When Mercy Triumphant Over Judgment

Ephesians 2:4-5
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

James 2:13 (KJV)
13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

James 2:13 (ESV)
13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Judgment
• I want you to understand today that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, God is a God of judgment.
  o God’s judgments a sure and certain.
• Scripture is replete with the evidence that God,
  o although he is not quick to anger and is slow to wrath,
    ▪ when his wrath comes it is a fearful thing not to be trifled with.
  o If I wanted to this evening I could take you on a tour thru the Word of God
    ▪ and survey the many examples of God’s terrible judgments.
  o We did some of that this morning.
    ▪ as the apostle Peter underscored the judgment of God.
  o We visited the world in the days of Noah
    ▪ When it grieved God that he had ever made man.
    ▪ We saw the judgement of God, swift and certain.
  o We also visited Sodom and Gomorrah
    ▪ where God demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt
      ▪ that He isn’t tolerant of alternative lifestyles.
  o We could visit so many other places in the Biblical record
    ▪ We could stand in the desert and watch the sands part and swallow Korah and his band of rebels
      ▪ as evidence that God doesn’t’ coddle
      ▪ those that rebel against spiritual leadership and authority.
    ▪ We could visit a book of Acts church and watch
      ▪ as Ananias and Saphira are struck dead
      ▪ after lying to the Holy Ghost.
• I could demonstrate the terrors of God’s judgment in a multitude of ways but that is not my goal this evening.
  o I just want to underscore the fact that the judgments of God are real.
I want you to understand that God doesn’t tolerate sin.
• I want you to understand that God doesn’t overlook sin.
• There are many that think that because judgment isn’t swift that it isn’t coming.
  o They couldn’t be more wrong.
    ▪ Judgment is certain.
    ▪ It is sure.
    ▪ And it is final.
• God is slow to anger and often he gives ample time for repentance.
  o However, when his judgment comes,
    ▪ it is a fearful thing.
• This was the point that Peter was making this morning:
  o God is Holy and God is Just
    ▪ God’s Justness and His Holiness Demand Judgment for sin.
      • God has to bring judgment to pass
        o or he would cease to be God
• Nahum 1:2-5 tells us that "God is jealous…"
  o and he will “take vengeance on his adversaries,
    ▪ and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.”
• “The LORD is slow to anger,” the old prophet says,
  o but “he is great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty”
• When he gets to the judgment of God the prophet speaks with fervor and passion
  o that “the mountains quake at him,
  o and the hills melt,
  o and the earth is burned at his presence.”
• I want you to understand that the judgments of God are not a thing to be taken lightly.
  o God’s judgment is serious business.
    ▪ And it is coming to this world.
  o Someone once said that only two things are certain in life, taxes and death.
    ▪ However they left one out.
      • My bible says that it is appointed unto every man to die then to face judgment.
• God’s not playing games in his judgment.
  o God won’t smile on sin and overlook it.
    ▪ Where there is sin, there will be judgment.
      • There won’t be any second chances;
      • there won’t be any do-overs.
• When this thing comes to a screeching halt on judgment day
  o the wrath of God will be poured out
    ▪ on all who have refused the gracious gift of Calvary.
• All of mankind is in trouble.
  o Without the mercy of God,
Man is, by his very nature, sinul.

- I want you to understand that, if God doesn't intervene,
  - man left on his own is lost and undone
    - and reserved for a day of judgment.

**Mercy**

- Ephesians 2 begins this way:
  - 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
    - We were all dead in trespasses and sin!
  - 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
    - We were, by nature, children of wrath!
  - 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
    - We were lost and undone.
    - We had nothing to look forward to but the judgement of God!
  - 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
  - 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

- We were lost.
  - Our situation was hopeless.

**But God...**

- We've talked about His judgment both this morning and this evening,
  - But now let’s talk about His mercy for a moment.

**But God...**

- Those are powerful words.
  - By virtue of our own nature we deserve judgment, **but God...**
  - By virtue of our own actions we should be condemned, **but God...**
  - We all have sinned and come short, **but God...**
  - No one is righteous, no not one, **but God...**
    - That’s the kind of God I serve!

- We deserved judgment for our sins,
  - “**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love**”

- We didn’t deserve it, we couldn’t earn it, none of us was good enough for it,
  - But God poured out the full force of his judgment at an old rugged cross.

- I want you to understand this evening
  - that while God’s judgments are sure, certain, and final
    - and the horror of them are unequaled,
      - **God would rather forgive than to punish.**
• God would rather show mercy than to pour out judgement!

• Let me tell you what the message of the cross is:
  o God held back none of his judgment for sin
    • but poured out the full fury of his wrath UPON HIMSELF
  • because he would rather forgive you than judge you.
  o The Psalmist said it this way, in Psalm 145:8-9,
    • “The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
      • slow to anger, and of great mercy.
      • The LORD is good to all:
      • and his tender mercies are over all his works.

• His tender mercies are over all his works.
  o The works of his mercy out-shine everything else he has ever done.
    • When all of creation is complete,
    • when all of the events of humanity have played out,
    • when all is said and done
    • the greatest of God’s works is his mercy.
  o Nothing declares the glory of God more than when his mercy is demonstrated.

• In no other aspect of his work will the glory of God be forever so illustrated
  o as in the vessels of mercy that have been ordained unto glory.
    • When those that have been saved by grace
    • sing around the throne for all of eternity
    • they will stand as an everlasting memorial
      • to the greatest work of God ever!

• Lets go back to Ephesians 2, beginning again in verse 4:
  o 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
  o 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
  o 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
  o 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

• Just as much as Sodom and Gomorrah stands as a testimony of the judgments of God for ages to come
  o So the cross of Calvary stands as a timeless testimony of the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus!
  o The cross is an eternal monument to the grace and mercy of God!
  o The cross is the supreme testimony of the greatness of our God!
  o IT stand high and towering above all of God’s other works
  o It declares, like nothing else can, the absolute greatness of God.
  o Nothing compares to the cross.
  o It is the GREATEST of God’s works!

• You need to get this message tonight:
While God is, indeed a God of judgment,
- he is first and foremost a God of mercy and grace,
  - a God of love,
  - who offers forgiveness and restoration
  - for all who will receive it.

- His mercy is his greatest work!
- His mercy is his crowning glory.
  - That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son is the greatest testimony the incredible glory of God that has ever been given!

Mercy Trumps Judgment
- Our text states that: *Mercy rejoiceth against judgment, or Mercy triumphs over judgment.*
  - The incredible thing about that text is that it was given in the context of judgment.
    - James points out in the prior portion of the passage that even if we are able to “keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point,” we are guilty of all of it (vs. 10).
  - However, after settling the issue that we are all guilty,
    - he concludes with this powerful statement that “mercy triumphs over judgment.”

- You’ve got to get this tonight:
  - God would rather be merciful than to exercise His judgment.
- Oh what a Savior!
  - The song writer said:
    - Oh, what a Savior! Oh Hallelujah
    - His heart was broken on Calvary,
    - His hands we nail scared: His side was riven,
    - He gave his life blood for you and me
  - Why?
    - Because his Mercy trumps his Judgment!
- This is the God that robed himself in flesh
  - and brought mercy to a world that would reject Him.
- This is the One that knelt to write in the dust
  - as the accusers drifted away
    - then looked up and said to the guilty woman,
      - “Where are thine accusers?
      - Neither do I condemn thee,
        - go thy way and sin no more.”
  - This is the one that
    - even though the blood of the martyrs was upon his hands –
      - would rather call Saul of Tarsus to his service
      - than to strike him dead on the road to Damascus.
- This is the God that, for the joy that was set before him,
endured the pain and the suffering of the cross.
  § On a hill called Galgotha,
    • Mercy triumphed over judgment.

We were all lost and undone,
  § like sheep we had all gone astray,
  § but at Calvary, God’s mercy rose up
    • and triumphed over our judgment.

What good news for a lost world!
  o What comfort to the down-trodden child of God!
    § I know you’ve made mistakes.
    § I understand you messed up
      • but can I tell you this evening that in the blood of Calvary,
        o Mercy triumphs over Judgment!

Once again, the Psalmist said (103:10),
  o “He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
    § Nor punished us according to our iniquities.
    § For as the heavens are high above the earth,
    § So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
    § As far as the east is from the west,
    § So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
    § As a father pities his children
      § So the LORD pities those who fear Him.”

It’s a message the whole world needs to hear.
  o It’s the message of the cross.
    § It’s the message of Easter.
  o We are all guilty.
    § We all deserve judgment.
      • But God’s mercy trumps judgment.

If you hear his word,
  o If respond to his call
    § and if you identify yourself with his sacrifice,
      • his mercy will triumph over judgment in your life.

The cross is the greatest monument ever erected to the greatness of God
  o And every time a sinner comes to an alter and finds forgiveness for sins.
    § By the power of that cross, mercy rises up against judgement.
  o When a multitude of wrongs
    § are forever hidden under the blood of Calvary,
      • the greatest work that God has ever done is demonstrated for the whole of creation to behold.

When a sin sick soul is set free from bondage and guilt,
  o God’s mercy triumphs over his judgment.

Call to action
• This evening I want to present to you more than just a display of the glory of God’s mercy.
  o I want to make you aware of the fact that
    ▪ **God is looking for someone**
      • that will introduce a lost world to that Mercy
  o God is looking for an individual that will carry a message of mercy
    ▪ to a people who desperately need to hear it.
• God is on a search
  o Jeremiah 5:1 says
    ▪ “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,
      and see now, and know, and seek
      in the broad place thereof,
      if ye can find a man,
      if there be any that executeth judgment,
      that seeketh truth,
      and I will pardon it.”
  o Ezekiel 22:30 says
    ▪ “And I sought for a man among them
      that they should make up the hedge
      and stand in the gap before me for the land,
      that I should not destroy it;
      but I found none.”
• God is on a search!
  o God who is holy and just is FORCED to pour out judgment
    ▪ because he can’t find what he is searching for.
• We have amply illustrated that “mercy triumphs over judgment.”
  o But I want you to get the image that is presented in the Old testament of
    ▪ God wading through sin sick cities
    ▪ that faced the judgment of the Lord and
      ▪ searching for one to stand in the gap
      ▪ and hold back the coming judgment,
        ▪ one that would allow mercy to triumph over judgment!
• God is still looking for someone tonight
  o that will stand between a lost world and judgment.
• God is looking for an individual that will become a vessel
  o thru which the Mercy of God might be administered.
• Since the garden of Eden, God has been on a quest!
  o God has been searching for someone that would allow him to work...
    ▪ Someone that would hold back judgment
      ▪ and allow mercy to work in a lost world!
• I’ve come today to make a passionate plea in this pulpit tonight...
  o Be the one that God is looking for.
    ▪ Share this great mercy that you have received.
Be the one!

- Judgment is coming on a lost world
  - However, believe it or not,
  - God isn’t looking forward to judgment.
- The One that has already poured out his wrath at the cross
  - doesn’t look forward to casting lost men into Hell.
- The one that left his throne in heaven
  - and went out of his way
  - to make a way for mercy to triumph over judgment
    - must be filled with sorrow
    - at every soul that slips into eternity outside of his mercy.
- It is time for the church to catch a glimpse of how God sees our world.
  - They need the mercy that was purchased at the cross.
    - They need someone that will carry that mercy to them.
  - They need someone that will testify to them that their failures don’t have to be final.
    - They need someone that will love them enough to show them the way to an old rugged cross.
- I’ve come to challenge you, again, this evening: Be the one!
  - Allow mercy to minister thru your life
    - God has no other plan.
      - He poured out his mercy at the cross,
        - then he left this thing in our hands!
  - It’s up to you and me to reach a lost world with a message of mercy.
    - You are his hands
      - It’s up to us!

Close

- We need to grasp three things this evening:
  - **The Holiness of God**
    - If we ever get a true glimpse of the holiness of God it will transform our lives.
      - God is holy!
    - The angels declare it around his throne 24-7
      - it is the highest praise,
      - the greatest description,
      - the epitome of his nature.
        - HE IS HOLY
  - **The Sinfulness of Sin**
    - Likewise, we need to catch a glimpse of the sinfulness of sin.
      - We live in a society that celebrates and promotes sin.
      - It’s easy to become calloused about it.
• My friend we need a fresh revelation of the horror of sin.
  o When we do it will break our hearts and change our lives.
  ▪ God is Holy and he will not tolerate sin.
  ▪ Heaven is a Holy place and no sin will enter there.
  o The Majesty of Mercy
    ▪ Finally we need to get a glimpse today of the Majesty of Mercy.
    ▪ The cross towers over everything else that God has ever done!
      • God, in his infinite wisdom,
        o has made a way for humanity to escape the curse of sin.
      • God, according to his great plan has already judged sin.
        o God has demonstrated his mercy at an old rugged cross.
      • And today this altar is a place where Mercy trumps Judgment.
  • In grasping these three things, we need to recognize that a sinful world needs a minister of mercy.
    o We have a job!
      ▪ To whom much is given, much is required...
        • We’ve received this wonderful salvation.
        • We’ve been given “Amazing Grace.”
        • We MUST share it with a lost world.
        • We MUST tell someone about the mercy of God.
  • Let’s share this wonderful mercy that we have received.
    o Go tell somebody.
    o Point someone to the cross.

I believe God wants to commission his church tonight.
• There’s mercy in this house tonight, if you need it.
  ▪ The Bible says that if we confess our sin he is faithful to forgive.
    • I would admonish you not to leave this place without getting in the alter and getting everything under the blood.
  ▪ Let Mercy triumph over judgment in your life!
• But, beyond that, I want to ask the church to recommit yourself to personal evangelism.
  o If Mercy is going to triumph over the sinfulness of our generation
  o If they are ever going to see the glory of the cross
    ▪ Its only going to happen because men and women like you and me share this wonderful truth with a lost world.
    • Can I ask you, again this evening to make a commitment to God to reach the lost with a message of mercy!