

# Attributes of God (Series 1): The Mercy of God

by A.W. Tozer

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*The mercy of God is a fundamental attribute of God's nature, which is infinite, uncreated, and eternal, and operates by God's goodness confronting human guilt and suffering.*

**Duration:** 46:43

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:6, 2 Peter 3:9

**Topics:** "Attributes of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the compassion and mercy of God. He starts by highlighting how God's compassion is not just a feeling, but an active response to the needs of His people. The preacher then goes on to share some facts about the mercy of God, emphasizing that it has always existed and is a fundamental aspect of His character. He also mentions how Jesus, as the Son of Man, sympathizes with our grief and offers relief. The sermon concludes by highlighting the amazing grace of God, which is what sinners desperately need and should be grateful for.

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## Transcript

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.

For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are thus. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children. 103 Psalm.

Then in 2 Corinthians, blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. James 5. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercies. 2 Peter 3. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Now, mercy, then, is an attribute of God. In the Old Testament there is a very wonderfully moving declaration of this, in Exodus and in 2 Chronicles, that one attribute of God is mercy. Moses, you remember, was up there, hiding, and the Lord, Jehovah, descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of Jehovah.

And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Then in 2 Chronicles, the temple came to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. When they lifted up their voices with the trumpet and cymbals and instruments of music and praised Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever, it came to pass, then, as they did that, that the house was filled with the cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priest could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house.

Now, we have in those two passages a setting forth in rather formal style the declaration that God is merciful. And I should like to say, as I have said about the other attributes of the Deity, that mercy is not something God has, but something God is. If mercy was something God had, conceivably God might mislead or he might use it up.

It might become less or more. But since it is something that God is, then we must remember that it is uncreated. The mercy of God did not come into being.

The mercy of God always was in being, for mercy is what God is, and God is eternal, and God is infinite. Now, here is something that you probably won't believe until you have checked it, because all our teaching has been on the other side on this. It has been careless, nobody has come out and said it, but we have gathered it, at least I have, that the Old Testament is a book of severity and law, and the New Testament is a book of tenderness and grace.

But, my brother, do you know that while both the Old Testament and the New Testament declare the mercy of God, the Old Testament says more than four times as much about mercy as the New? That is a little bit hard to believe, but it is true. It can be checked. Anybody who has the proper source books can find out that that is true, that the words mercy and merciful and mercies occur over four times as often in the Old Testament as they do in the New.

So that is an error, that error of the severe Old Testament and the kind New Testament. It is a great error, because the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New is one God. He did not change, he is the same God, and being the same God and not changing, he must therefore necessarily be the same in the Old as he is in the New, and the same in the New as he is in the Old.

Because he is immutable, he does not change, and because he is perfect, he cannot add, so that God's mercy was just as great in the Old Testament as it was and is in the New. Now, a goodness is the source of mercy, and right here I must apologize for my necessity to use human language to speak of God. You see, language deals with those things that are finite, and God is infinite, and when we try to describe God or to talk about God, we are always breaking our own rules and falling back into the little semantic snares which we don't want to fall into but can't help.

You see, when I say that one attribute is the source of another, I'm not using correct language, but I'm putting it so we can get hold of it. If I tried to talk in absolutes, you'd all fall sound asleep, and I couldn't do

it to begin with and wouldn't do it if I could, because you'd all fall sound asleep. But let me say, and say it with the understanding that I am talking down to myself, that goodness is the source of mercy.

I preached on the goodness of God here two, three, four weeks ago, and God's infinite goodness is taught throughout the entire Bible, that the goodness is that in God which desires the happiness of his creatures, and it is that irresistible urge in God, that urge to bestow blessedness, and that this goodness of God takes pleasure in the pleasure of his people. I wish I could teach the children of God to know this. We have had this drummed into us so long that we believe that if we're happy, God is scared and frightened about us, and that he's never quite pleased if we're happy.

But the strict true teaching of the word is that God takes pleasure in the pleasure of his people, provided his people take pleasure in God, and that God suffers along with his friends. Now, over here in Isaiah, I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, that's Jehovah, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindness. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie, so he was their Savior.

In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and his pity he redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old. God takes pleasure in the pleasure of his friends, and he suffers along with his friends, and he takes no pleasure in the suffering of his enemies.

Read this, it says, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their way and live. The book of Lamentations tells us more fully than that, that God is not pleased when people suffer. God never looks down and rejoices to see somebody squirm.

If God has to punish, God is not pleased with himself for punishing. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, saith God. Now, according to the Old Testament, mercy has certain meanings.

It means to stoop in kindness to an inferior, and it means to have pity upon, and it means to be actively compassionate. There used to be a verb that springs out of the word compassion. We don't use it anymore.

Maybe it's because we don't have the concept anymore. I think the reason that some words fall into disuse is that the concept they fall into disuse, and it's the word compassionate. It is a verb that God actively compassionates suffering men.

I like that very, very wonderfully well. Actively compassionates. That is, that God has compassion.

But you know, for God to feel compassion at a distance would be one thing, but for God actively to compassionate people would be something else. Let me read again from the word of God about it here. It says, And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of their bondage.

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant, and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them. Now, that's the close of the second chapter of Exodus, and the third chapter opens with the burning bush and goes on to the commissioning of Moses to go deliver Israel from Egypt. So this active compassion is when God actively compassionate people, he did four things.

He heard their groanings, he remembered his covenant, he looked upon their sufferings, and he pitied them. And immediately he came down to help them. The same thing is true in the New Testament where it is said of our Lord Jesus that when he saw the multitude, that they were a sheep having no shepherd, he was moved with compassion and said unto the disciples, Give ye them to eat.

That is to actively compassionate. A great many people are very merciful in their beds, very merciful in their lovely living rooms, very merciful in their 1959 cars, but they never, they have compassion, but they never compassionate. They read something in the script, in the newspaper for the moment now we're talking about, they read something in the newspaper about somebody that's suffering, so isn't that terrible, that poor family was burnt out, and they're out on the street with no place to go, and they turn the radio on, listen to some program.

They're very compassionate for a minute and a half, but they don't compassionate. That is, they don't do anything about it. But God's compassion leads him to actively compassionate.

He did it by sending Moses down to deliver the children of Israel. Now I'd like to give you some facts about the mercy of God, and I want you to get a hold of this, and even if it does sound dry to you tonight, I promise you that if you'll get a hold of it, it will be worth gold and silver and precious jewels to you in the days to come. Here are some facts about the mercy of God.

One is that it never began to be. The mercy of God never began to be. I've heard of men who were hard-hearted or careless, and then they began to get stirred up, and their mercies began to blossom forth.

Well, it never was so of God. God never lay in lethargy without his compassion, because God's mercy is simply what God is, and it is uncreated and eternal, as I have said, it never began to be. It always was.

When heaven and earth were yet unmade and the stars were yet unformed, and all that space men are talking about now was only a thought in the mind of God, God was as merciful as he is now. And not only did it never begin to be, but the mercy of God has never been any more than it is now. It has never been more.

There are some things they tell us of swirls out yonder that have burnt themselves out. They tell us that there are heavenly bodies that disappeared in a grand explosion so many light-years ago that it will yet be thousands of earth-years before their light stops shining. The light is still coming, the waves are still coming, though the source of those waves of long cease to be.

Then there are stars that burn upright and dim down low again. But the mercy of God has never been any more than it is now, for the simple reason that the mercy of God is infinite, and anything that is infinite can't be less than it is, and it can't be any more than it is. It's infinite, that means boundless, unlimited, it has no measurements on any side, because measurements are created things, and God is uncreated.

Therefore the mercy of God has never been any more than now, and the mercy of God will never be any less than now. Don't imagine that when the day of judgment comes, in which I firmly believe, now don't think for a minute that God will turn off his mercy as the sun goes behind a cloud or you turn off a spigot. Don't think for a minute that the mercy of God will cease to be.

The mercy of God will never be any less than it is now, because the infinite cannot cease to be infinite, and the perfect cannot admit an imperfection. And again, nothing that occurs can increase the mercy of God, or diminish the mercy of God, or alter the quality of the mercy of God. For instance, the cross of

Christ.

When Jesus died on the cross, the mercy of God did not become any greater. It could not become any greater, for it was already infinite. You see, we have the mistaken notion, and this isn't heresy, it isn't something somebody goes around teaching, but we just get odd notions.

We get the idea that God is showing mercy because Jesus died. No, no, brother. Jesus died because God is showing mercy.

Jesus died. It was the mercy of God that gave us Calvary, not Calvary that gave us mercy. If God had not been merciful, there would have been no incarnation, no babe in the manger, no man on the cross, and no open tomb.

It was the mercy of God that gave us Calvary, not Calvary that aroused the mercy of God. So keep that in mind, that nothing that ever anybody did ever increased the mercy of God in us. God has mercy enough to enfold the whole universe in his heart, and nothing anybody ever did could diminish the mercy of God.

A man can walk out from under and away from the mercy of God, as Israel did, and as Adam and Eve did for a time, and as the nations of the world have done, as Sodom and Gomorrah did. We can make the word, the mercy of God, inoperative toward us by our conduct, since we are free moral agents. But that doesn't change the power of the word of God any, or the mercy of God any, and it doesn't diminish it in the slightest, and it doesn't alter the quality of it.

Let me say this, and you may wince under this for a little bit, that the intercession of Christ at the right hand of God does not increase the mercy of God toward his people. For if God were not already merciful, there would be no intercession of Christ at the right hand of God, and if God is merciful at all, then he's infinitely merciful, and it's impossible for the mediatorship of Jesus at the right hand of the Father to make the mercy of God any more than it is now, simply cannot be. Now in coming home this afternoon from a meeting, I talked with Brother Chase, and he reminded me of something.

I told him I was going to preach on mercy, so I'd like to add this little thing to my sermon. I wrote it in here so I wouldn't forget it. It is that no attribute of God is greater than any other one.

You know, we think so. Some would say, oh, the love of God. The man Drummond, Henry Drummond, wrote, what did he call his book? The greatest thing in the world, yeah.

Greatest thing in the world, well, yes, if you need love, love is the greatest thing. If you need mercy, mercy's the greatest thing. Here's the point.

Since all the attributes of God are simply God, then it's impossible that anything in God can be greater than anything else in God. That's good theology, brothers, metaphysics, but it's good theology, and you can't change it, and you can't argue it down, but it's true that the love of God is infinite, and the mercy of God is infinite, and the justice of God is infinite, and therefore, one is not greater than the other, but all are the same. And yet, there are attributes of God that can be needed more at various times.

For instance, when the man went along and saw the fellow that had been beaten up by robbers lying there, the most needed attribute at that moment was mercy. He needed somebody to compassionate him. And so the good Samaritan got down off his beast and went over and compassionated him.

That's what he needed at the time. And that's why the mercy of God is so wonderful to a sinner who comes home and he wants to write about it and talk about it forever, because it was what he needed so desperately bad at the moment. So we sang as we sang our opening song tonight, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound.

And yet the grace of God is not any greater than the justice of God or the holiness of God. But for fellows like you and me, it's what we need the most desperately at the time. It isn't God that's different, it's us that's different.

You go up to heaven and talk to an angel up there and say to the angel, isn't the mercy of God wonderful? He'll know that it is, but he won't understand it the way we do. Why, as Benny said in his great little hymn, that these creatures round the throne, they have never, never known a sinful world like this. So they cannot appreciate the love of God as we can quite, and they can't appreciate the mercy of God as we can, and they talk about the holiness of God.

They talk about the judgment of God and the justice of God, and they sing to righteous are their judgments, because they've never known sin, and therefore they are not in need of the mercy that you and I are, so that all God's attributes are equal because they're simply what God is, and God equal to himself always. But when you're in a jam, you need certain attributes more than others. When I'm in the doctor's office, I need pity.

I want help, and that's what I want the most. Now I can look up on the wall and see his diplomas and a lot of things, but I just want him to be nice to me, because I'm always scared when I go to a doctor. And when we come to God, our need determines which of God's attributes at the moment we'll celebrate, and we'll have a thousand of them to celebrate.

Now let's point out something else, how God's mercy operates. I said two weeks ago tonight that the judgment of God is God's justice confronting moral inequity. That the justice judgment of God is God's justice confronting inequity.

When the justice of God confronts moral inequity, which is inequity, then judgment falls. When justice sees inequity, judgment falls. So I say tonight that mercy is God's goodness confronting human guilt and suffering.

When the goodness of God confronts human guilt and suffering, God listens, God hears, and the bleating of the lamb comes into his ear, and the moan of the babe comes into his heart, and the cry of Israel comes up to his throne. The goodness of God is confronting human suffering and guilt, and that is mercy, my brethren, that is mercy. Now I'd like to say that all men are recipients of God's mercy.

Let's remember that. Don't think for a minute that when you repented and came back from the swine pen to the Father's house, that then mercy began to operate. No.

Mercy had operated there all the time. Listen, it says over here, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. So remember that.

If you hadn't had the mercy of God all the time, withholding, stooping in pity, withholding judgment, you'd have perished long ago. Khrushchev in the Kremlin is a recipient of the mercy of God. The triple murderer in Bradwell is a recipient of the mercy of God.

And the blackest heart that lies in the lowest wallow in this city tonight is a recipient of the mercy of God. Now, that doesn't mean they'll be saved. That doesn't mean that they'll be converted and finally reach heaven.

But it means that God is holding up his justice because he's having mercy. He is waiting because a Savior died. So all of us are recipients of the mercy of God.

You say, well then, when I come and am forgiven and cleansed and delivered, isn't that the mercy of God? Sure. That's the mercy of God to you. But all the time you were sinning against him, he was having pity on you, for God is not willing that any should perish.

And that, it says in Romans 2, accounts for the long-suffering of God. He's waiting. God would take this world and squeeze it in his hand as a child might squeeze a robin egg and destroy it out of mind forever, except that he's a merciful God and he hears tears and sees tears and hears groans and sees groans.

And with all of his intelligence and his love and mercy, he is conscious of our suffering down here. So all men are recipients of the mercy of God, but God has postponed the execution. That is all.

When the justice of God confronts human guilt, then there is a sentence of death, but the mercy of God, because that also is an attribute of God, not contradicting the other, but working with it, postpones the execution. Now, mercy cannot cancel apart from atonement. Now, when justice sees iniquity, then there must be judgment.

But as I said the last two weeks ago, mercy brought Christ to the cross. And I don't claim to understand that. I am so happy about the things I do know and so delightedly happy about the things I don't know.

I don't know what happened there on that cross exactly. I know he died. I know that God the mighty maker died for man the creature's sin.

I know that God turned his back on that holy, holy, holy man. I know that he gave up the ghost and died. I know that in heaven was registered atonement for all mankind.

I know that. And still I repeat, I don't know why and I don't know what happened. I only know that in the infinite goodness of God and his infinite wisdom, he wrought out a plan whereby the second person of the Trinity incarnated as a man could die in order that justice might be satisfied while mercy rescued the man for whom he died.

Ah, my brother, that's Christian theology. That's Christian theology. Whether whatever your denomination, that's what you want to go to heaven on.

Can't go to heaven on spirituals and choruses and cheap books, but you can go to heaven on the mercy of God in Christ, for that's what the Bible teaches. Justification means that mercy and justice have collaborated and that when God turns and sees iniquity and then the man of iniquity rushes to the cross, he sees no longer iniquity, but he sees justification. And so we're justified by faith.

Now I'd like to clear up something I said over here. And if you've been following me real closely, you've been believing everything I said without wondering and checking on me, then I'm not doing you as much good as I want to do. When I said over here that God takes pleasure in the pleasure of his people and suffers along with his friends, and read the scripture to show you that he suffers along with his friends, if

you're a good, close, tight thinker, immediately you followed me and said, how can a perfect God suffer? Because suffering means that somewhere there's a disorder.

There must be a disorder somewhere in order that anybody might suffer. You don't suffer as long as you have a psychological, mental, and physical order. But when you get out of order, then you suffer.

Now again, I'll tell you this, as long as it's declared in the Bible, you take it by faith and say, Father, I believe it. And then because you believe, you try to understand. And if you can understand, then thank God and your little intellect can have a little fun leaping about rejoicing in God.

But if you read it in the Bible and your intellect can't understand it, then there's only one thing to do, and that is to look up and say, O Lord, God, thou knowest. There's an awful lot we don't know. The trouble with us evangelicals is we know too much, and we're too slick, and we have too many answers.

I'm looking for the fellow who will say, I don't know. And O Lord, God, thou knowest. There's your man who's spiritually wise.

But when we have all the answers and know everything, well, but about this suffering of God, how can God suffer? Suffering would seem to indicate some imperfection. And yet we know that God is perfect. Suffering would seem to indicate some loss or lack, and yet we know that God can suffer no loss and that he cannot lack, because God is infinitely perfect in all his being.

So I do not know how to explain this. I only know that the Bible declares that God suffers with his children, and that in all their affliction he was afflicted, and in his love and in his mercy he carried them, and he made their bed in their sickness. I know this, but I don't know how.

And the great old theologian said, Don't reject the fact because you don't know the method. Don't say, It isn't so because I don't know how it's so. There's so much you don't know how it's so.

If you come to me after service and ask me the how of things, I'll ask you twenty-five questions one after the other about yourself, about your body, your mind, your hair, your skin, your eyes, your ears. You won't be able to answer one question. Yet you use all those aforementioned things even though you don't understand them.

So I don't know how God can suffer. That is a mystery I may never know. You know the scripture says we're going to know as we're known, and we're known perfectly.

So I suppose it means that within certain limits we're going to know perfectly, and possibly we will know. A lot of hymn writers who should have been cut in the grass at the time have written some songs, and one of them runs something about like this, I wonder why, I wonder why he loved me so, I will love when we pray, I might know why he loved me so. Well, my brother, you will never know that.

There's only one answer to why God loved you, and that is because God is love. And there's only one answer to why God has mercy on you, it's because God is mercy, and that mercy is an attribute of the deity. Don't ask God why, but thank him for the vast, wondrous how and fact of the thing.

I think, Brother McPhee, that I'm going to paraphrase a little quatrain written by Faber about this, of how God can suffer. I think I'm going to read it like this, how thou canst suffer, O my God, and be the God thou art, is darkness to my intellect, but sunshine to my heart. I don't know how he does it, but I know that when

I'm sick, God's sad, and I know that when I'm miserable, God suffers along with me, and I know that in all my sickness, he'll make my bed, because his name is goodness, and his name is mercy.

I want to talk a little bit now, in closing, about the nearness of God's mercy. As a father pitieth his children, I read, as a father pitieth his children. Way back, right after the First World War, when Herbert Hoover was, I forget what his technical name was, he was administrator of American aid, I think, for the orphans of Europe that had been dislocated and their parents had been killed and their towns broken up by the war.

The United States, with its big heart, our American people gave vast sums of money and they appointed Herbert Hoover to go over and administer it, hand it out to the people, rightly. But they didn't have too much compared with the number of orphans they had. Here is what I read.

A newspaper man saw this and wrote about it. He said he was in one of these places where they were handing out dough to the orphans. He said, A man came in, very thin, large, supernaturally or unnaturally bright eyes, and thin cheeks and thin arms, and leading a little girl.

And she also showed signs of malnutrition, eyes too large and bright, her little abdomen distended, and her thin little legs and arms too small, too thin for her age. And this man let her in. And he said to the person in charge, he said, I would like to bring you my little girl and have you take her and put her on your list.

And they said, This is your little girl? Yes. Well, they said, We're awfully sorry, but our rule here is that only full orphans can receive any help. If one of the parents is living, then we can't take responsibility because we just don't have enough.

There are too many full orphans for us to take a half orphan. He looked down at his little girl, and she looked up questioningly with her big bright, too bright eyes. And then he turned and said, Well, you know, I can't work.

I'm sick. I have been abused. I've been in prison.

I've been half starved, and now I'm ill, and I can't work. I can barely stagger around, but I brought her down for you to take care of her. And they said, Well, we're sorry.

Where's the mother? Well, the mother's dead. She was killed in the war. Well, we're sorry, but there's nothing we can do.

Only full orphans. He said, You mean that if I were dead, you'd take care of my little girl, and you'd feed her, and she could live and have clothing in the home? They said, Yes. Then he reached down and pulled her little skinny body up to himself and hugged her hard and kissed her, and then put her hand in the hand of the man at the desk and said, I'll arrange that.

He walked out of the room and committed suicide. Brethren, I heard that story, and I haven't gotten over it in the last years. The war ended in 1918, that was told in 1918 or early 1919, and still I see that picture.

I see the picture of the man who was too sick to work, but who stood in the way of his daughters getting decent food and clothing. He said, I'll take care of that, and he did. That's mercy, as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.

Jesus said, I go out, the Son of Man goes out, and he will be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, and he will be crucified and slain. And Peter said, Not so, Lord, not so. But Jesus said in effect, Here you are, all of you, and if I don't, you don't live.

So he went out, not to slay himself, but to put himself where they could slay. Mercy was compassionating in the only way it could at the moment, by dying. So Christ Jesus, our Lord, died there on that cross, for he loved us and pitied us as a father pities his children.

Now, there are two things I'd like to say. One of them is that we that have received mercy must show mercy, and that we must pray that God will help us to show mercy. We have received it, we have to show it.

And the second is that this mercy can only come by atonement, but atonement has been made. That is, it can only operate toward us because of atonement, but atonement has been made. And now I want to close my little talk with the reading and a little commenting on a hymn I have here.

I've never heard it sung, and I don't know that it's being sung these days, but here's the way it goes. It's evidently a hymn written around the book of Hebrews, or parts of the book of Hebrews. It says, Where high the heavenly temple stands, the house of God not made with hands, a great high priest, our nature wears, the guardian of mankind appears.

There we have it, my friend. I don't want to introduce anything unpleasant, but I said to someone today, if the Church rests upon the Pope, then the Church has no foundation, and won't have for eighteen or more days. And if priests are as necessary, then I don't see it, because I learned that where high the heavenly temple stands, the house of God not made with hands, a great high priest, our nature wears, the guardian of mankind appears.

Though now ascended upon high, he bends on earth a brother's eye. Partaker of the human name, he knows the frailty of our frame. Our fellow sufferer now retains a fellow feeling of our pain, and still remembers in the skies his tears, his agonies, and cries.

In every pang that rends the heart, the man of sorrows has a part. He sympathizes with our grief, and to the sufferer sends relief. With boldness, therefore, at the throne, let us make all our sorrows known, and ask the aid of heavenly power to help us in the evil hour.

How wonderful this is, my brethren, how wonderful, that our great high priest, who is the guardian of man, wears our nature before the throne of God. If you went up there near the throne, and God would allow you to look, for I don't know how we can look on that awesome sight. But if you were permitted to look, there would be creatures you couldn't identify.

There would be strange creatures there before the throne, having four faces and six wings, and with twain they would cover their face, and with twain they would cover their feet, and with twain they would fly. And you would see angels there so strange that Abraham saw, and that Jacob saw, going up and down the ladder. And you wouldn't be able to identify them quite because you've never seen an angel.

And I suppose there are other creatures there, I read about them in Daniel and Revelation, that you couldn't identify quite. But you know, as you drew near the throne, you would recognize one order of being. You would say, look, look, I recognize this.

I'm familiar with this shape, this form. I know this. This is a man.

This is a man. This has two legs under him. This has two arms.

This, this is a man. Oh, my friend, the great high priest our nature wears, and the guardian of mankind appears. Though you might be very much of a stranger among those strange creatures yonder, there would be one being that you would know.

You would say, why, I grew up among them. I knew them. I've seen them go down the street and come up the street.

I've seen little ones and big ones and black ones and yellow ones and red ones. I've seen them, I know. This is a man.

And he would smile down from the throne, because though now ascended up on high, he bends on earth a brother's eye. Partaker of the human name, he knows the frailty of our frame. Now, don't pity yourself, brother, but don't be ashamed to go and tell God all about your troubles.

He knows all about your troubles. There's a little song that says, nobody knows the trouble I've seen, but there's somebody that knows all right. And our fellow sufferer still retains a fellow feeling for our pains and still remembers in the skies his tears, his agonies and cries.

And though he's now at the right hand of the Father Almighty, sitting crowned in glory, waiting, of course, that great coronation day that yet is to come. But though he is there, and though they cry all around about him, worthy is the Lamb. He hasn't forgotten all of it.

And he hasn't forgotten the nails in the hands. He hasn't forgotten the tears and the agonies and cries. And he knows everything about you.

He knows. He knows when the doctor hates to tell you and your friends come and try to be unnaturally encouraging, you know, and cheerful, and in your deep heart you're too smart, you know, something's deeply wrong, and they won't tell you, but he knows. He knows.

Well, I believe this. With boldness, therefore, at the throne let us make all our sorrows known and ask the aid of heavenly power to help us in the evil hour. The mercy of God is an ocean divine, a boundless and fathomless flood.

Let's plunge out into the mercy of God and come to know it. Amen. Amen.

You've been a very quiet congregation. I haven't had a peep out of anybody. But I hope you believe what I've said, because you're going to need this mercy terribly, terribly bad if you don't already have it.

The mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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