

- I. Session 47: The Mercy of God
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the mercy of God.
 - b. What is the mercy of God?
 - i. The words in the Old Testament
 1. *raham*
 - a. “One group stem from the verb *raham* (“to love, “pity,” “be merciful”). This term speaks of deep love often rooted in some natural bond. In the Piel, the verb refers to the deep inward feeling that is compassion, mercy, or pity.”¹
 - b. As we shall see in the rest of the study, this word for mercy is often translated as the English word “compassion” also as well since if we are compassionate we are being merciful.
 2. *hanan*
 - a. This verb “depicts a hearful response by someone who has something to give to the one in need.”²
 - b. It is used primarily to refer to God’s mercy in the Old Testament (some 41 times) such as the pleas in the Psalms for God to be merciful.³
 3. *Hemlah*
 - a. The root of this noun “connotes the emotional response that results (or may result) in action to remove its object (and/or its subject) from impending difficulty.”⁴
 - b. Used twice to describe God’s mercy in protecting someone from danger, as seen in [Genesis 19:16](#), [Isaiah 63:9](#).⁵
 - ii. The words in the New Testament: *eleos*.
 1. Regular Greek usage “it is an emotion that is stirred when one sees someone who is undeservedly afflicted.”⁶
 2. “When used of God, it often refers to his faithfulness...often the word is used of God’s acts in salvation history, especially in relation to Christ.”⁷
 - iii. Summarizing definition:
 1. “It is when you show unmerited favor “specifically to those whose condition is miserable and one of great need.”⁸

¹ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 358.

² *Ibid.*, 359.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

2. It is “a sympathetic view of another’s distress, motivating helpful action.”⁹
- c. What does the Bible teach about the mercy of God?
 - i. God’s physical deliverance of people is the result of His mercy
 1. Example: “*But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the [a]hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.*” (**Genesis 19:16**)
 - a. “Compassion” of the Lord is the Hebrew word *Hemlah*.
 - b. Context is the story of Sodom and how the angels saved Lot and his family.
 - c. The basis for their physical deliverance: Mercy/Compassion.
 2. Example: “*Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;”*” (**Exodus 34:6**)
 - a. This is stated directly as an attribute of God.
 - b. Background is the story of the Hebrews’ exodus!
 - ii. Forgiveness of sins is the result of His mercy
 1. Example: “*The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children [a]to the third and the fourth generations.*” (**Numbers 14:18**)
 2. We deserve to be punished for our sins, so when He forgives us, it is an act of mercy.
 - iii. Spiritual salvation is the result of His mercy
 1. “*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*” (**Titus 3:5**)
 2. “*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead [f]in our transgressions, made us alive together [g]with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” (**Ephesians 2:4-7**)
 - a. This is before the famous Ephesians 2:8-9 passage about salvation being by grace.
 - b. Here in this passage we see salvation is the result of mercy!
 - c. Note also God is rich in mercy!
 - iv. How important is God’s mercy?

⁹ John Frame, *Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002), 441.

1. David states it is better to fall into the hands of God's mercy than man's hand (**1 Chronicles 16:34**)
 2. Imagine a world without God's mercy: a world without any help from physical problem, a world without any forgiveness of sins, a world without any salvation.
- d. How does the mercy of God relate to other attributes of God?
- i. The attribute of God's mercy is often described in proximity of other similar attributes of God.
 1. For example: "*The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.*" (**Psalm 103:8**)
 2. While other attributes are similar there are also shade of differences that makes it distinct.
 - ii. God's mercy presuppose certain truths we've seen earlier in this series:
 1. Man is sinful.
 2. God is just as a judge if He punishes man for their sins.
 3. God's mercy presuppose God's righteousness and God's wrath.
 4. Without those truths, it makes no sense to talk about mercy, but instead we only talk about what we deserve.
 - iii. The basis of God's mercy:
 1. God has strong ties towards those who are his children¹⁰= "*Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.*" (**Psalm 103:13**)
 - a. Here the Hebrew word for compassion is derived from the Hebrew word for mercy: *raham*.
 - b. The image of father and children is used here to describe God's mercy.
 - c. But the basis for God's mercy isn't ultimately based upon our works of fearing Him as we shall see in the next point.
 2. God's mercy reflects His Sovereign choice¹¹= "*And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."*" (**Exodus 33:19**)
 - a. Again here the Hebrew word for compassion is derived from the Hebrew word for mercy: *raham*.
 - b. God shows compassion upon whom He shows compassion. It is not ultimately about us being deserving.
 - c. Paul quotes this verse in **Romans 9:15** that emphasized the point of God's mercy is because of His sovereignty.

¹⁰ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 358.

¹¹ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 358.

- i. In its context in the previous verse Paul acknowledge a possible objection to God's sovereign mercy: "*What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!*" (**Romans 9:14**)
 - ii. His answer to that objection is to cite this verse followed by his explanation in verse 16 that stresses God's sovereignty: "*So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.*" (**Romans 9:16**)
- e. Implication
 - i. In difficult times go to God and cry out for mercy
 - 1. See the example in **Psalm 86:15-16** of David: "*But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. 16 Turn to me, and be gracious to me; Oh grant Your strength to Your servant, And save the son of Your handmaid.*"
 - 2. Every time someone cries out to God, it is implied that we are trusting that God is merciful!
 - ii. Motivation for why we repent from our sins (**2 Chronicles 30:9**)
 - iii. Don't hide your sins: "*He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*" (**Proverbs 28:13**)
 - iv. Keep on looking to His mercy (**Jude 21**)
 - v. Wish mercy upon others (**Jude 2**)
 - vi. Sing of His mercy (**Psalm 89:1**)
 - vii. As Christians we also need to be merciful towards others (**Matthew 9:13, 12:7, Luke 10:37**)
 - 1. "*But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*" (**Matthew 9:13**)
 - a. In **Matthew 9:13** we see the context it is Jesus receiving opposition for sinners and tax collectors turning towards Him (**v.11**).
 - b. Here in **verse 13** Jesus quotes **Hosea 6:6** as an answer to the religious leaders of what they need to learn.
 - c. The word translation "*compassion*" could also mean "*mercy*" especially in light of the Hebrew in **Hosea 6:6**.
 - d. Apparently God demands includes showing mercy.
 - e. God even desire mercy more than sacrifice.
 - f. **Application Question: Do you understand God wants you to show mercy more than sacrifice?**
 - 2. Jesus invoked **Hoses 6:6** again in **Matthew 12:7**= "*But if you had known what this [d]means, 'I desire [e]compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.*" (**Matthew 9:13**)

- a. In context the religious leaders were opposing Jesus because His disciples were hungry during the Sabbath.
 - b. Jesus again went to the heart of the matter by questioning whether they understood the passage.
 - c. **Application Question: Are you quick to condemn others? And do you condemn the innocent because you are so quick to be judgmental rather than merciful?**
3. *“And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do [p]the same.” (Luke 10:37)*
- a. In context Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan and finishing the parable He asked Simon *“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” (Luke 10:36)*
 - b. The answer by Simon was that it was *“the one who showed mercy toward him.”*
 - c. Jesus reply is that we are to do likewise!