

Mercy in Sodom

by Voddie Baucham

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's mercy and how it is extended to both the righteous and the wicked, highlighting the imputed righteousness of Christ and the power of the blood of Christ to forgive and cleanse us from sin.

Duration: 49:49

Scripture: Genesis 19:12-14, Matthew 5:21, Romans 3:9, James 2:10

Topics: "Sodom"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the differences between the games boys and girls play, particularly focusing on a game called Mercy. The speaker then connects this game to the concept of God's mercy. They explain that God is merciful to both the righteous and the wicked, offering deliverance and warning. The speaker emphasizes that we often fail to appreciate God's mercy because we mistakenly believe we deserve it. They also discuss the importance of sharing the message of Jesus with others, highlighting the question of how much someone would have to hate another person to not share the gospel with them. The sermon concludes with a reminder that not everyone who hears the message of Jesus will be saved, as it is only those whom the Lord calls to Himself.

Transcript

Welcome to the teaching ministry of Grace Family Baptist Church. GFBC's mission is proclaiming the supremacy of Christ to all men with a view of biblical conversion and comprehensive discipleship. Thank you for visiting gracefamilybaptist.net. You know, as a boy, I think about being a boy.

The games that boys play and the games that girls play are oftentimes quite different. There are exceptions to the rules. But, again, those games are often quite different.

Oftentimes, the games that boys play have to do with hitting one another and getting one another in headlocks and things like that. I remember as a boy, there was a game we used to play called Mercy. Y'all remember that game, Mercy? You know, you interlock fingers with the other guy.

And the rule is, you know, once you say go, you start turning and twisting until one guy shouts, Mercy. What a game. That's just the essence of boyhood right there.

Let's play Mercy. Let's see if I can hurt you bad enough to make you scream for Mercy. That's just boyhood, is it not? But Mercy is a very important concept for us to understand.

And, unfortunately, I'm afraid that many of us don't understand the mercy of God. We don't understand the grace of God, and we simply must. And in our text today, we see a picture of God's mercy, the mercy that God extends both to the righteous and to the wicked.

God is merciful. God is always merciful. God is being merciful to us right now.

God has been merciful to us throughout our lives. On your worst day, God was being merciful to you. Did you hear me? Did you hear me? On your worst day, God was being merciful to you.

Not just on your best day, but on your worst day. Look with me, if you will, at Genesis chapter 19, verses 12 through 14, and let's look at this picture of the mercy of God. It reads, Then the men said to Lot, these are the angels speaking to him, Have you anyone else here, sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of this place.

For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against it, against its people, has become great before the Lord. And the Lord has sent us to destroy it. So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, which were to marry his daughters, Up, get out of this place.

For the Lord is about to destroy the city. But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. Lord have mercy.

He seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. You're playing, right? You're just joking with us, right? He wasn't joking at all. The city was about to be destroyed.

And we are about to see an epic display of the wrath and judgment of God, here in Sodom and Gomorrah. The Twin Cities, the cities of the plain, are about to become forever and always synonyms for wickedness and the judgment that such wickedness deserves. God is most assuredly about to do a thing that will never be forgotten.

Thousands of years later, we talk about Sodom and Gomorrah. It has not been forgotten. It will not be forgotten.

There are just a few moments in Scripture that rise to this level. One of them had happened just eight generations earlier. And that was the flood.

Notice when you say the flood, you don't have to say the Noahic flood. You don't have to say the flood way back. No, just the flood where the whole earth was wiped out, except one man and his family.

And then here again, we see with Sodom and Gomorrah. You don't have to say which Sodom, which Gomorrah. No, just Sodom and Gomorrah.

And of course, there is the judgment that is to come. And yet, in those instances, we see the wrath of God juxtaposed with the mercy of God. And as I've said before, I believe it is impossible to understand the mercy of God and the grace of God apart from understanding the wrath and the justice of God.

We will see that on next week, this picture of the wrath and judgment of God. But today, let's hone in on this picture of God's mercy that takes place in these three brief verses. Number one, we see the mercy of God toward the righteous.

The mercy of God toward the righteous. First of all, God is being merciful to Lot. And remember, we refer to him as righteous Lot because that's what we find out in the New Testament from Peter, that he is righteous Lot.

And that bothers us. And the reason that it bothers us is because we saw what righteous Lot just did. Number one, we see that righteous Lot has pitched his tent in Sodom.

It just doesn't sound very righteous to us. If he's righteous, why does he live there with those people? Secondly, we have seen the stench of the sin of Sodom on Lot's life, in that while he goes out and courageously faces this mob that is bent on sodomizing his guests, one of the things that he offers them is his two virgin daughters. We look at that and we hear that and we say, that simply is not righteous.

And in a sense, we're absolutely correct. Paul makes that clear in Romans chapter 3. There is none righteous. No, not even one.

In fact, let's go there and look there for a moment, shall we? As we look at the mercy that God demonstrates to the righteous. Look at Romans chapter 3. And let's begin at verse 9. What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written.

None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands.

No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless.

No one does good. Not even one. Their throat is an open grave.

They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. In their paths are ruin and misery. And the way of peace they have not known.

There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law. So that every mouth may be stopped.

And the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight. Since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

So in essence, we're right to feel uncomfortable to refer to Lot as righteous. Because he's not. But here's where we misstep.

We misstep because we're uncomfortable referring to Lot as righteous because of two things in his past. Not because he was born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Also, we have a problem referring to Lot as righteous because he's done things that we happen to not be guilty of.

If you can't say amen, you ought to say ouch. It's real easy for us when we find people who do things that we just absolutely would not do ourselves to stick our finger in their face and say you are not righteous. So the problem is we're uncomfortable calling Lot righteous for the wrong reasons.

We ought to be uncomfortable calling ourselves righteous as well. Because our righteousness has not come, will not come, does not come through keeping the law. So we see the mercy of God upon the righteous and first of all that he does not give them what their sin deserves.

Listen to this. Psalm 32 verse 1. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Anybody need to say amen to that? Romans 4 verse 8. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 19. That is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ.

God making his appeal through us we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. 1 Peter 2 verse 24. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 3 verse 18. For Christ also suffered once for sins.

The righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. Any righteousness that we have is imputed righteousness. All righteousness that we have is imputed righteousness because of the righteousness of Christ.

The righteousness of Christ. We see the righteousness of Christ first of all inherently in him as the second person in the Godhead. Secondly we see it through his active obedience in that he kept the entirety of the law without sin.

And thirdly we see it through his passive obedience taking upon himself the penalty for the sins that you and I have committed. And it is only as a result of that that he can impute his righteousness to his elect. Why is Lot righteous? Same reason you and I are if we're righteous.

The imputed righteousness of Christ. That's why. And so first of all here we see the mercy of God in that Lot does not get what he deserves.

Lot is rescued out of Sodom and Gomorrah. Do you see that? You and I. In fact you and I deserve much more. Do we not? To whom much is given much is required.

For those of us who look at the sinner and say to the sinner how dare he. May I suggest something to you? He's acting in accordance with his job description. You're not.

So whom should be afraid? You and I should. It's the mercy of God that is extended to us. In that we do not get what our sin deserves.

Here's the second one. And this one's a little tricky. We see the mercy of God toward the righteous in that he extends mercy both to and through them.

Don't miss this. And we'll take a little time looking at this one. But look at what happens here.

Then the men said to Lot, Have you anyone else here, sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of this place. In other words, the angel says to Lot that not only are we going to be merciful to you and that you won't get what you deserve and you will get out of here before the

judgment comes, but we're also going to allow you to take you and yours with you. That's the mercy of God.

The mercy of God extended to and through the righteous. After all, why are we even talking about Lot? Why is Lot even a part of this entire scheme of God rescuing him out of Sodom if not for his connection to Abraham? Amen? Amen? It's part of this idea of the covenant blessing of God. And I said we have to be careful here because there's a ditch on both sides of the road.

On the one hand, we have to recognize the fact that God does and has throughout the Scriptures been a God who works covenantally in the lives of His people and His people's people. Amen? We see that throughout the Scriptures. We see that in the Old Testament.

We see it, for example, if you'll turn with me to the right and look at Exodus. Look at Exodus chapter 20. And I'll show you the one danger.

In verse 4, we see the second commandment here. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water underneath the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them for I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

God repeats this, by the way, in Deuteronomy chapter 5. He repeats this same principle in Deuteronomy chapter 5. And we see this, do we not? How often do we see people repeat patterns from their families? How often do we see people who walk in the sin of their forefathers? For example, here's just a little fact, just a little ditty, a couple of things for you. Do you know that a woman who grows up in a household where her father is an alcoholic is more likely to marry one than not? I mean, you'd think that statistically we'd find the opposite. I mean, wouldn't you think that just logically? Women who grow up in homes where they're abused are more likely to end up in relationships where they are abused.

People who were born out of wedlock and suffer from that sin and watch it devour their family generation after generation after generation, you guessed it, they're more likely to have children than themselves. We've seen it, have we not? We've also seen the opposite. We've seen individuals who are blessed beyond measure because of the family that they've grown up in.

We've seen God do that in an unbelievable sense. But does that mean that we are either doomed or destined to repeat or benefit from what our parents have done? No, it doesn't. If that was the case, then Lot and all of his people would not only get out of there, but they would have experienced righteousness too.

Is that the case? No. Lot makes it out. The angel says, go and get all of your people.

Okay, get your wife, get your daughters, get your sons-in-law, the guys who are going to be your daughters. Well, first of all, the sons-in-law don't even make it out. The wife, pillar of salt before they get settled somewhere else.

The daughters, need I say more? So do they just automatically experience the blessing? Not necessarily. Not necessarily. There was a benefit to being part of Lot's household.

So there's a ditch on that side of the road. And here's how it sort of manifests itself oftentimes in our culture. And as an adoptive father, this one is of particular interest to me.

There are many and some very well-known individuals. In fact, there is one ministry that is a well-known ministry out there. It's especially well-known among those of us in coming to your church circles, well-known among those of us in the homeschool movement, things of this nature, well-known ministry out there that actually warns people about adopting children.

And they warn people about adopting children because you do not know if perhaps the child that you adopt is actually under a curse because of the sins of their fathers. This is a well-known, well-respected ministry. Be careful.

Because after all, if you get this child and all of a sudden this child comes from a lineage of this particular sin, a lineage of this particular curse, and voila, all of a sudden, because you've adopted them into your household, now your household is under that curse because of this inevitable principle in God's Word. Is that the principle, though? Let's look at another passage of Scripture, shall we? Turn with me, if you will, to Ezekiel chapter 18. Ezekiel chapter 18.

And let's just read for a little while here in Ezekiel chapter 18. And this is important, especially for those of you who've heard this kind of teaching before about multigenerational curses. And we've all heard it, the whole multigenerational curse thing.

We're under a multigenerational curse. That person's under a multigenerational curse. There's several things wrong with that teaching.

Here's problem number one. Problem number one with that teaching is this. Those individuals who would say, you know, this whole idea of you go out and you adopt, there's multigenerational curses and you might expose yourself to those multigenerational curses.

If that's the case, I never should have been a father because of the multigenerational curses that I know about in my own family. Amen? Adoption should be the last thing I'm worried about. I know for a fact these multigenerational curses that are in my family and if we really believe that, then that same ministry should have told me, boy, you better not ever have any kids.

Here's the second problem with that. The second problem with that whole thinking about the multigenerational curse is that it is an absolute blasphemy against the blood of Christ because it argues that the blood of Jesus is insufficient for certain things. That's blasphemy.

It's absolute blasphemy. There is nothing that your mother or your father has ever done that's more powerful than the blood of Jesus. Those of you who have adopted children in this room, there is nothing that their mother or their father has ever done that is more powerful than the blood of Jesus.

Nothing. Nothing. Here's the other thing that's wrong with it.

Look right here in Ezekiel chapter 18. And we're going to read a little while just to get the feel of this. The word of the Lord came to me.

What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel? The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no

more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine, the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine.

The soul who sins shall die. If a man is righteous and does what is just and right, if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, does not oppress anyone but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, walks in my statutes and keeps my rules by acting faithfully, he is righteous. He shall surely live, declares the Lord.

Next verse, if he fathers a son who is violent, a shedder of blood, who does any of these things, though he himself did none of these things, who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, oppresses the needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, lends at interest and takes profit, shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations, he shall surely die, his blood shall be upon himself. Next verse, now suppose this man fathers a son who sees that, now this is the wicked man, who sees all the sins that his father has done.

He sees and does not do likewise. He does not eat upon the mountain, lifts up his eyes to the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry, and covers the naked with a garment, withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules and walks in my statutes. He shall not die for his father's iniquity.

He shall surely live. As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity. Yet you say, why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father? When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live.

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father.

The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. Amen.

Hallelujah. This is the word of the Lord. Enough already with this generational curse business.

There are patterns of generational sin in our lives and in our families. Yes, absolutely. That is different than a generational curse.

Certainly we look like our fathers, walk like our fathers, talk like our fathers, and have a tendency toward the same predilections as our fathers. But the blood of Jesus is more powerful than any of that. That's the ditch on that side of the road.

There's also a ditch on the other side of the road. Look at this one. Listen to these passages of Scripture.

Acts 2, 38 and 39. And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises

for you and for your children, for all who are far off.

The danger in that one is not finishing the verse. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. Does that mean that every one of my children is going to be in the kingdom of God? No, absolutely not.

Only the ones whom the Lord calls to himself. But how about this? The Lord ordains the ends as well as the means. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

We repent, we believe the Gospel, we turn to the Lord. Folks, you are much more likely to do that if you are born in a household that follows the Lord Jesus Christ and preaches the Gospel to you than you are if you don't. Acts 11, 13.

This is Cornelius. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter. He will declare to you the message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.

You and your household. By the way, Cornelius and all of his household got saved. Amen.

Happens again in Acts 16. The jailer. They said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

You and your household. The Philippian jailer was saved. He and his household.

All of them. In both instances, don't miss this. Everybody heard the Word.

Not everybody. Everybody. Alright.

This is not what happened. Cornelius, you and your household will be saved. The Word is preached to Cornelius only.

And as a result of Cornelius only hearing and believing, he's saved and baptized. And the rest of his household is saved and baptized. That's not what the Bible teaches.

Peter preached to Cornelius and everyone in his household. Paul preached to the Philippian jailer and everyone in his household. They believed.

Everyone in their household believed. And everyone in their household was baptized. Because they heard the Word and they believed.

That's why. So, understand that God does extend mercy to and through the righteous. This does not mean, on the one hand, that the wicked are absolutely doomed and that the righteous are guaranteed that their descendants after them will follow God.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Do you know the history of Israel? Amen? It's craziness to think that. Everything in the Bible mitigates against thinking that.

It doesn't happen that way. See that pattern? It's not there. It's not there.

But by the same token, we do see this blessing that is extended to and is often extended through the righteous. The mercy of God saved Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah. And the mercy of God also got his wife out.

Yeah, but she turned into a pillar of salt. That's right. But she was not burned with fire and brimstone in Sodom and Gomorrah.

It got his daughters out. Yeah, but they commit incest later. Yes, they do.

But by God's mercy, they were not burned with fire and brimstone in Sodom and Gomorrah. And that was purely because of their connection to Lot. Which means, this is what's so ironic about this one particular ministry.

And the reason I don't name the particular ministry is because... Anyway, it's very difficult to locate the actual comments themselves. The tracks are being covered. And I don't in any way want to bear false witness against this particular ministry.

But I can tell you what I know from what I've heard myself. And I can tell you what I know from conversations that I've had with individuals on the inside of this ministry. That it is what has been taught on a number of occasions.

And here's what's ironic about it. If you believe that there are children out there who are up for adoption. Who are under a curse.

Where on earth would you rather have them... Than in a household that's under a blessing because of their covenant relationship with God. That is a wicked and pernicious teaching. Don't trust God to save that child who comes from a bad background.

Instead, save your own house from the possibility of something that could be messy. Because that just wouldn't be. Do you hear that? We ought to be the ones saying, bring the mess on.

Because we got the only answer for the mess. They go somewhere else. They get their own curse and the curse of the godless family they go to.

They come to us and they get something that's more powerful than anything their father or their mother ever passed down to them. God is merciful to the wicked. To the wicked also.

Not just to the righteous. He's also merciful to the wicked. Wait a minute, merciful to the wicked? What do you mean? Yeah.

He warns them of the judgment to come. God warns the wicked of the judgment to come. I want you to notice something.

Go back in Genesis chapter 19. And look at verse 4 again. Now, who's in the house with Lot? The angels? Lot's wife, Lot's two daughters.

That's who's in the house, right? That's all that's in the house. Now go back to verse 4 in chapter 19. But before they lay down the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man.

Guess who that would have to include? Lot's sons-in-law. And yet they got a warning from Lot to come out. That's merciful.

That's merciful. See the hand of mercy extended even to the wicked. God is angry with the wicked every day.

And yet they're allowed to live and to breathe. That's mercy. God's merciful to the wicked.

Secondly, God is merciful to the wicked in that every righteous person comes out of the ranks of the wicked. Amen. Is God merciful to the wicked? Yes.

Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

God's merciful to the wicked. The gospel is preached to the wicked. The wicked are converted.

The wicked are saved. The wicked are rescued from the coming judgment. That is God being merciful to the wicked, is it not? So preach the gospel to the wicked.

You show mercy to the wicked when you preach the gospel to them. Preach the gospel to the wicked. It's a merciful thing to do.

The merciless thing to do is not to preach to the wicked. The merciless thing to do is wash your hands of the wicked. The merciless thing to do is never get your hands dirty in the lives of the wicked.

That's the merciless thing to do. The merciless thing to do is take what you know and hide it under a bushel. That's the merciless thing to do.

The merciful thing is to preach the gospel to the wicked. Even though the wicked will hate you for doing it. It's the merciful thing to do.

Recently, on his video blog, I forget if it's Penn or Teller, the one that talks. Penn and Teller, these magicians, one of them doesn't talk, one of them does talk. They're wicked men.

They are blasphemous men. They are vulgar men and all, just all of that. But recently, and I'll just say Penn.

Recently, Penn had an encounter with a guy. And this guy either worked at the place where their show was taking place or he was there. Somebody brought him to the show.

And they called the guy on stage during their show. And so he was a prop in one of their magic tricks. Well, the next day, the guy comes back to the show.

And after the show is over, Penn says he sees the guy and he noticed the guy. He recognized the guy from the previous show that he was the guy that they brought up as part of the show. And he could just tell.

You know how you can tell when somebody's waiting to talk to you? And the guy's just waiting to talk to him. So Penn makes his way over after the show, gets the guy, I guess backstage, and talks to him. The guy takes out this tract and says, you know, the Lord just put it on my heart to give this to you.

And, I mean, you do with it what you will, but I just couldn't not tell you about the God who's changed my life. So Penn goes and he reads this tract. On his video blog, this is what he says.

How much would somebody have to hate me not to tell me about Jesus if they believe I'd go to hell for not knowing about Him? How much would somebody have to hate me to not do for me what this guy did? He's an atheist. He's not a Christian. And this atheist says, how much do you Christians have to hate us to not get your hands dirty in our lives and to never, ever, ever tell us about Jesus Christ? How much must you hate us in order to live like that? In order to completely and utterly separate yourselves from us to the extent that you don't even proclaim the gospel to us.

You won't even rub elbows with us. You won't even have us over to your home and tell us why it is that you live so distinctly from us. How much do you have to hate us in order to do that? The mercy of God is extended to the wicked in the proclamation of the gospel to them and in the warning of the coming judgment.

Noah builds an ark for a hundred years. For a hundred years, God is merciful to the wicked. Every day it didn't rain, God was being merciful to the wicked.

Every day Noah preached, God was being merciful to the wicked. Every day. And when these angels send Lot into Sodom and Gomorrah and says, go tell all those who are even anyway connected with you.

He's being merciful to the wicked. Through his long suffering and through that proclamation. I love the fact that there's this reprieve here.

In the first half of Genesis chapter 19, we see the establishment of the guilt of Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing more need be said. In the last half of Genesis 19, we see the execution of the verdict and the punishment against Sodom and Gomorrah.

And God is completely and utterly righteous in doing so. There is absolutely no need for verses 12 through 14. Other than this.

To establish the mercy of God in the midst of him meeting out his righteous judgment upon the wicked. That's it. That's the answer to the question, why those three verses? That's it.

Because God is merciful. Right before you see him do one of the most terrible and awful things in the entire Bible. Know this.

God is merciful. He's merciful to the righteous. In that he delivers them out of the judgment.

And in that even through them, he offers mercy to those who are connected to them. He's merciful to the wicked. And that he even gives a word of warning.

Extends this opportunity, if you will. He's merciful in that there were days, months, even years before. When he would have been well within his rights to destroy the city.

But he was patient. He was long suffering. And though judgment would ultimately and inevitably come.

He was merciful in that he waited. God is merciful. We don't understand the mercy of God and we don't appreciate the mercy of God.

Because we actually think we deserve it. And that's our first problem. You and I deserve the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.

All day, every day, twice on Sunday. We deserve the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. The only reason we are righteous is the very reason that Lot is righteous.

It's imputed righteousness. It's an alien righteousness. It's not our own righteousness.

It's a righteousness that is declared, not because of, but in spite of what we have done. And as we close, I'll leave you with this. Just in case there is anyone who is under the illusion.

That God is giving you what you have earned and deserve. And not being merciful to you. Couple of things.

James chapter 2 and verse 10. You don't have to turn there. Instead turn to Matthew.

Matthew chapter 5 for a moment. James chapter 2 and verse 10. If anyone keeps the whole law, but stumbles at one point, he is guilty of breaking all of it.

Let me say it again. If anyone keeps the whole law, but stumbles at one point, he is guilty of breaking all of it. You are a law breaker.

Period. End of discussion. No matter what else happens.

If you stumble at one point, don't tell me about the two or three laws that you have become adept at keeping. And in case that doesn't do it for you. Let's listen to Jesus for a while, shall we? Matthew chapter 5, beginning of verse 21.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder. And whoever murders will be liable to judgment. And so we pound our chest and say, yes.

I am not guilty of the sin of murder. Jesus continues. But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. And whoever says you fool will be liable to the fire of hell. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you.

Leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court.

Lest your accuser hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard and you be put in prison. Truly I say to you, you will never get out of it until you have paid the last penny. Anyone ever been angry with a brother? Anyone ever insulted a brother? Called a brother a fool? Jesus says you harbor the same guilt as the individual who has committed murder.

You are not righteous in and of yourself. But wait, there is more. Verse 27, you have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. You are not righteous in and of yourself. You are guilty.

And you deserve the punishment that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. Every last one of us. And yet, God has been merciful.

But don't do this. Don't mistake the mercy that God has extended by holding back His ultimate judgment from you, a wretched man. For the mercy that is extended to those who place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repent of their sin and believe in Him and Him alone and His finished work for their salvation. Because many have made this mistake. You are a rank, wretched sinner.

And because God hasn't killed you, you think you're okay. But you have not come to faith in repentance. And you are taking God's kindness for weakness.

No, no, no. Repent. Believe.

Place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn from your sin and turn to Him completely and utterly as your only answer. And your only hope for your sin problem.

Otherwise, you are merely marking time. And the day of your judgment is sure. And it will be swift.

And there will be no hope for you then. Do not mistake God's kindness for weakness. Do not mistake the fact that you have not gotten what your sins deserve for the fact that your sins still deserve it.

Repent of your sin. Place yourself on His mercy and be saved. This is our only hope.

Take advantage of the reprieve between the first half of chapter 19 and the second half of chapter 19. And call upon His mercy while it may be found. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your goodness toward us. For your mercy toward us. We are so grateful that you have not dealt with us according to what our sins deserve.

I pray for every soul under the sound of my voice. That your word would resonate clearly and powerfully in our hearing. That we would not take your mercy for granted.

But that we would cry out to you in repentance and faith. Thank you for the mercy that you have extended to every one of us. We are grateful.

God, would you forgive us for being merciless to sinners around us. May we dutifully and mercifully preach the gospel to them. May we mercifully and dutifully employ all biblical means in doing so.

May we mercifully and dutifully consider them in light of our own wickedness. And not sit in judgment or superiority. And every time we are sickened by the sin of the wicked.

May we in turn be sickened by our own sin. And more so in light of the grace that has been extended to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thank you Lord God.

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