

Who is God ...? God is Merciful [Huruma wa Moyo]

- ❖ Merciful: Definition – “a disposition to be compassionate or forgiving of others”
- ❖ Synonyms – Compassionate, kind, benevolent, gracious

✧ *PS 69:16 Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness [wema]of your love; in your great mercy turn to me.*

- This psalmist or David appeals on the basis of “the goodness of God’s love and his GREAT mercy.”
- We ask God to hear our prayers not because of our goodness but because of his goodness.

✧ *GE 19:12-16*

- Some angels come to visit Lot and warn him that God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of its great sin
- The word “sodomy” is literally taken from the sin this city was infamous for.
- This was a wicked city!
- God was merciful to Lot and his family by sending angels to rescue him before he destroyed the city with “fire from heaven”

In Gen 13 when Lot settled in Sodom it was a green fertile valley, God cursed the city because of its sin (our conduct after we become disciples matters a lot)

- Now, in v16 of Gen 19 it says “the Lord was merciful to them”
- This shows Lot was not rescued on his account but on account of God’s mercy so nothing he could boast about apart from God’s mercy

We are saved on account of God’s mercy not of ourselves

- Lot should have been fleeing from that city, but he was dragging his feet to leave
- God was still merciful to them and rescued them
- God is a specialist at rescuing righteous men and women from ungodly situations
- ✓ Many are times that we hesitate to leave environment that compromise our godliness even after God had sent his Angels to us.
- ✓ We might be waiting to see Angels physically but those human beings you keep shutting down as they warn you are the Angels God has been sending to you

✧ *DT 4:25-31*

- You may ask: “I thought God was merciful, why is he allowing foreign armies to destroy these guys?”
- God is merciful, but he is also a just judge.
- ***The mercy of God is only available in v29 “if you seek God and return to him with all your heart, then God will be merciful”***

Amazingly, despite God forewarning the Israelites of their back-sliding, they did it anyway

- They grew rich and comfortable in the Promised land, they forgot God and he became less and less important to them
- They changed their priorities and worshipped created things instead of the creator.
- God sent in the Babylonians to beat them up and take them into captivity – there as slaves in a foreign land they were humbled and returned to God with fasting, confession and weeping. **[It is so sad to see baptized disciples having other things as priority]**
- God rescued them and brought them back together to rebuild the nation of Israel.

Now God could easily have said “I warned you and you did not listen, it is over”

- But God is wonderful, if you will confess your sins and repent then he will be merciful

- If your heart has been filled with evil, angry, vengeful thoughts
 - If you will confess and repent God will forgive you. For he is a merciful God
- ➔ We are all in need of God's mercy, aren't we?

☼ Psalm 77:1-13

- The psalmist says: "I cried to God for help – but my soul refused to be comforted"
- Ever been there spiritually?
- You are in distress spiritually – something in your life is not going according to plan
- Your marriage is a mess
- Your finances are out of control
- You are facing troubles at work that are overwhelming
- And you wonder:

✓ These are dark, lonely feelings BUT the psalmist finds a way out

- Despite his feelings of abandonment he decides to trust in God's character
- **V10** He remembers the deeds and miracles of God
- How God rescued and redeemed his people from slavery
- God's character, his nature of showing mercy to his people comforted this psalmist in his time of discontent and confusion.
- It's my prayer that "we all understand the nature of God" because on those dark emotional days we will be able to say "I know God, I know his character, and I am going to trust not in my emotions but in His character"

☼ *Jer 3:1, 12 " 'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD, 'I will not be angry forever.*

- God describes himself as merciful
- He is appealing for the Israelites to return to him
- He encourages them by saying: "I will not be angry forever". God is truly merciful
- God is merciful, now he does get angry, but mercy kicks in when we confess and apologise and repent.

☼ *Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

- Jesus accurately describes God's character and says: "Your heavenly father is merciful" so we can be sure his nature is not towards condemnation but towards mercy and forgiveness
 - He says: Because your heavenly father is merciful you be merciful towards each other
- Quiz; Are you?
- How do you feel towards people who have sinned against you?
 - Are you bitter with them? Hateful? Vengeful? Unforgiving? Self-righteous and without mercy?

If we are sons of God we need to have nature of forgiveness and mercy towards people.

☼ Luke 23:32-43

- Not only is the father merciful – the son is equally merciful
- Jesus is the picture of mercy in action. The men who were crucifying Jesus did terrible things to him.
- AND his response was: "Father forgive them, they know not what they are doing"
- Talk about the nature of compassion and forgiveness from Jesus