



When All Thy Mercies, O My God

Grace is a loving God giving us what we don't deserve; mercy is a forgiving God *not* giving us what we do. And, soul to soul, contemplation of both lifts us out of the banalities of temporal life, lifts us into the heavens of eternal God.

*When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.*

It is a paradox of faith that grounding ourselves in the realities of God results in our feet being lifted off this earth's soil. To discover God we must look upward, to commune with God we must gaze upward. The earthly philosopher, the psychiatrist, the nihilist—all gaze inward, ultimately failing to find mercy, for they hope to manufacture it from flesh.

But the child of holy God gazes upward, and is immediately overwhelmed by the mercies and grace of God flowing into his life from above.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.
For You are great and do wondrous deeds;
You alone are God.
Teach me Your way, O Lord;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.
I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,

And will glorify Your name forever.
For Your lovingkindness toward me is great,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

Psalms 86:5-13

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*To all my weak complaints and cries
Thy mercy lent an ear,
Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learned
To form themselves in prayer.*

*Unnumbered comforts to my soul,
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From Whom those comforts flowed.*

Before we knew the vernacular of religion (let alone the language of heaven) God was listening to our stumbling entreaties and infantile praise. For He is not impressed with grand elocution, but hears to the pedestrian desire of the sincere. He turns a deaf ear to pride, but hears every ineloquent word of the humble, broken heart.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ But

the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:10-14

*Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the last a cheerful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.*

After salvation, the greatest gift God gives His children is the proclivity to love Him, to know Him as a Father, to find joy in Him. The believer's life is so replete with gifts from above that they cannot be counted, so filled to overflowing with His boundless generosity that it cannot be measured. Nor should it be, for this is not a life of numerical quantity, but immersive *quality*. We do not love God because He is our favorite sugar daddy, showering us with pretty gewgaws at every turn. We love God because He invests all that He is in those who call upon Him with earnest and open heart. He does not hold back. Oh, we can hold back our affections, and we can turn away from His. But that is on us. God's love does not wane, will not fail.

Give thanks to the Lord,
for He is good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Oh let Israel say,
“His lovingkindness is everlasting.”
Oh let the house of Aaron say,
“His lovingkindness is everlasting.”
Oh let those who fear the Lord say,
“His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

Psalms 118:1-4

*Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
For, oh, eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise!*

Joseph Addison

Amen.

Love is His inclination to do us good considered simply as creatures; mercy respects us as apostate and as miserable creatures. Observe, God's eternal love or goodwill towards His creatures is the fountain whence all His mercies vouchsafed to us proceed; and that love of God is great love, and that mercy of His is rich mercy, inexpressibly great and inexhaustibly rich.

Matthew Henry