



## BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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### BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH PART 1 : "Three Little Words"

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Study 2 : "MERCY"

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

"Building Blocks of Faith" is a series of basic Christian beliefs. The studies will be kept as simple as possible. Those who are considering following Jesus will have the main issues of the Christian Faith explained. New Christians will gain an insight into what God has done in their life ... and why. Older Christians need to revisit the basics from time to time in order to check that what they are building is consistent with the blueprints!

### TODAY'S STUDY

The first part of the Series looks at three very simple words - small containers for principles that establish both God's dealings with us & our relationships with others - GRACE, MERCY, & PEACE.

Today's Study is on the second of these "Little Words" - Mercy. Grace and Mercy are closely related. They could be described as the two sides of God's "coin" of love.

## A. THE CENTRAL ISSUE: HOW DO I GAIN FAVOUR WITH GOD?

From last week, Ephesians 2 : 8 -9 -

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith - and this not of yourselves,  
it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast

The answer? I find favour with God as his FREE GIFT, neither earned or deserved

In today's text, Titus 3:4-5 the same point is made :

When the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

In the Ephesian passage : "Grace" highlights the unmerited favour of God

In the passage from Titus : " Mercy" highlights our desperate STATE; we cannot do anything about our condition before God. Not even "*the righteous things we have done*" count.

The only BASIS for "gaining favour with God" is his mercy.

## B. TWO EXAMPLES OF MERCY FROM THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

### 1. A STORY OF TWO PRAYERS

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus introduces us to the prayers of two quite different people. He calls his story a parable ... a story told out of everyday life that has a spiritual lesson. Jesus was a keen and interested observer of life around him; just as he had probably seen the sower at work as the basis for his "Sower and the Seed" parable, so he had most likely observed these pray-ers at prayer and had heard these exact same prayers.

From a respected Religious leader came the **first** prayer :

"O God, I thank you that I am not like all other men, robbers, evil-doers and adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all that I get."

From one of society's rejects came the **second** prayer :

"God have mercy on me, a sinner."

PRAYER 1. The purpose of the prayer was self-promotion

**PRAYER 2. The basis of the prayer was self-examination**

..... Pray-er 1 had confidence in himself

..... **Pray-er 2 had confidence in God**

..... If God should act, the grounds would be in the Pray-er's MERIT

..... **the grounds would be in God's CHARACTER**

## 2. A STORY OF ONE WOMEN ... AND A CROWD OF PROSECUTORS

John 8 : 2-11, tells of a women "caught in adultery" (v3) and paraded before Jesus with the express purpose of trapping him. (v6)

The men were : **SELECTIVE** : if the women was "caught in adultery," where was the man?

**MANIPULATIVE** : both the women and Jesus were to be used for their ends and to justify their actions and attitudes.

**HYPOCRITICAL** : quite happy to condemn the women for breaking the law; also quite happy to disregard their own breaking of the law of God (vs7-11)

"If anyone of you is without sin, let him cast the first stone ..... where are they? Has no one condemned you? .... neither do I condemn you ... go now and leave your life of sin."

Here is the point of the incident : Jesus was without sin ... and would have been perfectly just and justified in executing punishment. But from love, acting in grace, he **CHOSE** not to do so! .... and that is **MERCY** (even though the word is not used)

These two incidents illuminate the central truth clearly taught in both Old & New Testaments :

God **RELATES** to us mercifully because of his love and compassion.

We have heard from the New, now, for example, from the Old Testament :

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious ... he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities." **Psalm 103 :8-10**

.... out of the goodness of your love, in your great mercy turn to me. **Psalm 69:16**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion **Psalm 51:1**

## C. SHOWING MERCY

He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly & to love mercy & to walk humbly with your God. **Micah 6:8**

Returning to Titus 3 : 4-5. Note the Context

v1-2 A call for the Christian to be "salt & light" in their community - "*with all humility*"

v3 A reminder; they once lived according to the values of their community.

v5 & 7 The key words; mercy and grace ... have led to "*rebirth ... renewal.*"

v7 & 8 Their new standing; "*having been justified*" & "*have trusted in God*" (past tense)

v8 The command; "*devote yourselves to doing good*" - having received mercy & grace, now let it **FLOW** through to those around you.