

## Christian Character – Mercy I Chr. 21:1-17

Introduction:

**Col 3:12** - Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

This story is also told in **II Sam. 24:1-17**.

(from Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

**mercy** (KINDNESS) noun [U]

kindness and forgiveness shown towards someone whom you have authority over:

Mercy (The Gospel Journal, Dub McClish, Jan 2002, pg. 3) is “God’s suspension of deserved punishment.”

### I. Notice why we need mercy.

- A. We need the mercy of God because when we sin, we are deserving of a punishment for that sin.
  - 1. David knew that he had sinned when he numbered the people of Israel.
    - a. Notice the sin of David.
      - 1) We are told that “Satan...moved David to number Israel” (21:1).
      - 2) This numbering of Israel would indicate that David was putting his trust in his army rather than in God.
      - 3) Even though David is warned by Joab not to do this, he does it anyway (21:3).
    - b. This was not the only time that David had sinned.
      - 1) He committed adultery with Bathsheba (II Sam. 11).
      - 2) He had Bathsheba’s husband (Uriah) killed (II Sam. 11).
      - 3) He did not transport the ark of the covenant in the proper way; which led to the death of Uzza (I Chr. 13).
      - 4) Now David has numbered the people of Israel without the authority of God.
    - c. David knew what it was like to sin against God.
  - 2. David also knew that there was going to be a punishment for his sin.
    - a. David was given three choices as to the punishment of His sin (21:11-12).
      - 1) Three years of famine.
      - 2) Three months to be defeated by his enemies.
      - 3) Three days be punished with the sword of the Lord (plague in the land).
    - b. David knew that there was a punishment for his sin.
- B. We need to understand today that we have all sinned against God and are deserving of punishment.
  - 1. We have all sinned against God.

- a. **Rom. 3:23** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
  - b. **Gal. 3:22** - But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
  - c. **I Jn. 1:8-10** - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
  - d. **Is. 53:6** - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
2. The punishment that we are deserving of is death.
- a. **Rom. 6:23** - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - b. This is an eternal death; an eternal separation from the Father.
- C. It is because of our sin that we need the mercy of God.

## II. We need to understand that God is a merciful God.

- A. David understood that God is a merciful God.
1. Notice the punishment that David chose.
- a. He chose to be punished by God, and not by man (**21:13**).
  - b. He did not want a famine or enemies to come upon him.
  - c. He understood that God is more merciful than any man could ever be.
    - 1) As we continue looking at our text, we discover the great mercy of God (**21:14-15**)
    - 2) David knew that God is merciful.
      - a) **Ps. 41:4** - I said, "LORD, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."
      - b) **Ps. 116:5** - Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes, our God is merciful.
- B. As we look throughout history, God was always merciful towards Israel.
1. He was merciful to them when they came out of the land of Egypt.
- a. **Ex. 34:6-7** - And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, {7} keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."
  - b. **Deut. 4:30-31** - When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice {31} (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

2. God was even merciful to them when they were taken captive by their enemies.
  - a. **II Chr. 30:9** - For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.
  - b. **Jer. 3:12** - "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: 'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the LORD, 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the LORD; 'I will not remain angry forever.'"
  - c. Nehemiah knew about the mercy of God while in captivity.
    - 1) **Neh. 9:17** - They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them.
    - 2) **Neh. 9:31** - Nevertheless in Your great mercy you did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; for You are God, gracious and merciful.
- C. God promises to be merciful towards us today.
  1. **Ps. 103:8-11** - The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. {9} He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. {10} He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. {11} For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
  2. **Heb. 8:12** - For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.
  3. **Js. 5:11** - Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord-- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.
- D. In fact, it is the mercy of God that saves us today.
  1. **Titus 3:4-7** - But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, {5} not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, {6} whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, {7} that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
  2. **I Pet. 1:3-5** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, {4} to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,

reserved in heaven for you, {5} who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**3. We need the mercy of God!**

**III. Because the mercy of God is great towards us, we also need to be merciful towards others.**

- A. Even though this is not directly mentioned in our text, David understood that in order to receive mercy, he had to show mercy.
  - 1. **II Sam. 22:26** (praise to God from David) - **With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;**
  - 2. **Ps. 18:25** (praise to God from David) - **With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;**
- B. We are commanded to show mercy to others.
  - 1. **Col 3:12** - **Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;**
  - 2. **Pr. 11:17** - **The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.**
  - 3. **Mic. 6:8** - **He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?**
- C. Even Jesus Himself commands us to show mercy towards others.
  - 1. **Mt. 5:7** - **Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.**
  - 2. **Lk. 6:35-36** - **But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. {36} Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.**

**Conclusion:**