

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 19 (May 4-10, 2014)

Without God's **mercy**, none of us could stand in His presence. Because of His **mercy**, we do not get what we deserve (death, Romans 6:23). This week's devotions will feature verses about the **mercy** of our Lord.

Sunday, May 4 (read Titus 3:3-8)

*But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His **mercy**. (Titus 3:4-5a, emphasis mine)*

Today's reading passage presents the plan of salvation as clearly as any other in Scripture. All of us lived sinful, disobedient lives at one time because of the sinful nature we were born with (v. 3). Some may have been worse than others, but this is not God's measuring stick. Because of His kindness, love, and **mercy**, the Lord forgave all of our sins (past, present and future) on the day we asked Him to come into our lives. We repented and were baptized in the Name of Jesus for the remission of our sins (see Acts 2:38) and we received His Holy Spirit to guide us from that point on (v. 4-5). Therefore, we have the hope (assurance) of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord (v. 6-7). Shouldn't His **mercy** and grace motivate us to want to live for Him (v. 8)?

Monday, May 5 (read Hebrews 4:12-16)

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive **mercy** and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16, emphasis mine)*

We have no excuse if we choose to reject the wonderful **mercy** of God. The Word of God has been preserved to be the measuring stick by which we examine our deeds, thoughts and motives (v. 12). Jesus, Himself sits on the right hand of God the Father to intercede for all believers. He understands our weaknesses because He has been tempted in every way that we have (pleasure, popularity and power), yet He lived without sin (v. 14-15). Therefore, we have been invited to "approach the throne of grace with confidence" instead of fear. **Mercy** has already been provided; we only need to **receive** it! Once we fully understand that, through **mercy**, our past sins have been forgiven and forgotten, we can "find grace to help us in our time of need."

Tuesday, May 6 (1 Chronicles 21:1-13)

*David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for His **mercy** is very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men." (1 Chronicles 21:13, emphasis mine)*

The Lord wants the leaders of nations (and churches) to trust in **Him** and not in the size of their armies. In today's story, God sees the pride in King David so He allows Satan to come against His chosen leader to tempt him to number Israel's fighting men (v. 1-7), since the king was trusting in his numerical superiority instead of in his God. David confesses his sin (v. 8), but he still has to deal with the consequences. The Lord sends Gad (David's spiritual advisor) to the king to allow him to choose one of three painful options (v. 9-12). David chooses to throw himself on the **mercy** of the Lord instead of trusting in **mercy** from his enemies (v. 13). You may want to read the rest of the story (v. 14-30) to see how God turned David's sin into an event that led to the building of the temple of God in Jerusalem (see Romans 8:28). Our Lord is always in control!

Wednesday, May 7 (Psalm 5)

*But I, by your great **mercy**, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple. (Psalm 5:7, emphasis mine)*

This psalm follows the thoughts from yesterday's devotion. Early each morning, David is pleading with God for relief from his evil enemies (v. 1-3, 8). He acknowledges that God takes action against the wicked (v. 4-6), so he appeals to the Lord's **mercy** to help him in his time of need (v. 7). Your "enemies" are probably physical, emotional or financial concerns rather than people or groups. Are you trusting in God's **mercy** for relief from them? Do you come daily into His presence to "receive **mercy** and find grace" to help you in your struggles (Hebrews 4:16)? Have you found refuge in the Lord, and are you experiencing the joy that comes as a result (v. 11)? God blesses the righteous (those in right standing with Him) and surrounds them with favor (v. 12).

Thursday, May 8 (2 Corinthians 4:1-7)

*Therefore, since through God's **mercy** we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. (2 Corinthians 4:1, emphasis mine)*

I never want to lose sight of the fact that I have been chosen to minister for our Lord because of His **mercy** alone (v. 1). Since I am aware that I do not deserve this trust, I do not have anything to prove to Him or to my sheep. This is a special passage to me and I truly strive to renounce secret and shameful ways while presenting the truth plainly (v. 2). Satan is alive and well as he goes about his task of blinding the minds of unbelievers (v. 3-4). My focus must always be on the Lordship of Jesus Christ and not on my circumstances since all of my light (knowledge) comes from Him (v. 5-6). I have written this devotion from a personal standpoint because I am a living testimony that God places these treasures in jars of clay to assure that He gets all the glory for our accomplishments (v. 7).

Friday, May 9 (1 Timothy 1:12-17)

*Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown **mercy** because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. (1 Timothy 1:13, emphasis mine)*

Paul gives his personal testimony of the **mercy** he was given when God turned the worst of sinners into a great apostle (v. 16). In yesterday's devotions, we found that God can pour His Spirit into weak vessels. Today, we see that He can change the heart of a violent blasphemer and persecutor and bring forth a mighty witness. Perhaps you, like Paul, did some heinous things before you became a believer in Jesus Christ. God can still use you to bring a revival into your area! When you were living apart from God, you did what your sin nature led you to do. Now that you know Him as your personal Lord and Savior, you can join Paul in his powerful doxology (v.17).

Saturday, May 10 (Luke 18:9-14)

*But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God have **mercy** on me, a sinner." (Luke 18:13, emphasis mine)*

This is one of the best-known parables of our Lord. He tells it to silence those "who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else" (v. 9). No one in Israel was as hated as the tax collector, because he robbed the Jews while collecting taxes for the despised Romans. The Pharisee is proud that he does all the right religious actions, unlike that awful tax collector (v. 10-12). The tax collector, on the other hand, understands his need for **mercy** and pleads to the Father to grant it to him (v. 13). Is it any wonder that the repentant sinner finds **mercy** while the self-righteous Pharisee goes home full of himself, but empty of God's **mercy**. Don't be too proud to plead with **your** Father for His **mercy**!