



Mercy

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Eternally Speaking Now

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One of the books my son was assigned to read for school this month was *The Screwtape Letters*, by C.S. Lewis.

The book is fantastic, by the way. I recommend every Christian read it at least once, if not multiple times.

In this intriguing novel, Lewis exposes the devil's cunning tactics to tempt humanity to sin, by unraveling the fictional story of a man who is unaware of the spiritual battle for his soul. The book leads its readers through a series of letters written from Screwtape, a senior demon, to Wormwood, his nephew and lower-degree demon, who is assigned the duty of tempting his target to compromise his virtue for corruption.

I first read *The Screwtape Letters* decades ago as a new believer and then read it with Zach for leisure last year. I was glad he had to read it again last week within the context of formal education, as the assignment included writing a composition to answer specific questions that provoked critical thinking.

His assignment led me down that same path as well.

While ingeniously weaving a plethora of theological truths through his book, C.S. Lewis equips his readers with a realistic peek behind the devil's curtain of deceptive tricks-- tricks designed to set us up and take us down. As a result of my son's own observations in the paper he wrote, my eyes were opened to a feature of *The Screwtape Letters* that I hadn't focused on before: the theme of mercy.

Throughout the entire book,
Lewis creatively reveals
the stark contrast between
the mercy of God and the
mercilessness of the devil.

The English noun 'mercy' in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word, *cheded*. There are multiple dimensions to this word, so to keep things on track with the point of this blog, I'll summarize its definition below, according to Strong's Concordance. Here is its definition, within the context of verses that refer to God and His character:

Cheded: kheh'sed
noun

Kindness, beauty, goodness
mercy, pity, faithfulness
desire, zealous love
constant abiding favor

The Bible is full of verses that use this word. Following are some of those verses. I'll highlight the English words that come from root word *cheded*.

For the word of the LORD is right,
and all His work is done in truth.
He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the **goodness** of the LORD.
Psalm 33:4-5

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying:
"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore with **lovingkindness** I have drawn you."
Jeremiah 31:3

"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed,
but My **kindness** shall not depart from you,
nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"
says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

Isaiah 54:10

And the LORD passed before him (Moses) and proclaimed (of Himself),
"The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful** and gracious,
longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..."

Exodus 34:6

But wait. This ocean of amazingness extends farther still.

Psalms 144 uses this same Hebrew word, *cheded*,
to describe God Himself.

Yes, God not only pours out His mercy on us
with an everlasting love,
but He also *IS* mercy.

People, this is a game changer.
It's one thing to grant mercy.
It's an entirely different thing to
BE the very essence of mercy itself.

Blessed be the LORD my Rock,
who trains my hands for war,
and my fingers for battle—

My lovingkindness and my fortress,
my high tower and my deliverer,
my shield and the One in whom I take refuge,
who subdues my people under me.

LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?

Psalms 144:1-3

In verse 2 above,
that title for God, "my lovingkindness,"
is literally "*my cheded*."
My mercy.

God *IS* our mercy.

CHALLENGE

In *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape is altogether horrible. In his letters to Wormwood, he is rude, condescending, angry, threatening, impatient, and cruel. Not only is this personality expressed towards people-- God's creation made in the Lord's glorious image and likeness, but Screwtape's terrible character is also directed at his very nephew, a demon of his own kind. That's serious mercilessness.

This is indeed what the devil and all the demons are like in real life. You can read about them throughout the Bible. Their character is the polar opposite of the Lord's. They are filled with an insatiable lust to torment, deceive, trick, accuse, condemn, and shame you. Their father, the devil, is the father of lies, whose sole intention is to steal from you, destroy you, and ultimately kill you. (John 8:44, 10:10)

On the contrary, God has mercy on all mankind. The concept of mercy has traditionally been summarized as "not getting what we deserve."

Did you know you actually deserve death?
Yup, it's true.
Romans 3:23 and 6:23 clearly explain this.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *All* means *all* of us. We've all sinned, and the wages of our sin is death. We are literally born into this world under penalty of death. The world system, the flesh of man, and the devil and his demons lure us to remain under that death penalty, but not God. His mercy-- His beauty, lovingkindness, and zealous love for us, has made a way for us to accept His Son, Jesus, who stood in our place and paid the punishment we owe...and could never pay ourselves.

But God demonstrated His love for us, in that,
while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!
Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23

Here's our challenge: We deserve death, we deserve its punishment, and the devil knows it. His entire system of evil hierarchy in the spiritual realm shows no mercy. The enemy is ruthless and violent and is looking for ways every day to rub your face in your own sin, failures, and weaknesses. While Jesus has set you free from guilt, shame, and condemnation, satan is determined to bring you back into that bondage.

Satan is cruel,
ugly,
bad,
merciless,
pitiless,
faithless,
zealously hateful,
and totally void of any favor.

But God is kind,
beautiful,
good,
merciful,
with gentle eyes of pity,
faithful,
full of a desire for us,
overflowing with zealous love for us,
in a constant state of pouring out abiding favor on us.

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing to You among the nations.
For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
and Your truth unto the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let Your glory be above all the earth.

Psalms 57:9-11

This is why I don't want to sin.

All these truths motivate me to flee from
agreeing with faulty worldviews,
giving in to addiction,
falling into temptation,
submitting to the enemy's strongholds, or
embracing his lies about God, others, and myself.

Why would we align ourselves with a cruel entity whose purpose is to destroy us?

Instead, let us consider and celebrate Jesus afresh today.

Let His love lead us into joyful obedience to Him.

His mercy is a vast sea, a depth with no end, a height with no bound.

His mercy endures forever.

"Who is a God like You,
pardoning iniquity and passing over the
transgression of the remnant of His heritage?

He does not retain His anger forever,

because He delights in mercy.

He will again have compassion on us

and will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

Micah 7:18-19

Follow the Tabs below for More glorious Truth

A Beautiful Mess

How can something that creates a stain also leave behind a cleansing? Before I was saved, I didn't understand why Christians sang songs about blood. Now I get it and embrace it. It's something everyone must understand, for it is beyond gorgeous, and in a mysterious way, it makes us more beautiful, too!

[Blog: A Beautiful Mess](#)

[Podcast: A Beautiful Mess](#)

The Heart of Jesus in My Hand

Have you every betrayed or doubted Jesus? Don't miss this true story that exemplifies God's great mercy towards us. It happened during communion, with a surprise when I opened my eyes and beheld the broken bread in my hand. There's a world of difference between the betrayal of Judas and that of Peter.

[Blog: The Heart of Jesus in My Hand](#)

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