

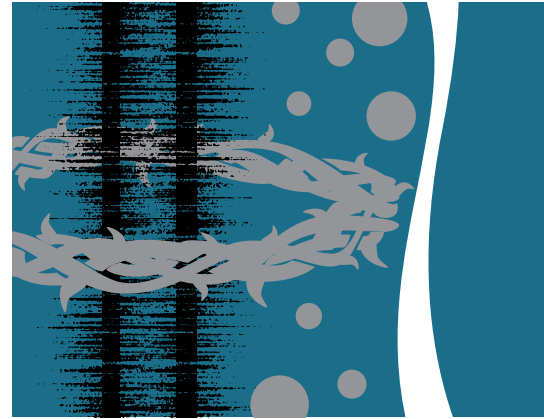
IF YOU WALK BEFORE ME WITH A HEART OF INTEGRITY
UNIT 12 • SESSION 4

GOD THE MERCIFUL KING

DOCTRINE SESSION

MAIN POINT

God has shown His mercy through Jesus.



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE **GOD IS MERCIFUL**

Mercy refers to God's compassion and is often expressed in God withholding something, such as punishment for sin (see Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:5). Both mercy and grace are undeserved, meaning humanity can do nothing to earn God's mercy and grace. If one could, then it would no longer be the free gift of mercy or grace.

ESSENTIAL **CONNECTION**

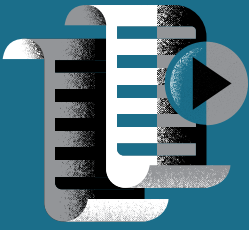
Solomon and his descendants were not like their father, David. They abandoned the Lord and turned to idols. It resulted in great discipline and pain. But God's mercy prevailed in the end. The mercy God has shown us was made possible by the perfect son of David. His name is Jesus.

SCRIPTURE **READING**

1 KINGS 9:4-9 • GOD IS MERCIFUL TO WARN OF JUDGMENT

1 KINGS 11:29-37 • GOD IS MERCIFUL TO DELAY JUDGMENT

TITUS 3:3-7 • GOD IS MERCIFUL TO SAVE US THROUGH CHRIST



DOCTRINE VIDEO

(Videos available for purchase at gospelproject.com/students)

When we disobey God, there can be serious consequences. God told Solomon that if he rebelled against the Lord, God would exile Israel and reject the temple. Solomon got himself into a big mess. He started worshiping other gods, he built temples for those gods, and he just outright disobeyed the Lord. Yet, even in Solomon's disobedience, God still extended mercy. And just like God was merciful to Solomon and the Israelites, God is merciful to us today. God shows us His mercy in that He sent His Son to die for us and to take the punishment for our disobedience. Because God has shown us mercy through the sacrifice of His Son, we should show mercy to other people when they wrong us. And mercy looks a lot like forgiveness. We should be quick to forgive and show mercy to others because God has shown mercy to us.

SUMMARY

- Sin has serious consequences.
- Solomon sins against God (and we do, too).
- God is merciful toward us.
- We should show others the mercy God has shown to us.

WATCH & DISCUSS

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE CONSEQUENCES OF BAD CHOICES?

HOW DOES DISCIPLINE HELP US GROW AND BRING US CLOSER TO GOD?

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED MERCY AND WHAT EFFECT DID THAT HAVE ON YOU?



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

God has shown His mercy
through Jesus.

1. GOD IS MERCIFUL TO WARN OF JUDGMENT

READ 1 KINGS 9:4-9

When Solomon consecrated the temple and it was filled with God's glorious presence, Solomon prayed to the Lord for mercy toward Israel. He asked God to show compassion and establish the promise made to David concerning a king on Israel's throne. These verses were God's reply.

WHAT DID GOD WARN SOLOMON WOULD HAPPEN IF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL ABANDONED THE LORD?

God warned that He would remove them from the land and remove His presence from the temple. Breaking the covenant of God would result in the repossession of covenant blessings. You cannot reject God and keep His inheritance and blessing. Of course, Solomon's sons would do that very thing, and it would eventually culminate in the destruction of the temple and the Babylonian exile.

HOW IS THE WARNING OF JUDGMENT AN ACT OF MERCY IN ITSELF?

A warning serves as an invitation to take a different course. Parents may warn their children before eventually following through with a consequence. God did the same thing with Israel. These warnings were the merciful patience of God. Jesus warned of judgment in his preaching, as did the apostle Paul in his letters. He wrote, "We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom" (Col. 1:28).



Show your group several traffic signs that give various warnings. What does each of these signs mean? Are these warnings there to harm us or help us? Because the state is no fun or because the state doesn't want us to hurt ourselves or others?

God's warnings are merciful. He doesn't warn us to steal our joy. He does it because He loves us and wants us to enjoy the journey with Him without wrecking our lives.



1 KINGS 9:4-9

9:4-9. “Without question, the book’s intended audience would have understood this warning as God’s grace to Solomon. All the king had to do was remain obedient to the Lord, shun idols, and continue to enjoy God’s favor.”²⁴

9:4-9. “The promise of an eternal house of David is always contingent on absolute faithfulness of the Davidic kings (9:6-7). This is not to dismiss the possibility of grace and forgiveness, which are a prominent part of Solomon’s prayer. The problem is to expect grace while persisting in compromise of the covenant. This is the warning of the vision, with specific attention to the fact that no splendor of building or eloquence of prayer can serve as a substitute for obedience (v. 8).”²⁵

1 KINGS 11:29-37

11:29-37. “It is only because of God’s faithfulness to David and choice of Jerusalem that Judah will continue as a kingdom. Second, the prophet asserts that the division will occur as a judgment of Solomon and the people’s idolatry. Clearly, sin impacts a country’s so-called secular existence. Despite Solomon’s unfaithfulness, however, the Lord will remain faithful. Promises made to David in 2 Samuel 7 will be kept.”²⁶

11:29-37. “Judgment is the result of Solomon’s promoting worship of foreign gods (v. 33; cf. vv. 7-8); judgment is mitigated because of God’s promise to David (vv. 34-36; cf. vv. 12-13).”²⁷



ENGAGE OPTION

Have students think about three conversations they have had this week. It could have been with a friend, a parent, a teacher, or a brother/sister. It could be as simple as a conversation with their dad trying to decide what to eat for dinner one evening on the way to a game. Then ask, at any point did you have to show mercy or grace in these conversations? Maybe they really wanted something for dinner and their dad said no. As a result, the student had to be graceful in their response instead of complaining and rolling their eyes. If so, what did their graceful/merciful attitude communicate to the person they were talking to? In today’s session, we will learn that the sinner deserves God’s punishment, but God has extended mercy. Furthermore, because our punishment has been withheld from us and placed on Christ as an act of God’s mercy, we seek to extend mercy to all others and be quick to forgive any wrongdoing, so that we might display the heart of the gospel before a watching world.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

God has shown His mercy
through Jesus.

2. GOD IS MERCIFUL TO DELAY JUDGMENT

READ 1 KINGS 11:29-37

HOW DID GOD DELAY JUDGMENT FOR SOLOMON? HOW DID HE SHOW MERCY EVEN IN THE JUDGMENT?

God promised to tear the kingdom away from Solomon's descendants, but not in his lifetime. And even in the execution of judgment, God showed mercy to David's house. He relented the total removal of David's line, preserving their kingship in Jerusalem and over Judah.

WHAT DOES GOD'S PATIENCE AND MERCY TO SOLOMON TEACH US ABOUT GOD'S NATURE?

God was patient, and His judgments were less swift and severe than they could have been. Even His discipline of David's descendants would not be forever (1 Kings 11:39). They experienced a temporary judgment followed by an eternal restoration.

This is yet another example of what God revealed about Himself to Moses: "The Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6-7).

3. GOD IS MERCIFUL TO SAVE US THROUGH CHRIST

READ TITUS 3:3-7

HOW DID THE APOSTLE PAUL DESCRIBE US APART FROM GOD'S MERCY?

The list in Titus 3:3 shows what we would be apart from God's mercy. Paul goes out of his way to help us see that not a single one of us has been saved by deserving it or earning it in any way. We sin against God, we sin against each other, and we are in desperate need of God's mercy.

HOW DOES THE GOSPEL DISPLAY GOD'S MERCY FOR US?

God gives us what we do not deserve by washing us pure and making us heirs of his eternal kingdom. If there was ever any doubt about God's nature—any questions as to His kindness—the gospel answers them all. The way He covers sins and cleanses sinners is an everlasting witness that God is indeed merciful. He will have mercy on even you. No matter your sin, He will have mercy if you will bring it to Jesus.



11:29-37. “All these things happen to ‘humble David’s descendants,’ not to eliminate the promise of an eternal kingdom. The messianic promise remains in effect, for the punishment will not last ‘forever.’”²⁸

TITUS 3:3-7

3:3. “Humankind’s innate sinful nature and the intensity with which it can manifest itself determines the degradation of all human society . . . Christians, though at one time degenerate and lost, were objects of God’s kindness and love, which resulted in their salvation. Christians are to demonstrate this same kindness and love to lost individuals and society.”²⁹

3:3-7. “Paul left absolutely no doubt concerning the basis of human salvation . . . The contrast is between humankind’s attempts to achieve salvation through their own effort and salvation as a result of God’s mercy.”³⁰

3:3-7. “People cannot save themselves! Salvation depends solely and completely on God’s grace, displayed in ‘his mercy,’ revealed and achieved by his Son, Jesus Christ, and applied to humankind by the Holy Spirit.”³¹

3:3-7. “Theologically, the purpose of the Old Testament law is not to show how humans could save themselves. Rather, the purpose of the law is to show humans that they cannot save themselves and that their only hope for salvation is in the gracious promise of God.”³²



BIG QUESTION

WON'T I ALWAYS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE GOD'S MERCY?

It is dangerous to procrastinate in sin. Perhaps you think, “I’ll live for myself now, and when I am older, I will turn back to God.” That calculated rebellion is Satan’s deception. When God shows patience, it’s an opportunity to receive His mercy today. But we don’t know when His patience will end. We don’t know if our hearts will be so hardened by sin that we are calloused to God’s Spirit and unable to repent. Don’t dismiss invitations to turn to Him, for “how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” (Heb. 2:3). Respond when God gives you an opportunity; you never know if or when it may be your last. “Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. 6:2).

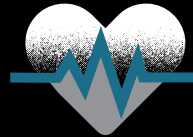


CHRIST CONNECTION

God is merciful to withhold the punishment the sinner deserves and place it upon Jesus instead. Jesus, who did no wrong, paid the penalty of sin on the cross so that all who trust in Him are forgiven, not because of what they might have done, but because of what Christ has done.



HEAD



HEART



HANDS

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT GOD DOES NOT BLUFF (PRETEND OR LIE) ABOUT JUDGMENT?

God's warnings provide an opportunity to turn away from sin and receive mercy. But we must understand that God's warnings are not empty bluffs. Authorities (parents, teachers, etc.) may give warnings then never follow through, but God doesn't work like that. The chances He gives us are not an invitation to procrastinate, but an opportunity to act while His grace is available.

HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE A HEART OF MERCY LIKE CHRIST?

God has covered our sins and removed our guilt. He who is holy has shown mercy. How can we who are sinners then withhold it? We grow in mercy as we remember the mercy we ourselves have been given. We grow in mercy when we see that our God does not treat sinners as they deserve, so we don't need to either. How shameful it is that God's people have a reputation that is so unlike our God? May we all work to have a heart more like Christ one day at a time.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHEN YOU SHOW THE MERCY OF CHRIST TO OTHERS?

We are often least merciful to the people we are closest to. It is easy to be kind to strangers, but harder to show daily mercy to your siblings, friends, and teammates. But those closer relationships are where we have the greatest opportunity to show God's mercy. Also, don't forget that your parents are human, too. Be willing to show them mercy because they will make mistakes. Don't delay; put mercy into practice this week!

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