

Yes, it is mercy that the sinner needs, and no praying, natural believing, presuming, claiming, or attempts to persuade the Almighty will effect anything until he that 'will' *be* merciful, is ! The doing is all God's; the bestowing is his, and the recipient is helpless and destitute of mercy until that mercy is shown. Therefore mercy is all of free and sovereignly exercised grace; yea, 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation'; for it is 'according to his mercy he saved us.'

Therefore never stop short of receiving mercy from the very hand of God. Any profession of Christ without this is nothing but groundless presumption; and, despite 'many wonderful works' which may subsequently be performed 'for the Lord' and 'in his name', all will be to no avail; for if you have not heard the voice of the Son of God in this life communicating grace and mercy to your soul in the felt need of it, then you will hear his voice for the first and only time on the day of judgment, saying, 'I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'