

God's Mercy

Ephesians 2:4

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us.

Paul begins with the word *but*. That three-letter conjunction is the pivotal point of this chapter, yes, of the whole letter - in fact, of all Scripture. Mankind as a group has made a terrible mess of things. In their wickedness and perversity all people are at odds with God. All are spiritually dead and enemies of God. All deserve the severest punishment. This changes the whole narrative from judgment to mercy and eternal salvation.

God is *rich in mercy*. For no other reason, God has rescued men and women from death and given them life. God's mercy is his overflowing active compassion, freely exercised, excluding all idea of merit on the part of the object.

Mercy is a positive quality that certainly has much in common with love. But it is also somewhat different. Mercy is the attitude in the mind and heart of God that moves Him to take pity on us when He sees our lost and wretched state. Mercy prompts Him to action.

The Greek *eleos*, which means "pity," "compassion," moved by the troubles of others. They convey the idea of compassion or sympathy, pity, pardon or forgiveness, and showing favor.

Love here is agape love. It speaks of a love and affection that is totally one-way. It all comes from God. Nothing in man the sinner, the God-hater, the spiritual corpse, drew God to him. Love resided only in the heart of God.

The following passages say it well:

- Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- 1 John 3:1 "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

Prayer: Dear Lord thank you for using your great mercy to include us in your mercy. Amen.