

## What Does it Mean to be Merciful?

**Lamentations 3:22-23: (KJV)** <sup>22</sup>*It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* <sup>23</sup>*They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*



Sometimes in the overwhelming flow of life we can forget the simplest things. We get so caught up in a "me first" - and sometimes a "me only" mentality that it never even crosses our minds to stop and consider some of the most basic and healing attributes available to humankind - kindness and mercy. What is mercy? How does it work? If we were to apply mercy on a regular basis, would it change our world and more importantly, could it change the way we see our world?

### What is mercy?

#### Old Testament:

**Micah 6:8: (KJV)** *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love **mercy <2617>**, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

**Kindness/Mercy: Strongs #2617, goodness, kindness, faithfulness**

**Hosea 6:6: (NASB)** *For I delight in **loyalty <2617>** rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*

The word for *loyalty* here is the same as was previously translated *mercy*! We will develop this further, but your loyalty to a person can draw you to a point of mercy.



**Introduction, Diane Sawyer, ABC News (2008)**

*(Susan Atkins killed for Charles Manson and gave this interview from prison before her death.)*

- *...this was an event so terrifying; it changed America...one of the most infamous murders in the U.S. And now, the young woman involved is asking for freedom after 37 years in prison. Susan Atkins was a member of the Manson family convicted in the 1969 murder of actress Sharon Tate and four others. Now, she has brain cancer and doctors say she has just months to live. She is raising questions about mercy, then and now.*

#### New Testament:

**Matthew 5:7: (NRSV)** *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive **mercy <1653>**.*

**Mercy: Strongs #1653** el-eh-eh'-o; to be compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace): have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, shew) mercy (on).

#### Another word translated "mercy" in English:

**Mercy: Strongs #1656** eleov eleos el'-eh-os

- 1) mercy: kindness or goodwill towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them
  - 1a) of men towards men: to exercise the virtue of mercy, show one's self merciful
  - 1b) of God towards men: in general providence; the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ

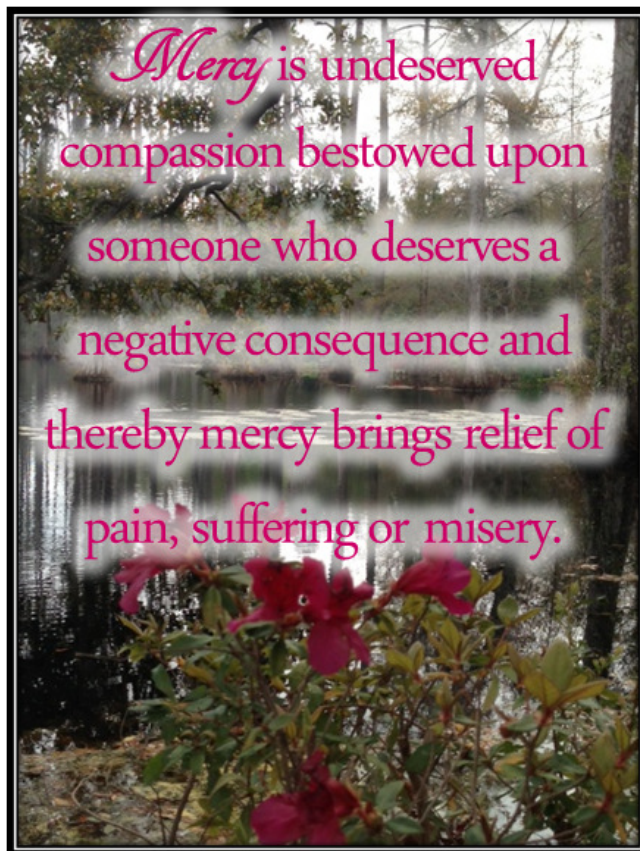
When there is misery, mercy takes a role to alleviate such misery.

Oftentimes we look at God's grace as being an overview of all that God does for us, but mercy and grace are actually different. They work together.



**Mercy in action:**

Matthew 9:9-13: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and he said to him, Follow me! And he got up and followed him. <sup>10</sup>Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners? <sup>12</sup>But when Jesus heard this, he said, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>But go and learn what this means: I desire **compassion <1656>**, and not sacrifice, (Jesus here quoting Hosea 6:6) for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.



**What must mercy be based upon?**

Point of interest: The vast majority of scriptures that talk about mercy are focused on the mercy of God to man. There are but a few scriptures that talk about human mercy towards each other.

**There are several texts that link mercy and justice together for us:**

Micah 6:8: (KJV) He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

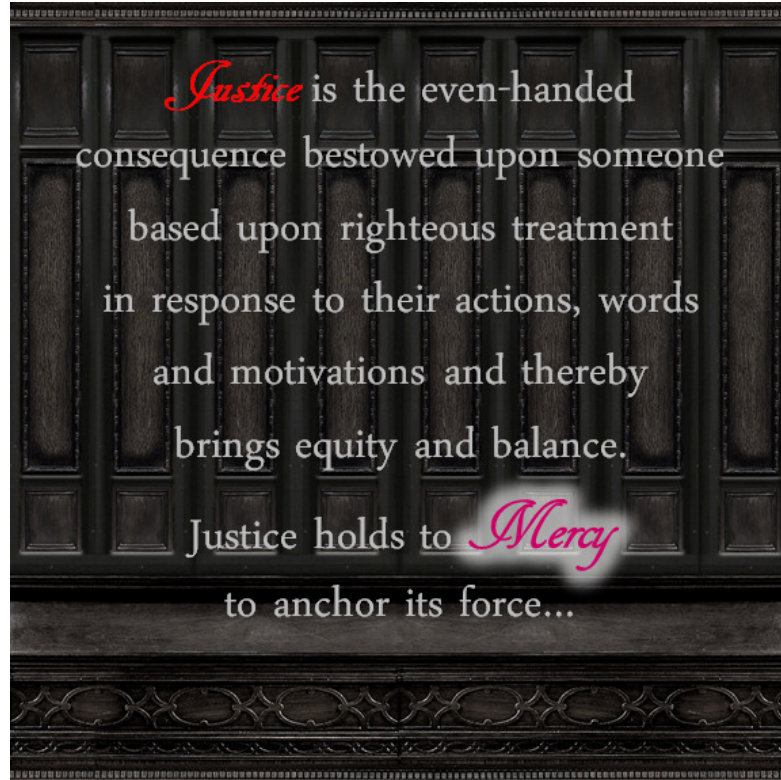
Hosea 12:5-6: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Even the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, return to your God, observe kindness and justice, and wait for your God continually.

It is logical to assume that true and lasting mercy cannot be applied in a context where true justice does not prevail...mercy may not be appropriate if something is unjust.

**So, with that basis, we expand the mercy connection:**

**Psalms 89:14:** *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Here we see that God Almighty has the justice/mercy connection coupled with truth!



 **Joining Manson, Diane Sawyer, ABC (2002)**

- *She met Manson when she was just 18. A topless dancer who had left home for San Francisco as a teen, eventually moving into a commune in Haight-Ashbury. Amid the partying and the drugs, she said she was a seeker and thought she had found something in Charles Manson. She became the fourth girl to join his family. She had a child there. She says it was his brainwashing and the drugs that drove her to join the killing of the beautiful and magical actress, Sharon Tate.*

**Proverbs 3:3:** *Let not **mercy** <2617> and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:*

**Proverbs 16:6:** *By **mercy** <2617> and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

Truth has its roots in God; therefore truth has its basis in justice. In a court of law, what do they want? “The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!”



*Mercy* would not exist but for *Justice*



*Mercy* seeks *Grace* to multiply its reach

### Mercy in action:

**Matthew 20:29-34:** (NASB) <sup>29</sup>As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. <sup>30</sup>And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David! <sup>31</sup>The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us! <sup>32</sup>And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, What do you want me to do for you? <sup>33</sup>They said to him, Lord, we want our eyes to be opened. <sup>34</sup>Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Mercy changes others' circumstances when it was not required to be rendered, so it is an important action we can and should take.

### But how was that healing based in justice?

**Isaiah 61:1:** (NASB) *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners;*

Jesus quoted this verse in the Temple and confirmed that it was about him. Jesus fulfilled the just plan of God by coming to show this would be a permanent change in the future. Jesus was moved with compassion. He felt for them and changed their circumstances by giving of himself.

### How does God's mercy express itself?

**Psalms 36:5-12:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Your **lovingkindness** (mercy), O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the skies. <sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast. <sup>7</sup>How precious is Your **lovingkindness** (mercy), O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. <sup>8</sup>They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. <sup>9</sup>For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light. <sup>10</sup>O continue Your **lovingkindness** (mercy) to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart. <sup>11</sup>Let not the foot of pride come upon me, and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.

God’s mercy surrounds the earth, protects the feeble and is reachable as long as we do not allow our own pride or another’s wickedness to interfere. God’s mercy has different levels of expression. It is fully expressed through the ransom of Jesus, as we will discuss later. For believers and followers of Jesus, God’s mercies are already apparent. For “everybody else,” it is yet to come.

1 Peter 1:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great **mercy <1656>** has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

God’s mercy is expressed through the death and resurrection of Jesus and that leads to heavenly inheritance! It all comes back to the love of God.



Discipleship in Christ is the precursor of what is to come to everyone else. It is given to the true follower of Christ ahead of time to those. It is given to those who have dedicated themselves to Christ in a time when it is not convenient or easy, and at a time when people laugh at you. But it is such a privilege and an expression of God’s mercy and then grace!

God’s love had to be first, because that is what created a just environment.



**A different person, Susan Atkins interview with Diane Sawyer, ABC (2002)**

- (Sawyer) All these years after the murder, Atkins is dying of brain cancer and her family are the ones pleading for mercy. She has been incarcerated at the California Institution for Women at Frontiers for 37 years, denied parole 11 times. I spoke to her in 2002. She was a different person who hadn't given up hope to be released.
- (Atkins) You know a person by their behavior, and my behavior in this institution speaks to the change that occurred over 30 years ago. I'm not the same person that I was when I came in here.

**Should she be shown mercy, alleviating her suffering?**

**Titus 3:4-7:** (NRSV) <sup>4</sup>But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his **mercy <1656>**, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

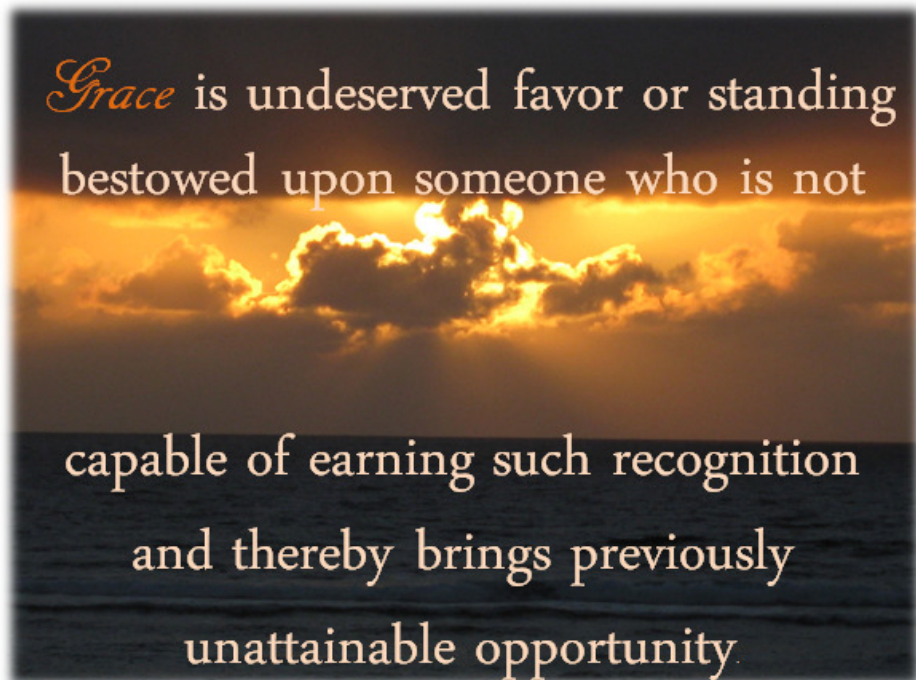
God's mercy is expressed through the *availability* of the water of rebirth, which leads to the Spirit...this brings us to living in God's grace.

**Hebrews 4:14-16:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy (an action) and (then you are able to) find grace to help in time of need.

Yet another connection for mercy - this time it is grace.

**What is the difference between mercy and grace?**

*Mercy* given is never based on "what they deserve."  
It is a gift based on *Love* and *Injustice* .





Both are undeserved, but one is compassion and one is favor.

Living transformed, *Susan Atkins interview with Diane Sawyer, ABC (2002)*

- *(Sawyer) And Charles Manson himself has said, I didn't make them do it. They did what they wanted to do. They did what they had inside them to do.*
- *(Atkins) I can't answer for what Charles Manson says. I don't know what is in his mind.*
- *(Sawyer) She says she has tried to live a transformation, spiritual enlightenment, helping others.*
- *(Male voice, her husband?) One time I asked her why she keeps trying, and she said that she knew that she couldn't change public opinion, but that's not why you do good things.*

**Mercy in action:**

Luke 10:30-37: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied and said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead...<sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, <sup>34</sup>and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you. <sup>36</sup>Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands? <sup>37</sup>And he said, The one who showed **mercy <1656>** toward him. Then Jesus said to him, Go and do the same.

So, how do all the elements we have talked about fit together?





A caller suggested: Romans 13:10: *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

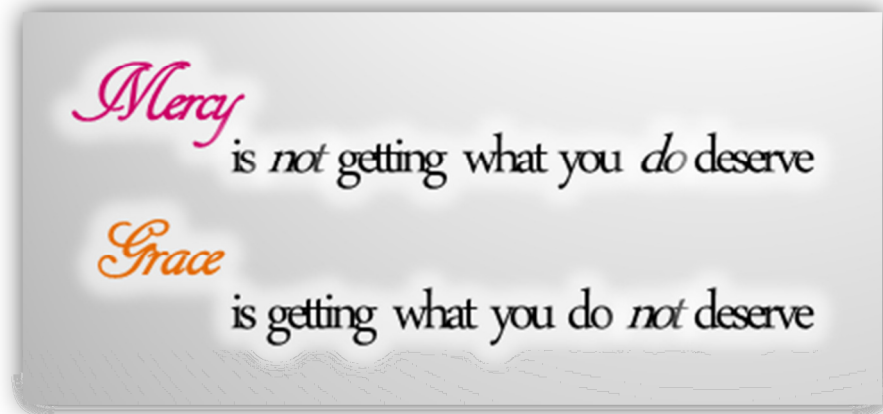
### A text with all four elements:

Ephesians 2:4-7: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, (MERCY) because of His great love with which He loved us, (LOVE) <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, (JUSTICE) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (GRACE), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 23:23: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy <1656>, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Doing the weightier matters would have granted them mercy, which would have lined them up for potential grace.

God's mercy is given in the context of justice and judgment.

How do we express mercy?



In the following teaching, is Jesus telling us to give people what they deserve?

Luke 6:27-36: (NASB) <sup>27</sup>But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup>Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; (do not retaliate; remember this does not have to be a physical hit) and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. (give to those who take) <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. (give to those in need) <sup>31</sup>Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. (live justly) <sup>32</sup>If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup>If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. (live a higher standard) <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Mercy magnified!!

God's mercy and grace is a template for us to follow in dealing with others.



 **Living remorse, Susan Atkins interview with Diane Sawyer, ABC (2002)**

- *(Sawyer) Sharon Tate's father, Paul, wrote: "31 years ago, I sat in a courtroom with a jury and watched with others and saw a young woman who giggled, sniffled and shouted out insults. While testifying about my daughter's last breath, she laughed." What argument can you make to him?*
- *(Atkins) There is none. There is only the continued attempt to apologize to him. Every time I've gone to the board, I've made every attempt possible to apologize. Remorse and sorrow for hideous actions is not calculated. You can't calculate it. It is not something that is tangible. Remorse is not sitting in a prison cell for the rest of your life, crying over what happened that you cannot change. Remorse is genuine repentance, turning away from behavior...*

**Here is a great parable regarding kindness and mercy:**

**Matthew 18:23-33:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup>But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, Have patience with me and I will repay you everything. <sup>27</sup>And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, Pay back what you owe. <sup>29</sup>So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, Have patience with me and I will repay you. <sup>30</sup>But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. <sup>31</sup>So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. <sup>32</sup>Then summoning him, his lord said to him, You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not also have had **mercy <1653>** on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had **mercy <1653>** on you?

**We can live mercifully by:**

- **C**laiming the mercy of God on our behalf
- **A**ppreciating the mercy of God on our behalf
- **R**ealizing the magnitude of God's mercy on our behalf related to our small earthly issues
- **E**xtending the mercy of God on our behalf to those over whom we have power

**Is mercy always appropriate?**

 **Everyone lost, Susan Atkins interview with Diane Sawyer, ABC (2002)**

- *I don't want to live a life with any unforgiveness in it. So many people lost so much. The victims, the families of the victims, the families of the people who were involved, the community at large, the society at large. Everybody lost.*

We agree that she should not have been paroled. Justice needed to be met. However, we believe God's mercy worked in her by helping her to transform her life where she was.



A caller suggested: Romans 12:21: *Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.*

### Israel’s command towards mercy:

Zechariah 7:8-14: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying, <sup>9</sup>Thus has the LORD of hosts said, Dispense true justice and practice **kindness <2617>** and compassion each to his brother; <sup>10</sup>and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. <sup>11</sup>But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. <sup>12</sup>They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. <sup>13</sup>And just as He called and I would not listen, says the LORD of hosts; <sup>14</sup>but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.

They were told to live by the law but practice mercy. They refused to listen and the consequence was the desolation of the land. God’s mercy was withdrawn because they did not show mercy to others. We really need to be thinking “mercy first” wherever possible.

Romans 9:14-15: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! <sup>15</sup>For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

God is not compelled to show all mercy in all circumstances, yet here He does show His willingness. Does He have mercy on all of His creation? Yes, because His plan, set up before the foundation of the earth, shows the sacrifice for sin even before the sin happened. That ransom satisfied justice, allowing mercy to eventually flourish.

For right now during the unfolding of His plan, God can pick and choose where His mercy applies and where it does not apply. Is that unjust? No, because the grand plan of God will apply to everyone. During the working of the details, there will be those who are drawn towards Him and those that will walk away from Him. It is important to note that He had compassion on anyone at any time who wanted to serve the God of Israel. That included foreigners in the land. There is a sense that God’s mercy always applies to those who seek after Him now, but will apply to everyone in the future when pain and misery is removed.

James 2:8-13: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. <sup>11</sup>For He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not commit murder. Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

We are to be a conduit of mercy. God’s mercy flows into us, gets reworked as mercy to others and flows out from us. We have received magnificent mercy! We live under liberty which encourages mercy. We are obligated, therefore, to extend mercy. Do all these things and triumph over judgment! Mercy opens the door for grace.

Through God’s love, He created a world in which it would be justice-related. Mercy cannot properly and appropriately exist unless it is founded in justice. If you don’t have mercy, you can’t open the door to grace. Grace is granting you favor that is not deserved; mercy is taking away consequences that *are* deserved - pain and suffering as a result of what you did.

God’s love, justice, mercy and grace show us how we should build our lives based on love first. If we love one another in a just manner, we can figure out how to be merciful. We don’t have grace we can give others, but we can share God’s grace with them. That’s where mercy fits in our lives! It opens our lives to God’s grace.

James 1:22: (NIV) *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

Don’t just listen to the word of God...do what it is says! Mercy is an action! We can think about mercy, dream about mercy, write about mercy and sing songs about mercy! But unless we do it, it is meaningless. Put mercy where it belongs so God’s grace can be opened up to those around us.

*So what does it mean to be merciful?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of **CQ Rewind!***



### Mercy in perspective:

Psalms 63:1-5: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup>Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. <sup>3</sup>Because Your **lovingkindness <2617>** is better than life, my lips will praise You. <sup>4</sup>So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. <sup>5</sup>My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.

There is nothing in this life better or more satisfying than the mercy of God.

### Stephen, a man of mercy:

Acts 7:51-60: (NASB) <sup>51</sup>You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. <sup>52</sup>Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; <sup>53</sup>you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it. <sup>54</sup>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; <sup>56</sup>and he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. <sup>57</sup>But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. <sup>58</sup>When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! <sup>60</sup>Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them! Having said this, he fell asleep.



### Stephen lives and dies Christian mercy:

- He preached to the Jews with logic, scripture and force, outlining God's merciful plan through the ages to His chosen people and plainly revealing Christ.
- He did not back down. For God's mercy to be upon his accusers, they needed to see the truth.
- As he died, his desire for his accusers was to receive God's mercy.

End note: His desire was granted, for Saul, his chief accuser, would by the mercy and grace of God become the Apostle Paul!

### A few thoughts on making mercy work:

How do we develop a love for kindness and mercy?

1. Have God's laws written in your heart;
2. Tell everyone;

Psalms 40:7-10: (NRSV) <sup>7</sup>Then I said, Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. <sup>8</sup>I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. <sup>9</sup>I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD. <sup>10</sup>I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

3. Use your words only towards positive communication;
4. Abandon bitterness, anger and malice;

Ephesians 4:29-32: (NRSV) <sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

5. Wear compassion, humility, meekness and patience on the outside;
6. Be forgiving;
7. Let the words of Jesus dwell in you; and

Colossians 3:12-17: (NRSV) <sup>12</sup>As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

8. Live your faith!

**James 2:14-18:** (NIV) <sup>14</sup>*What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?* <sup>15</sup>*Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to him, Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?* <sup>17</sup>*In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* <sup>18</sup>*But someone will say, You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.*

**James 1:22-25:** (NIV) <sup>22</sup>*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.* <sup>23</sup>*Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup>and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.* <sup>25</sup>*But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.*

**1 Timothy 1:18-19:** (NIV) <sup>18</sup>*Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup>holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*

### **Finally, a bit of information on the end of the Susan Atkins story:**

(Source: Excerpt from L.A. Times Obituary, By Elaine Woo)

September 26, 2009

Susan Atkins, who committed one of modern history's most notorious crimes when she joined Charles Manson and his gang for a string of killings in 1969 that terrorized Los Angeles and put her in prison for the rest of her life, has died. She was 61.

Atkins was diagnosed in 2008 with brain cancer and was receiving medical treatment at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, where she died at 11:46 p.m. Thursday, said Terry Thornton, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Thornton attributed the death to natural causes, but an official cause of death will be determined by the Madera County coroner's office after a review of Atkins' medical history.

Convicted of eight murders, Atkins served more than 38 years of a life sentence at the California Institution for Women in Chino. She was the longest-serving prisoner among women currently held in the state's penitentiaries, Thornton said. That distinction now falls to Patricia Krenwinkel, who was convicted along with Atkins in the Tate-LaBianca murders.

Although prison staffers and clergy workers commended Atkins' behavior during her many years behind bars, she was repeatedly denied parole, with officials citing the cruel and callous nature of her crimes.

In June 2008, she appealed to prison and parole officials for compassionate release, but the state parole board denied the request. On Sept. 2, she was wheeled into her last parole hearing on a hospital gurney, but was turned down by a unanimous vote of the 12-member California Board of Parole.