

Mercy by Stephen Moore

Grace is undeserved favour from God such as forgiveness, eternal life, relationship with God, an eternal inheritance etc. Mercy on the other hand is not getting what we do deserve such as separation from God, judgment and punishment for our sin.

In other word grace is all about receiving things from God whereas mercy is all about not receiving things from God. Both grace and mercy are positive gifts from God.

- *Mercy only exists with guilt*

Romans 3:19, James 2:10

We must understand that God is merciful because we are guilty. We have broken His law and offended Him and in His mercy He offers us the hand of friendship through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- God is merciful – FACT

Exodus 34:6, James 5:11

Our very salvation depends on God's great attribute of mercy because if He is not merciful then we are lost in our sin and guilt. God is full up to the very brim and overflowing with mercy. He couldn't be any more or any less merciful.

- God is merciful – EVIDENCE

Numbers 14:12, Matthew 27:44, Luke 23:39-43

There are many examples of God's mercy throughout the Bible however some of the greatest examples of God's mercy are witnessed in His dealings with the nation of Israel. On numerous occasions God withheld judgment and punishment which they deserved for their rebellion against Him.

Another great example is the Thief on the cross. Both thieves insulted the Lord at the beginning of their crucifixion however one gradually recognised that the man in the middle was the Son of God and in desperation he cried out to Him, "Remember me." The man was being justly punished for his sin and deserved God's judgment and punishment after death however the Lord was merciful and told him, "Today you will be with Me in paradise."

- God is just

Exodus 34:7

Not only is God merciful but He is also just and, "He does not leave the guilty unpunished." Our response as individuals to the good news about Jesus determines which of these attributes is most prominent. If we reject Jesus as Saviour then God's justice is more prominent to us because we will experience it. If we receive Jesus as Saviour then God's mercy is more prominent to us because we will experience it.

- How can God be both merciful and just with us at the same time?

1Peter 3:18

God does not brush sin under the carpet because all sin must be paid for. God's mercy and salvation are free to the recipients but they cost God a lot. God can be merciful to us and still just because Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins in our place on the cross. Through faith in Him and His finished work we can receive God's mercy.

- Sovereign mercy

Romans 9:15-18

God does not show mercy to everyone and there are people in Hell right now experiencing the justice of God. Throughout history God demonstrates to us His sovereign mercy particularly when He chose Abraham, Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau. God is sovereign and in control and He alone decides who receives His mercy.

- Who qualifies for God's mercy today?

Romans 10:9-13

In His sovereignty God has decided that only those who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, who believe that He died and rose again, who trust in who He is and what He has done, and who call upon His name will receive God's mercy and salvation. God has decided that those who don't will never experience His mercy.

- What happens if you reject God's mercy through Jesus Christ?

Romans 1:18-21, Exodus 5:1-9, 7:13-14, 8:15+19+32, 9:12+35, 10:1+20+27, 11:10

Present wrath

Everyone has received some revelation from God whether by creation or the Bible etc. and it is our responsibility to respond to that revelation. If someone refuses God's revelation then God will send them darkness, gave them over to their sin, and harden their heart.

Pharaoh is an example of someone who challenged God's existence and authority and hardened his heart and rebelled against God. In response to his stubbornness God judged him and hardened his heart for him.

Future wrath

Romans 2:5-8

If a person continues to reject God's revelation and mercy then they are simply storing up wrath which God will exercise on the Day of Judgment in the future.

- Motivating mercy

Romans 12:1-3

As Christians God's mercy is a motivating force to make Jesus Christ Lord of our lives and to live for Him instead of ourselves and for His glory instead of our own.

- More mercy

Hebrews 4:16

God's mercy is not complete at the point of conversion but it continues throughout a Christian's life. There is more mercy on offer to help us when we fall and fail in our quest to make Jesus Christ Lord of our lives. We need to respond to this mercy by approaching His throne with confidence to receive it.

- Be merciful

Luke 6:36

God is our example for life. He is our example of humility, love and mercy. We must challenge ourselves to be merciful to those who offend us and sin against us because we sinned against God yet He has shown us great mercy in Jesus Christ.

We must respond to God's mercy by receiving it for salvation and for help to live our Christian lives!