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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

ENDURING MERCY

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Psalm 136:1

Over the course of the last six issues of the Grace Gazette we have pointed out six characteristics or attributes which the LORD has revealed about HIMSELF which are said, in the Scriptures, to “endure forever”. They are (1) HIS TRUTH (Ps.100:5); (2) HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ps.111:3); (3) HIS PRAISE (Ps.111:10); (4) HIS RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS (Ps.119:60); (5) HIS NAME (Ps.135:13); and (6) HIS WORD (I Pet.1:25).

HE “inhabiteth eternity”, (see Isa.57:15), HE alone, “hath immortality” (see I Tim.6:16), and HE is the great “I AM”, (see Ex.3:14; John 18:8) being the “ALPHA and the OMEGA, the BEGINNING and the END” (see Rev.22:13) So we must recognize that all that comes from HIS person, of necessity, cannot pass away and must endure forever. Nothing in HIS creation has life or immortality in itself; as all life is that which is bestowed and perpetuated by HIM according to HIS own Sovereign will and purpose. As surely as HE is the BEGINNING, HE is also the ENDING according to that same will and purpose. Now who is sufficient for such things and who can say “what doest THOU?”. Men may strive with one another as mere potsherd of the earth, but none can ever raise a valid objection to anything which HE is pleased to do or design.

The phrase “endureth for ever” appears fifty different times in the scriptures. Forty one of those verses make reference to HIS mercy while the other nine refer to those characteristics which we have mentioned at the beginning of this article. In fact, one of the Psalms, (Ps.136) repeats that glorious truth in every one of its twenty six verses. While the LORD “changeth not”, nor does HE wax or wane in any sense, yet the scripture clearly indicates that the prevailing characteristic of HIS nature, which HE would make known unto the sons of men, is that HE is full of mercy unto all who call upon HIS NAME, those who are made willing in the day of HIS power.

When Moses asked to see HIS glory (when he was on Mt. Sinai), the LORD, who could have unveiled HIMSELF to Moses in any light HE wished, said this, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.” (Exo 33:19)

The fact that the mercy of the LORD “endureth for ever” can be seen in the declaration of the LORD to show mercy. Mercy does not just happen nor is it dispensed in response to something seen or demonstrated in the creature. Rather the scripture clearly indicates that all mercy flows from the LORD as a direct result of HIS purpose to show mercy to whom HE wills.

Mercy is a result of the goodness of the LORD which HE told Moses would pass before him. In fact the mercy and goodness of GOD go hand in hand even as David testified, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” (Psa 23:6)

The LORD’s mercy is, in a measure, extended to HIS whole creation. “Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.” (Psa 136:25) “The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every

living thing.” (Psa 145:15-16) There is no creature upon the earth that has not benefited from the enduring mercy of GOD, which will testify against the unthankfulness and disobedience of men in the day of judgment..

Yet there is no such thing as “general mercy” as though it was the result of some cosmic force made available to all. Every act of GOD’s mercy is as particularly and sovereignly directed and dispensed even as much so as the planets are guided about the Sun in their various orbits by HIS sovereign purpose. We can see this plainly demonstrated with Hagar as she wandered in the desert with her son Ishmael. (see Gen 21:12-20)

It is impossible to rightly speak of GOD’s mercy without a clear understanding of the sovereign nature of its dispensation. It is popular today for men to preach with disregard to that sovereign disposal and to picture the mercy of GOD as some sort of general bank of benefits, which a man might partake of according to his own free will. If “mercy” could be gained by the effort or activity of the creature then it would not be mercy at all but would be the fulfilling of an obligation or the payment of a debt.

Mercy is strictly the demonstration of GOD’s goodness according to HIS desire, even as HE said to Moses, I “*will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*” By nature, all men deserve destruction; it is according to the mercies of GOD alone that we are not summarily and swiftly delivered to that fate. Jeremiah recognized this fact as HE said, “*It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*” (Lam 3:22-23) Why has the grave not swallowed us up? “*HIS mercy endureth for ever.*”

Now while the mercy of GOD is without limit insofar as the fulfillment of HIS purpose is concerned yet it does in no wise rule out or overturn HIS justice and subsequent judgment, anymore than HIS justice does supercede or cancel HIS mercy. Neither modifies the other but they both work in perfect harmony to demonstrate the perfections of the ALMIGHTY. It is with the knowledge of HIS unbending and unshakeable justice that HIS mercy is caused to shine in its entire splendor. If one does not recognize HIS absolute demand for justice, he cannot in anywise appreciate and marvel at HIS mercy but will consider it an available commodity which men may enjoy or disregard according to their whims.

It is common, today, to hear men speak of the mercy of GOD, as if it were somehow an antidote or substitute for HIS judgment. Yet nothing could be further from the truth as we see this demonstrated in HIS sending JESUS CHRIST into the world to be the SIN-BEARER for that people who are the objects of HIS saving mercy. Even the ONLY BEGOTTEN of the FATHER, in whose mouth is no guile, must pay sin’s awful price, when HE is judged a SINNER. “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” (2Cor 5:21)

Justice demands a payment for sin, mercy supplies a LAMB whose blood sacrifice cancels that debt. Justice guards the entrance to the kingdom, judicially blinding those who have transgressed the law of GOD, so that they cannot see. Yet mercy has provided a way into the Holiest place of all, giving sight to the blind and a cry for mercy to HIM who shall save all who call upon HIM.

One of the greatest demonstrations of the enduring nature of HIS mercy is seen in the HIGH PRIESTLY prayer of the LORD JESUS in Gethsemane. John sets the stage for us to look in upon it, in chap 13, when he says, “*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*” (John 13:1) Then we read our LORD’s own words wherein HE demonstrates HIS determination to manifest HIS mercy to those who are the objects of that mercy. “*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*” (John 17:2) “*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*” (John 17:9) “*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*” (John 17:26) “*HIS mercy endureth for ever.*”

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