

Encounter(ing) God

Merciful and Gracious Part 4

Steve Berger

February 10, 2019

Review... Truly encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- 1) Contrast “Knowing About” and “Encountering” God
 - a. Knowing – *aware and informed*
 - b. Encountering – *revealing (seeing) and transforming – MEETING!*
 - Often, we are content to live in the “land of knowing” when God desires for us to press in to the “place of encounter” (pay attention to what the Lord is showing me).

**Too often we are content to live in the “land of knowing”
when God desires for us to press in to the “place of encounter.”**

Early life warning

John 5:39-40

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

**The Pharisees were super religious, studied the scriptures,
thought that would produce life.**

**BUT, they stopped there instead of encountering Jesus!
BEWARE!**

Listen – when we talk about Encountering God, we’re talking about Encountering Who He is – His character... no clearer summary of His character than in Exodus 34.

Background – Moses says, “Show me Your glory” – God shows Moses His character!

If we want to know what’s glorious about God – it is Who He is!

Exodus 34:6-8

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 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." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. (*Moses obviously encountered God*).

I am merciful and gracious

- 1) first thing God says of Himself — that we can get our heads around — I am merciful and gracious.
- 2) each word is used 13 times in Old Testament, 11 times they are mentioned together, strong connection between the words, practically speaking, they are inseparable.

What merciful is — Merciful — full of compassion, 5 times translated that way, to look upon the miserable and afflicted and then act on their behalf... God says He's merciful!

What mercy does —

- a) 2 Chronicles 30:9- it allows the return of the rebellious.
- b) Matthew 9:36- it pities the weary and scattered.
- c) Matthew 14:14- it heals all manner of sickness, disease, etc.
- d) Matthew 15:32- it provides for the hungry.
- e) Matthew 18:27- it forgives the repentant.
- f) Mark 5:19- it delivers the demon-possessed.
- g) Luke 7:13- it comforts the grieving by raising the dead.
- h) Luke 10:33- it cares for the abused and wounded.
- i) Luke 15:20- it lovingly embraces the prodigal.
- j) Ephesians 2:4-5- it makes us alive in Jesus, though dead in trespasses and sins.

God's mercy produces God's grace!

Important observation — God's mercy produces God's grace!

Because He's merciful and full of compassion and looks upon our misery and afflictions — and then acts on our behalf — *the acting on our behalf is the gracious part.*

What Gracious is — Gracious — to bend down in kindness to an undeserving inferior.

What grace does — Grace favors us so we can encounter God's goodness — and it empowers us so we can live in godliness.

Grace saves us

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

**Grace didn't come to us by our effort, it was God's gift —
He bent down in kindness to us as undeserving inferiors and He saved us!**

Summary of mercy and grace — “I’m full of compassion for you. I see your miserable condition, I want to act on your behalf to heal, restore and bless you. I’m going to bend down in kindness toward you though you don’t deserve it. I’m going to bestow favor on you so you can encounter Me, and empower you so you can live for Me.”

Mephibosheth — 2 Samuel 9

It’s the best picture of the mercy and grace of God touching someone’s life.

- a) Grandson of Saul, son of Jonathan, best friend of David. Saul, Jonathan and two other brothers killed by Philistines, beheaded, hung on wall of Beth Shan. *(Trauma)*.
- b) Mephibosheth’s caretaker fled when David became King — dropped him, wounding and crippling Mephibosheth. *(Don’t understand intentions of King- run, fall, crippled)*.
- c) He lived in exile in a place called Lo Debar- east of Jordan, not promised land, barren place, no pasture. *(That’s where you end up when you run from the King)*.
- d) David, as King, seeks the well-being of any of Jonathan’s family, for Jonathan’s sake, *(1 Samuel 20:15-16)*, so that he may show the “kindness of God”, “mercy and grace.” He hears of Mephibosheth, summons him to palace. *(What if he said, “NO”)*.
- e) “I will show you kindness, restore land and servants, eat at my table continually.”
- f) “What do you want with a dead dog such as I?” *(You can hear brokenness)*
- g) “Giving Mephibosheth everything that belonged to Saul, and the servants work the field for him, bring in the harvest, but he’s eating at my table, as my son, continually.” *(Restoration, blessing, security)*.

Mercy, grace, and kindness of God

See how the mercy, grace, and kindness of God operates?

See what the mercy, grace, and kindness of God does for people?

- a) Mercy and grace seeks you before you accept it. *(wounded, crippled, hiding)*.
- b) Mercy and grace comes in the name of another. *(not due to your effort)*.
- c) Mercy and grace brings you out of barren places. *(transformation, not same)*.

- d) Mercy and grace summons you to the King's palace. (decision time).
- e) Mercy and grace brings you to the King's table. (personal relationship).
- f) Mercy and grace makes you a King's kid. (fully adopted and secure).
- g) Mercy and grace restores you.
- h) Mercy and grace works for you.
- i) Mercy and grace brings you a harvest. (way more for you than you could do for yourself).
- j) Mercy and grace covers your lameness. (doesn't require perfection, just humility. Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet).

Question — Have you encountered the mercy and grace of God?

Your life should show it... internal transformation, external generosity.

Mercy and grace for mercy and grace.

Question — Do you want the mercy and grace of God today?

Discussion Questions

1. When Moses asked God to show him His glory, what did God proclaim as He passed before him?
2. What does it reveal about the character of God, that the *first thing God says of Himself*, is that He is merciful and gracious? What could He have said? (*righteous, mighty, love*)
3. How is that mercy extended to you today?
4. What is the difference between mercy and grace?
5. How is God's grace being manifested in your life today?
6. To whom have you given mercy and grace recently?