International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones, October 2024

WEEK 5

DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Matthew 9 13

But go and learn what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Hebrews 4 16

Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Mercy is the most far reaching of God’s attributes. Mercy goes further than grace. God’s love does not reach as far as His grace, and His grace does not reach as far as His mercy. If I am in a good condition and my standing matches yours, and you give me a gift, that is grace. But if I am in a pitiful condition and my standing is far removed from yours, and you give me something, that is mercy.

If I come to you as your dear friend, and you give me a gift, that is grace. However, if I am a poor, unclean beggar, unable to do anything for myself, and you give me a gift, that is mercy. Grace extends only to a situation that corresponds to it. But mercy goes much further, reaching into a situation that is poor and unworthy of grace. According to our natural condition, we were far removed from God, totally unworthy of His grace. We were eligible only to receive His mercy.

Today’s Reading

It is God’s mercy that has reached us. None of us was in a condition that corresponded to His grace. We were so poor and pitiful that there was the need for God’s mercy to extend to our fallen condition. God’s mercy has brought us into His grace. How we need to realize this and worship God for His mercy!

Even now, after being saved and having shared in the riches of God’s life, we still, in some ways, are in a condition that needs God’s mercy to reach us. This is the reason Hebrews 4 16 says that first we need to receive mercy, and then we can find grace for timely help. Oh, how much we need God’s mercy! It is always God’s mercy that qualifies us to participate in His grace.

Our concept is that the one who wills will gain what he wills to obtain and that the one who runs will gain what he runs after. If this were the case, then God’s selection would be according to our effort and labor. But it is not so. On the contrary, God’s selection is of God who shows mercy. We do not need to will or to run, for God has mercy on us. If we know God’s mercy, we shall not put our trust in our effort. Neither shall we be disappointed by our failures. The hope for our wretched condition is in God’s mercy.

Romans 11 32 says, For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. Man’s disobedience affords God’s mercy an opportunity, and God’s mercy brings man salvation. How marvelous is God’s mercy! God’s mercy and His grace are both the expression of His love. When we are in a pitiful condition, His mercy reaches us and brings us into a state where He is able to favor us with His grace. Luke 15 20 to 24 says that when the father saw the prodigal son returning, he had compassion on him. This is the deeper mercy, an expression of the father’s affectionate love. Then the father clothed his son with the best robe and fed him with the fattened calf. This is grace, which also manifests the father’s love. God’s mercy reaches further than His grace, bridging the gap between us and God’s grace.

Often, because of our pitiful condition, we need to receive mercy before we can find grace. We come to the throne of grace like beggars, in somewhat the same condition as was the prodigal son when he came to his father. When we come to the throne of grace, we may have the sense that we are pitiful and say, Father, I am not worthy of anything. But the Father may say, You are unworthy, but I am merciful. My mercy reaches you and qualifies you to receive My favor. My mercy brings Me to you that I may clothe you with the best robe. God’s mercy is always available to us.

This is the end of Today’s Morning Revival