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Finding Mercy in Our Merciful Lord; Psalm 28
GPBC
3.3.19

Introduction - The most precious, most valuable attainments in life are often the hardest to attain. For example: Forgiveness. If you have said something horribly wrong, done something tremendously harmful, or been part of something terribly hurtful, your soul lives in abject misery until you find forgiveness from the one you have so wrongfully offended. Isn't that true? The guilt and conviction weigh heavy on your heart. You are confined in a prison cell of anguish. Joy disappears as a vapor until you find forgiveness. But forgiveness is extremely hard to obtain.

Forgiveness requires admission and confession of wrongdoing on your part. Forgiveness requires making an apology. Forgiveness requires requesting forgiveness from the one or ones you have offended. And forgiveness requires leaving the results in the hands of the offended. Those self-denying acts of humility are very hard to make, especially hard to make them with sincere honesty and truthfulness.

But when those necessary steps of forgiveness have been taken and the heart of the offended has been softened to accept your apology and offer forgiveness, there is no greater relief in that moment than forgiveness. Other examples would be reconciliation of an estranged, meaningful relationship or vindication from false accusation.

As difficult as restoring our relationship with one another may be, when it comes to spiritual restoration between us and Almighty God, the things most precious in life move from difficult to impossible in terms of our ability to make things right. One of those treasured attainments for which our souls thirst is mercy. Mercy has been defined as not receiving what we truly deserve, and when it comes to our status as sinners before a holy God, there is no doubt of what we deserve. Therefore, we desperately need mercy from the Lord. How delightful it is then to discover throughout the pages of Holy Scripture, that the Lord is not only perfectly holy and just, but He is immeasurably gracious and merciful. We serve a most merciful heavenly Father. How invigorating and refreshing it is to our souls to read verses such as Lamentations 3:22 "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end." In this life, our sin never

comes to an end, but oh how rich it is to know that neither do His mercies! I usually greet people with the question, "How's it going?" ill. Every once in a while, someone will reply, "Better than I deserve." There's a person who understands the mercy of the Lord. David understood mercy as well.

I. A Desperate Prayer in Desperate Need of Mercy (vv1-2)

A) Notice that David begins Psalm 28 as a desperate prayer. He writes, "To You, O Lord, I call." In our age of texting, FB, and Instagram we've almost done away with phone calls haven't we? It's just seems easier and more convenient to shoot off a few lines rather than engage in a conversation. But not all conversations can be covered in quick, short text form. Some occasions require hearing a voice. Personal contact conveys emotion and tone. Some conversations require face to face communication. That's what prayer is. Approaching the very presence of God with praise and the burdens of the soul. That's what David is doing here. This is not a text. This is not a phone call. This is prayer.

B) And it is desperate in nature. He cries, "be not deaf to me, lest if You be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit." There is a clear desperation in David's voice here. The need of the hour coupled with his own awareness that he deserves nothing from God, drives him to plea for mercy. He must hear from God on this, in this. He must. Look ahead to Psalm 29 - the voice of the Lord. When the soul is on edge, there is no greater balm than the voice of heaven to soothe and to restore. David says, "I might as well be dead if I don't hear from You!"

C) And he pleads here for mercy, v2. Mercy. I don't deserve your goodness. I don't deserve Your grace. I don't deserve Your salvation. But I so desperately need it. Lord, I need You, every hour I need You.

D) We have needs in life. We have needs today. Some of those may be very desperate in nature. We often need forgiveness, mercy, grace, healing, comfort, conviction, correction, humility, salvation. And there are times when we reach out to one another, and we become agents of God's mercy, grace, and comfort to one another. But in every need, we always need to go straight to the source, to God, in prayer. Have you called on Him today to meet your pressing need?

D) As David pleads for mercy, he then describes the state of those who do not seek after the mercy of God.

II. A Portrait of a Life Void of the Lord's Mercy (vv3-5)

A) Woooo David. Calm down man. That's a little over the top. Jesus tells us to love our enemies. This just doesn't sound right for David to pray

this way. Now because both the OT and NT are equally inspired by God, we reject any notion of contradiction between the two. What we must recognize in these passages is that the Psalms are teaching us another aspect of God. We learn from Jesus that we are to be merciful to others because we have received mercy from God. We learn from the imprecatory (praying for the judgement of God upon evil) psalms that God's justice is sure and certain and right.

B) I think it would be helpful for us to see three truths in these verses that put David's seemingly harsh prayer into biblical perspective. This gives us a full vision of the Lord and enables to see that all of His attributes are holy and good.

1. Evil breeds in the hearts of those who reject the Lord. Evil flourishes when the Lord is neglected. When the Lord is absent from the heart, evil abounds and takes over. (v5a) The source and garden of evil is the disregard of the Lord. That's what makes one wicked, a worker of evil, and one who is spitefully two-faced (v3). The cure for evil, then, is to seek the Lord. The one thing that drives away evil is the Lord's presence.

2. Justice will prevail eventually and finally over evil because the Lord is just. (v4 - talking to the Lord, v5b - the Lord will accomplish it)

3. It is just for evil to reap evil, for sin to reap sin. Listen to Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." David is praying for justice to prevail when he prays v4.

a. The examples of this throughout Scripture are numerous.

(1) Remember it was the Egyptians who slaughtered the Hebrew children and when God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt, the tenth plague was the loss of every firstborn.

(2) Sisera meant to destroy Israel with his iron chariots, but an iron nail drove through his temple.

(3) Samson fell by the lust of the eye and the Philistines put out his eyes.

(4) Daniel's accusers were thrown into the lion's den that they meant for Daniel.

(5) Haman hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai.

C) If you do not seek the mercy of the Lord, you are left with only the justice of the Lord, and His justice is just as perfect as His mercy.

D) So keeping all of this in biblical perspective, David is praying for two things in Psalm 28. He is praying for justice, that evil would not prevail but that right would prevail. That God would not be treated as if He did not exist or matter. But he is also praying for mercy. Remember, he is praying for justice in the context of pleading for mercy.

E) In other words, David knows he deserves justice too. The only difference between he and the workers of evil is that he is seeking the Lord, he is pleading for the Lord's mercy. He has regard for God. He knows what he deserves (justice), therefore, he knows what he needs (mercy).

F) What David discovers is the same precious truth that every soul discovers who cries to the Lord for mercy - He is so very merciful to everyone who seeks His mercy.

III. A Portrait of a Life Filled with the Lord's Mercy (vv6-9)

A. The Lord is indeed merciful and that is reason to greatly praise Him!

B. The result of mercy

1. The mercy of the Lord is evident in His people not only in what they do not receive but also in that the Lord fills every need.
2. The mercy of the Lord is evident in His people when their hearts and mouths are overflowing in praise. You show me someone who cannot stop praising the Lord, and I'll show you someone who understands their desperate need of mercy and has found a never-ending supply of it in our Merciful Father.

C. proclamation of mercy – v8

D. prayer for mercy – v9. He prays for what he knows to be true about God.

Conclusion - When the OT speaks of God's anointed it is always pointing to the Messiah, The Anointed One, and by extension then to the people of God. Which means, if the Father is the saving refuge of the Anointed One, His Son, then the way we seek and find refuge in God the Father is through God the Son. The path to the Lord's mercy is by way of the Son. That's what Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me."