

The Prayer for Mercy

INTRODUCTION: PSALM 136

1. Fanny Crosby (1820 – 1915) wrote over 8,000 hymns in her lifetime.
2. As a child she was blinded due to an eye infection; so, she began to memorize the Bible.
3. In 1873, she and a friend wrote the hymn “Blessed Assurance.”
4. One verse contains the phrase: “Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.”
5. Her song echoed the mercy of God that has been sought after and sung about throughout time!
6. The truth of God’s enduring mercy is a theme of the book of Psalms – and the repeated refrain of Psalm 136, 26 times.
7. It is also a theme in the life of Jesus, as many cried out to Him for the mercy of God.

I. THE PICTURE OF MERCY (LUKE 15:20-24)

- A. Mercy is defined as “active compassion” (Strong) or “kindness or good will towards the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to help them” (Thayer).
- B. Mercy is the opposite of justice; referring to one not receiving the punishment that is deserved.
- C. Mercy is actively seeking the best for those who are the worst.
- D. The picture of mercy found in Scripture is embarrassing and almost scandalous.
 1. How could this father forgive such a worthless son?
 2. How could he run to meet his wicked child?
 3. How could he celebrate the return of this wayward disgrace?
- E. Yet, how much more did the Father in Heaven humble Himself to save sinners (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 John 4:10).
 1. Think of the example of Jesus in forgiveness (John 8:3-11).
 2. Think of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (John 19:1-5; 1 Peter 2:21-24).
- F. Indeed, God is “rich in mercy” (Ephesians 2:4).

II. THE PRAYER FOR MERCY (MATTHEW 20:29-34)

- A. The words of this prayer are simple: “Lord, have mercy.”
 1. *Kyrie eleison* is the phrase in Greek.
 2. It is often used in songs in various religious groups.
- B. The prayer for mercy is a prayer of submission (Luke 18:10-14).
- C. The prayer for mercy is a prayer of contrition (Psalm 51).
- D. The prayer for mercy is a prayer of conviction (Psalm 57:1; Hebrews 4:16).
- E. This prayer should be continuously on the lips of every Christian, followed by gratitude and praise (Hebrews 13:15).

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF MERCY (MATTHEW 9:27-31)

- A. When two blind men called out to Jesus for mercy, He asked them, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?”
- B. To pray for mercy is to invite God to act in one’s life; thus, faith is required.
- C. One must acknowledge the reality of God’s mercy – for all (Luke 15:25-32; Jonah).
- D. One must accept the change produced by God’s mercy.
- E. One must advance the cause proclaiming God’s mercy.

CONCLUSION: *LORD, HAVE MERCY*