

Mercy or Grace or Both?

“Because He delights in mercy.
He will again take pity on us...”
Luke 1:18-19 (NASB)

“But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and His grace toward me did not prove vain;
but I labored even more than all of them,
yet not I, but the grace of God with me.”
1 Corinthians 15:10 (NASB)

Scripture is rich in the use of words to describe our God and His activity on our behalf. For example, when speaking of the Lord, Isaiah in particular, loves to call the Lord the “Holy One of Israel”. Such an expression to identify the Lord is seen elsewhere in Scripture but is seen many times in Isaiah.

Today, I wish to open a wonderful duo of words which are sometimes used as synonyms and other times have distinct meanings in their context. When used as synonyms they both refer to the Lord’s generous and undeserved kind actions on our behalf.

When mercy and grace diverge in meaning, mercy addresses us as miserable while grace speaks to our needs.

A verse that shows the Holy One of Israel ministering to His people in mercy is Isaiah 25:8 where we read, “He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord God will wipe tears away from

all faces, And He will remove the disgrace of His people from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.” Here the tenderness of our Father in heaven is seen as He gently, compassionately wipes away our tears. In mercy He helps us smile and feel the humiliation leave and joy come in its place. Do I create too much substance for the verse to bear? I think not!

For specific words that describe God acting on behalf of our great need Ephesians 1:4-6 reads, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved.”

Of our many great needs, here we are told of needs met by the Lord that we were totally unable to meet ourselves. So, God’s rich

grace gives us what we cannot earn, yet desperately need.

Grace shows the Lord acting with great power and mercy, and shows His tender and compassionate activity on our behalf. Which do you need today? Both are offered to you through Jesus Christ, and you will never come with needs that exceed His resources.

“Thou art coming to a King,
large petitions with thee bring,
for His grace
and power are such
none can ever ask too much.”
-John Newton

“How unspeakably wonderful to
know that all our concerns are
held in hands that bled for us.”
-John Newton

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