

**Behold Our God**  
**Session 7: The Mercy and Grace of God**  
**(Exodus 34:6-7 & Select Scriptures)**

**Introduction:**

Is there anyone in here tonight who likes to collect things? If so, what do you collect?

My grandfather (Pop Pop), collected coins. I remember going into his walk-in closet at his house and looking through his hundreds, if not thousands of coins that he had collected throughout the years.

Did you know that coins can be extremely valuable? In fact, the most valuable coin in the world, the Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle, is worth \$20,165,100.<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, this coin wasn't a part of my Pop Pop's collection.

But with any coin, as you know, there are two sides.

Tonight, we are once again going to tackle two attributes of God. If salvation was a coin, I'd argue that these two attributes would be the two sides of the coin: Mercy and Grace.

I love how Tozer puts it in *The Knowledge of the Holy*, "In God mercy and grace are one; but as they reach us they are seen as two, related but not identical."<sup>2</sup>

I suspect if we went around the room tonight, there would be some of you who would have a hard time explaining the difference between mercy and grace. And as we'll see tonight, that's for good reason: they are closely related. Yet, they are not the same. We desperately need both God's mercy and grace.

So tonight, just like in previous weeks, we will answer the following three questions:

- 1) What does it mean for God to be merciful and gracious?
- 2) Where does the Bible teach that God is merciful and gracious?
- 3) What difference does God's mercy and grace make in our lives?

**Take Home Truth: God is merciful and gracious.**

- I. What does it mean for God to be merciful and gracious?
  - A. Mercy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ceoworld.biz/2023/08/25/top-most-valuable-coins-for-collectors-across-the-globe/>

<sup>2</sup> AW Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 93.

1. Our English word “mercy” comes from the Latin word “merces” which means “price paid”.<sup>3</sup>
2. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines mercy as, “compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one's power”<sup>4</sup>
3. I remember my youth pastor growing up frequently told us that mercy is, “Not receiving what you deserve.”
  - a) For example, imagine you fell on hard times financially and you went to a bank for a loan of \$10,000.
  - b) Sadly, the hard times continue and you aren't able to make the payments to the bank to repay the loan
  - c) The bank would have every right to take legal action against you.
  - d) But say that they don't. The bank has compassion on you and chooses to work with you in creating a repayment plan.
  - e) This would be an example of mercy.
4. There are several words used in the original languages of the Bible that are translated into the English word “mercy”.
  - a) In the OT, we see two primary Hebrew words that are translated into the English word “mercy”
    - (i) Racham (רָחַם): Compassion<sup>5</sup>
    - (ii) Checed (חָסַד) (which comes from the verb “Chacad”): Favor, kindness, merciful<sup>6</sup>
  - b) In the NT, the Greek word Eleos (ἔλεος) is used for mercy.<sup>7</sup>
    - (i) Eleos means “pity” or “compassion”<sup>8</sup>
5. So to summarize, when the Bible speaks of God's mercy, it's referring to His kindness, compassion, and pity, which leads Him to not give to wrongdoers that which is deserved (namely, His wrath).
  - a) In *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Tozer defines God's mercy as His active compassion and goodness which confronts man's suffering and guilt.<sup>9</sup>

## B. Grace

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.compassion.com/poverty/mercy-definition.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mercy>

<sup>5</sup> <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7356.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2616.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://biblehub.com/greek/1656.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> AW Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 90-91.

1. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines grace as, “unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification”.<sup>10</sup>
  - a) Or to put it concisely, “unmerited favor”
2. My youth pastor always used to define grace as “Receiving what you don’t deserve”
3. Do you see the difference between mercy and grace?
  - a) Mercy is not receiving what you do deserve
  - b) Grace is receiving what you don’t deserve
4. They are closely related, but not identical.
  - a) Two sides of the coin of salvation
5. In the OT, the Hebrew word “chen” (חֵן) is used for “grace”.<sup>11</sup>
6. In the NT, the Greek word “charis” (χάρις) is translated into English as “grace”.<sup>12</sup>
7. Both words mean favor, kindness, or grace.
8. So when the Bible speaks of God’s grace, it’s referring to His kindness which leads Him to give that which isn’t deserved. God’s grace is His unmerited favor.
  - a) Listen to what Tozer writes about God’s grace: “so grace is His goodness directed toward human debt and demerit. It is by His grace that God imputes merit where none previously existed and declares no debt to be where one had been before. Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving.”<sup>13</sup>
  - b) Or listen to what JI Packer writes of God’s grace in *Knowing God*: “The grace of God is love freely shown towards guilty sinners, contrary to their merit and indeed in defiance of their demerit. It is God showing goodness to persons who deserve only severity, and had no reason to expect anything but severity.”<sup>14</sup>

### Application:

Well said, Mr. Tozer and Mr. Packer.

So what I would like you to do right now, is for the next couple of minutes, turn to the person next to you and explain to them what it means for God to be merciful and gracious. Explain both attributes to one another and then we’ll reconvene.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grace>

<sup>11</sup> <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2580.htm>

<sup>12</sup> <https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm>

<sup>13</sup> AW Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 93.

<sup>14</sup> JI Packer, *Knowing God*, 120.

God's mercy is His compassion which leads Him to not give the guilty what they deserve. God's grace is His kindness which leads Him to give to the undeserving.

Before we move on, do you think these are communicable or incommunicable attributes?

They are communicable attributes. As we'll see later on, God shares these attributes with us, His children (though we are imperfect in these things, while He is perfectly merciful and gracious)

Next, let's explore where the Bible teaches that God is merciful and gracious.

## II. Where does the Bible teach that God is merciful and gracious?

### A. The writings of Moses reveal that God is merciful and gracious (Exodus 34:6-7)

1. In the immediate aftermath of the people of Israel sinning against God by worshiping the golden calf (see Exodus 32), Moses interceded on behalf of the people.
2. God was angry with the people of Israel for their idolatry (Exodus 32:10).
3. Moses pleads with God that He would show them mercy and God relents from the disaster He was going to bring on His people (Exodus 32:11-14).
4. After all of this happened, Moses went to the top of Mount Sinai once again and spoke with God; he made an audacious request of Him, "Please show me your glory." (Exodus 33:18).
5. God hid Moses in the cleft of a rock, and let him briefly look upon His backside.
6. The morning after all of this took place, God descended in the cloud on Mount Sinai and stood next to Moses and proclaimed His name to him:
  - a) Exodus 34:6-7: 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
7. What a name! He proclaims so many things about Himself in these two verses. So many of His attributes are highlighted here.
  - a) But notice, the first two attributes He reveals about Himself are His mercy and grace.

### B. The writings of David reveal that God is merciful and gracious (Psalm 145:8-9)

1. Psalm 145:8-9: 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.
  2. We see God's explanation of His name that He gave to Moses repeated here by David.
  3. Yahweh is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
  4. His mercy is so vast, it is over all that He has made.
- C. The writings of the prophets (Jeremiah) reveal that God is merciful and gracious (Lamentations 3:22-25)**
1. Lamentations 3:22-25: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." 25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.
  2. God's steadfast love and mercy are unending (aka "infinite")
  3. His mercy and grace are vast beyond all measure
- D. The Gospels reveal that God is merciful and gracious (John 1:14; Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; etc.)**
1. In John 1:14, we read the following about Jesus:
    - a) John 1:14: 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
    - b) Jesus is full of grace (there are no limits to His grace)
  2. Jesus is full of mercy as well
    - a) On several occasions in the gospels we read that Jesus had compassion on people (see Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32)
    - b) Another word for compassion is mercy
  3. Remember, all Three Persons of the Trinity share equally in all of the divine attributes
    - a) God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy are all infinitely merciful and gracious
- E. The writings of the Apostles reveal that God is merciful and gracious (Eph. 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:3; )**
1. Mercy
    - a) Peter, in 1 Pet. 1:3, tells us that God is great in mercy.
    - b) The Apostle Paul in Eph. 2:4, writes that God is "rich in mercy"
      - (i) Inexhaustibly great and rich in mercy
  2. Grace
    - a) Paul writes of God's grace in Titus 2:11:
      - (i) Titus 2:11: 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,
    - b) Salvation has been made available to all people because of the infinite grace of God

## **Application:**

From beginning to end, the Bible reveals that God is merciful and gracious. From Moses to the Apostles, this is the central message of the Bible; our merciful and gracious God has made a way for sinners like you and me to be saved.

This leads us to our final point for the evening.

### **III. What difference does God's Mercy and Grace make in our lives?**

#### **A. Recognize how much we need God's mercy and grace for our salvation**

1. JI Packer, in his book *Knowing God*, suggests three reasons why we should be grateful for God's mercy and grace.<sup>15</sup>

a) Reason #1: God's mercy and grace are the source of the pardon (forgiveness) of sin

- (i) This is a reminder that the Bible teaches in Hebrews 9:22, that apart from the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.
- (ii) Apart from Jesus shedding His perfect, sinless blood for you on the cross, your sin wouldn't be forgiven.
- (iii) Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate display of God's mercy and grace.

(a) You deserve God's wrath for your sin.

- (i) But if you've placed your faith in Jesus, the wrath you deserve for sin, was placed on Jesus at the cross.
- (ii) You haven't received what you deserve
- (iii) This is God's mercy

(b) You don't deserve eternal life

- (i) But if you've repented of your sin and placed your faith in Jesus, you have received the gift of eternal life (John 3:16)
  - (ii) Paul writes of this gift in Ephesians 2:8-9:
    - (a) Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
  - (iii) Paul makes it very clear that if you have received eternal life, you didn't deserve it.
  - (iv) This is God's grace
- (iv) Be thankful for God's mercy and grace. It's the reason you are forgiven

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<sup>15</sup> JI Packer, *Knowing God*, 121-123.

- b) Reason #2: God's mercy and grace are the motives of the plan of salvation
  - (i) Here we see the ultimate cause and effect
  - (ii) God's mercy and grace led Him in eternity past to create the plan of salvation
  - (iii) Paul writes of this plan in Ephesians 1:
    - (a) Ephesians 1:3-10: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
    - (iv) Be thankful for God's mercy and grace. It's the reason that there's a plan of salvation in the first place.
- c) Reason #3: God's mercy and grace serve as the guarantee of the preservation of the saints
  - (i) As Paul writes in Philippians 1:6:
    - (a) Philippians 1:6: 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
      - (i) The God who is infinite in mercy and grace will bring to completion the good work He began in you.
        - (a) God always finishes what He starts
      - (ii) No one is able to snatch you out of your merciful and gracious Heavenly Father's hand (John 10:29).
    - (ii) Be thankful for God's mercy and grace, which guarantee our preservation as God's sons and daughters

- B. Recognize how much we need God's mercy and grace for our sanctification
  - 1. Titus 2:11-14: 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in

the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

- a) God's grace saves us and trains to live godly lives.
- b) Apart from God's mercy and grace, we couldn't possibly grow in Christlikeness
  - (i) Ephesians 2:10: 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**C. Recognize how much we need God's mercy and grace in the midst of suffering**

1. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
  - a) God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all of our affliction
  - b) He moves towards us with compassion as we suffer
2. He is the God whose grace is sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12:9) in the midst of our difficulties.
  - a) His grace alone is sufficient

**D. Remember, these are communicable attributes: we are called to be merciful and gracious, just like God**

1. Did you catch it in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4? Take a look at it again.
2. Q: Why does God show us mercy and comfort us in all our affliction?
3. A: "so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction"
4. God has shown us mercy so that we would show mercy.
5. He has been so gracious to us so that we would be gracious to others.
  - a) In our connect groups, we will spend some time thinking through practical ways that we can be merciful and gracious to others

**Conclusion:**

But as we close, I want us to consider the words of one my favorite songs: "His Mercy is More" (Matt Papa and Matt Boswell)

**Verse 1**

What love could remember, no wrongs we have done

Omniscient, all-knowing, He counts not their sum



**Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore**

**Our sins they are many, His mercy is more**

**Verse 2**

**What patience would wait as we constantly roam**

**What Father so tender is calling us home**

**He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor**

**Our sins they are many, His mercy is more**

**Verse 3**

**What riches of kindness He lavished on us**

**His blood was the payment His life was the cost**

**We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford**

**Our sins they are many, His mercy is more**

**Chorus**

**Praise the Lord**

**His mercy is more**

**Stronger than darkness**

**New every morn'**

**Our sins they are many, His mercy is more**

**Never stop praising our God whose mercy is more and whose grace is sufficient!**