**“Mercy from Mercy”**

Psalm 103:1-13

Genesis 45:3-15

1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42

Luke 6:27-38

Epiphany 7, Feb. 19/20, 2022

“Jesus said: ‘I say to you who hear, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.’”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Last week we were reminded that, in the world, only **two kinds of people exist: the “blessed” as Jesus called them and the opposite in the “cursed” upon whom He spoke “woes”**. This week, we deal with the fact that there are only **two kinds of “blessed” people in this world (the believers): ones humbly seeking mercy and ones graciously givingit because they know it so well themselves**. ….

Actually, these last two kinds are **the same … just different activities, one because of the other**. No one **can’t** **give** what they don’t know themselves. One, however, **must give**, so they’d better know well mercy.

Christianity literally means the **receiving of mercy from God and, then, the giving of it (forgiving because we’ve been forgiven so much), gifted that and receiving IT (knowing IT) as God’s salvation and forgiveness of us, such that we can give what we’ve gotten**. Christians know mercy and, so, have to share, but need **reminded of that gift and, then, duty**. You can’t be Christian (**saved**) without **humility knowing why (needing IT). Without humility you may not have received salvation, because it’s the forgiveness necessary, yet given, mercifully upon our need by God**. Knowing that, it would be impossible to be **stingy with it extend also by us to others (God’s mercy to us, then our forgiving others, either in God’s stead as in sharing the Good News of the Gospel, or us demonstrating the Gospel in us by always being a forgiving person of people.** **Christians know well to give what we’ve received**. Christians are, therefore, always (as Christians) **MERCIFUL FROM MERCY**.

**Text**

As reminder and encouragement **(and to humble us where we seem stubborn in failure in this, therefore again need mercy ourselves**, today’s example is Jacob’s son Joseph (**his situations** and **what he did with them**).

Part of a big family and gifted and (maybe also) cursed with the high favor of his father, Joseph got to be hugely envied by his brothers. So much hated by them was he that they (almost as one unified-whole) took opportunity to be rid of him by either murder or the selling him into slavery … both were discussed. Dad would be told that they came upon Joseph’s coat, killed by a wild animal. But the truth was that he was thrown into a pit and sold by his own brothers as one fairly-united group. He was sold by them to merchants bound for trade in Egypt.

One brother **saved Joseph’s life**. Not guilty (as most of the others were) of his **sale into slavery** also, **Reuben** was God’s **extender of mercy to Joseph … a mercy (as it turned out) which would also save an entire nation and, ultimately in their descendent Jesus, everybody in the world, for all of time**.

**God’s mercy had Joseph in Egypt prospering**. Not that it was always **easy** (because he a slave, then jailed and connived against), but **that path God used through challenges, and He makes of it what our Genesis account tells us about**. Joseph **SAVED** Egypt (led it wisely) and **SAVED** his brothers and the big family that would grow into a nation of people (Chosen by God because of His own Son coming from them, that “Seed” of a Savior born woman who He mercifully preserved to save the world through this entire situation. God mercifully **SAVED** mankind and for all eternity, first from the famine (death to life and a place to live) to, then, both an **earthly and heavenly** “Promised Land” of life “flowing with milk and honey”, eternal through to Heaven. And God’s mercy was **expressed-back upon guilty brothers in forgiveness and grace (he forgive them knowing God had shown him mercy and protection and purpose): “God sent me before you to preserve life.”**

**That Mercy (with life preserved for all to have) was** the **“Seed” born then of a woman generations later**. The book of Hebrews says that “Without the shedding of blood there **is no forgiveness of sins**”, yet since the sacrifice was preserved to come, “as far as the east is from the west, so far does God **remove our transgressions from us for His Son’s sake**” (His bloodshed / the “Seed” born of a woman / **Jesus** dying / shedding His divine blood upon a cross. 1st Corinthians says that “By one man (that is Adam) came death” and we’ve confessed our contribution to that, “by a man (the “Seed” of a woman promised since Genesis 3 and preserved through Joseph’s protection) the resurrection of the dead has come (LIFE). For as in Adam all die” without hope apart from God’s mercy in a dramatic sacrificial intervention, “so also in Christ shall all be **MADE ALIVE**”.

So, “love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you, forgive, and you will be forgiven”. “Forgive us our trespasses, **AS** we forgive those who trespass against us.” because **our sins were your enemies You embraced**.

## Application

Our “love of, even, enemies” is **because we know How merciful God’s been to us**. The **greatest “Good work” is giving another God’s mercy upon them and, also, our forgiveness of them**. Start there (after knowing it yourself) and it will make you **mercifully** **generous in all ways**.

Remember **Joseph** and (more importantly) Jesus. But also, if there’s a task reminding us of God’s mercy to us that will make us almost automatic in showing mercy to others, then Luther’s Small Catechism in just two short spots are **MUSTS**. If you’re short a Small Catechism, then take one of these small white pamphlets of it on your way out.

Turn, though, to that Catechism printed also in our hymnals (it’s the last thing in the front, right before the hymns start (page 322 for this part). The “Second Article” of the “Creed” and, then, the “Fifth Petition” of “The Lord’s Prayer” teaches “Mercy from Mercy”.

The **first** (the “Creed’s Second Article”) announces God’s mercy ( the “Seed”, Jesus, and His sacrificial work, and why). “What does this mean?” (and, so let’s all together read aloud from the bottom of page 322 onto the top of page 323):

“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is rise from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.”

From **that**, **“living under Him in His kingdom and serving Him in an everlasting”** looks like this: from “The Lord’s Prayer’s Fifth Petition” (page 324) forgiveness received and then, finally, our obvious sharing of mercy to others (forgiving as we’ve been forgiven / “Mercy from Mercy”). All together, “What does this mean?”:

“We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So **we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us**.”

There are only **two kinds of “blessed” people in this world (believers / Christians): ones humbly seeking mercy and ones graciously giving it to others, since we well-know it ourselves**. Be **BOTH of those**. Now may the Peace of God (Mercy) keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. In +His name. Amen.