

Love, Mercy and Forgiveness

Develop the characteristics of the mind of Christ!

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services!

With everything ‘good’ that’s going on, everyone wonders what’s going to happen, and will I be alive next month or no?. Let me just bring you up to date on a couple of things.

- 2000 we were told the Y2K was going to kill all of us
- 2001 the anthrax was going to kill all of us
- 2002 the West Nile virus was going to kill all of
- 2003 SARS was going to kill all of us
- 2004 *nothing; we were all going to live*
- 2005 the Bird Flu was going to kill all of us
- 2006 E-coli was going to kill all of us
- 2007 *nothing; that’s amazing*
- 2008 the bad economy was going to kill all of us
- 2009 Swine Flu was going to kill all of us

By the way, the Chinese have had to kill so many swine because of the Swine Flu, and they were even speculating that because of all the smoke of burning all the over 100-million swine—remember that the wind comes from the west to the east—back in the interior of China and mixing in with all of the smog that they have in China...

I don’t know if you’ve seen any pictures of how much smog China has, but they have a great deal of it. Some even speculated that maybe some of this added to the Coronavirus thing in China—*who knows?*

- 2010—the BP oil spill was going to kill all of us

As a matter of fact, they were so wrong in their scientific analysis because the salt water breaks down oil, and produces a lot of things that causes growth and increased production of fish and so forth.

nothing in 2011

- 2012—the Mayan calendar was going to kill all of us
- 2013—North Korea is going to kill all of us
- 2014—Ebola was going to kill all of us
- 2015—the Disney measles and ISIS is going to kill all of us
- 2016—the Zekavirus was going kill all of us
- 2017 *nothing*

- 2018 *nothing*

But in 2019 the Coronavirus started and in 2020 we have it!

So, we have all those things threatening to kill us, but we’re still here. I hope all of you are in good health and are taking care of yourself and being careful where you go and what you do.

God is going to protect us and watch over us! But we have to be ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves,’ and do the things that are necessary.

For example, if you go on a trip and drive your car, you’re going to put on your seatbelt, because if there’s an accident it will keep you from being tossed all around. However, you pray and ask God for a blessing and protection on your trip, even though you have your seatbelt on.

So, there are certain basic things we need to do when all of these things come around so that we take care of ourselves and not do stupid things ourselves. Remember, ***we don’t want to do things to tempt God***, by saying, ‘God, I know You’re going to protect me in everything that I do, so I’m never going to wear my seatbelt.’ ***You don’t want to do that!***

As we come closer to the Passover time, and many of us are going to have to take the Passover at home. We have online at truthofGod.org *How to Keep the Passover at Home*, plus we have sent out the CDs with:

- The Sabbath Before Passover
- Passover
- Night to Be Much Observed
- First Holy Day of Unleavened Bread
- Sabbath During Unleavened Bread
- The Last Holy Day
- Sabbath After Unleavened Bread

All of those are prepared for you, so if you have to stay home and you can’t get out of your house, then you have it all right there, and God will bless you in it.

Love, mercy and forgiveness is what we need! The Protestants want to have all the love from God, but they don’t want to love God back. Let’s see what John has written concerning the love of God and why we really need that:

1-John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are from God...”

How do you test the spirits? Do they obey God, because every one of the false ministers may be led by a false spirit.

I got an e-mail from a Catholic priest saying... If you watch Church at Home {churchathome.org} I'm not very kind to the Catholics on Church at Home. I challenge them on everything that they do. This Catholic priest said, 'You really just misunderstand.' *Well, that's how you test them!* Do they believe God? *Not just believe in God! But believe God to obey Him!* That's the whole key!

"...because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (v 1).

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them."

Why? *Because they have things that appeal to the flesh! That appeal to you receiving something from God with nothing that you have to do!* But that's not what God desires. Remember what we read during the Passover night: Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep the commandments, namely My commandments' (John 14).

Verse 6: "We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this means... [this is how the test is done] ...we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception."

Even though those Scriptures are used, Paul warns against those in 2-Cor. 2 who falsify the Scriptures. There are many who do that.

Now, because of all that's going on, v 7: "Beloved, we should love one another **because love is from God...**"—*our love, emotions, everything that we have comes from God!* In Him we live, move and have our being.

There's nothing that we have that doesn't come from God, even if it came through the hands of someone else who may have made it or built it. It still is working with everything that God has created.

"...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love" (vs 7-8).

That's His very nature, and everything comes from it! Examine the Ten Commandment and it's all based upon the fact that God is love. That's why God says in the first commandment, 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' *That's an amazing thing!*

That's not the whole commandment. The whole commandment is: ***I am the Lord your God***

Who took you out of the land of Egypt! What is in Egypt? ***All the false gods of this world! Therefore, you shall have no other gods before Me!*** That's based on love, because ***God wants to bless us! God wants to love us!*** But God is not going to love us with the love that we want to have if we go against God.

If we go against God, His love obligates Him—through the laws that He has created—***to correct us!*** Just look what is going on in the world today, the world is leaving God more and more, and what happens? *We've got a pandemic!* Guess what that does; ***it drives people to look for God!*** Let's hope that has a good effect, especially in America.

Someone said on television, based upon the prayer of Solomon for the children of Israel, that *'when You're people turn to You in time of trouble, you will hear and answer.'*

Israel was never called to salvation, but there are many Protestant ministers working with the President and they have regular prayer meetings. As those prayers are sincere, ***God will hear,*** because God is interested in the nation, not only for the sake of His promises to Israel, but also for the greater sake of having the Gospel preached to the world. The only place in the world that it's coming from is from the United States of America.

You might look at Protestantism, even though there are a lot of false things they have—which limits their contact with God, without a doubt—nevertheless, we can look at that as kind of the state religion of Israel. So, we will see how that goes.

But remember, that doesn't mean that they're called to salvation. That just means that God is dealing with the nation. Being called to salvation is an entirely different thing.

Verse 9: "In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him."

What is one of the first things we are looking for when we come to God? ***Help and forgiveness!***

Verse 10: "In this act is the love..." *That's what we study about with the Passover, everything that Jesus did; everything that He suffered through!* He said that He 'laid down His life *willingly Himself,* and ***with the covenant that He had with the Father He would receive it back when He finished everything He needed to do!*** That's what happened with the resurrection.

"...God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him" (v 9).

Remember, the very purpose of why we're here and where we're going and what we are doing is for the preparation to work under Jesus Christ with all the saints and all the plan of God to save the world, starting with the Millennium and the return of Christ.

"...—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son **to be the propitiation for our sins**" (v 10)—*meaning a continual source of mercy, forgiveness and atoning upon repentance!* That's what it's all about!

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, **we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the Righteous.**"

If you have sins that you have done, you need to come to God through Christ and the shed blood of Christ and repentance, ***and God will forgive you! You will receive His mercy!*** We'll see that as we go along here.

Notice that the advocate is Jesus Christ, v 2: "And He is **the propitiation** for our sins..."

Lest we get conceited, selfish and forget the plan of God... It's not like some of the 'religious' groups say, that only in this group are you going to be saved, and all the rest of the world is going to be burned up. *Not true!* God's plan includes the vast majority of all mankind in the schedule that He has determined by what the meaning of the Holy Days depict for us.

"...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). *That's quite thing, but it is not yet time for the whole world!* That's why we're called *the firstfruits!*

1-John 4:11: "Beloved, if God so loved us... [He did this before we even existed] ...**we also are duty-bound to love one another.**" *That's why there's forgiveness!*

We're going to see that if we want forgiveness for our sins, which we do, then we need to forgive those who have sinned against us. That's a big thing with God! Very important!

Let's see how Jesus expressed it in a little different way. Jesus did not 'hang out' with the scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the Law. Think about it, even His birth—totally miraculous, yes indeed—***didn't come with:***

- fanfare in the world
- an announcement to the high priest
- a grand reception of all the religious dignitaries when He came to the temple during the Passover season during the first year of His ministry

No He didn't! When He was born, to whom did God reveal Who Jesus was? *To two shepherd boys out watching the flocks!* Amazing!

Matthew 9:10: "Then it came to pass when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, 'Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"

Well, if He came to save sinners, why shouldn't He? Look at what Jesus said:

Verse 12: "But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, 'Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick.'"

There's a physical sickness and there's a spiritual sickness! Many of the spiritually sick don't know that they're spiritually sick. That's describes the Pharisees! Let that not be us! Let us always come to God with repentance and forgiveness ***every day.***

Verse 13: "Now, **go and learn what this means:** 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" *That's what it's all about!* That's quite an interesting thing.

Let's see to whom God will look. It's not the high and mighty. Yes, God has a standard with the different nations. He works with them in different ways. Look at what happened with the Ninevites when Jonah went to preach to them that God was going to destroy them. They all repented in sackcloth and ashes. But that was not unto conversion. That was unto the acknowledgement of God that He rules in the nations. Now on an individual basis:

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where then *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made and these things came to be,' says the LORD..." (vs 1-2).

As beautiful as the temple was, everything about the construction and decoration and how it was made—everything—those plans came from God and were made of things that God created. God wants something greater to honor Him than what He has created in the physical world. What is that?

"... 'But to this one I will look...' (v 2). ***Do you want God:***

- to look at you?
- to hear your prayers?
- to give you understanding?
- to bless you
- to love you

Here it is:

“...to him **who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word**” (v 2).

That’s a repentant attitude! Why is that important? *Because repentance is a choice!* And since God has given us free moral agency, He wants us to use that agency ***to willingly come to Him, to willingly repent!***

- for forgiveness
- for removal of sins
- for the blessing of His Spirit

That’s what the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about!

We’ve covered the Scriptures leading up to Passover about how much we are to love God, and that is with all our heart, mind, soul, being and strength.

So, in loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and being, that ties right in with loving each other. Love must first come from God, and with God’s Spirit and love in you, and reaching out to the brethren and whoever else is in your life. That love is motivated by God’s Spirit, just like John said: *The one who loves has been begotten by God! The one who does not love has not been begotten by God!* So, let’s see how Jesus explained it:

John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.”

Remember what we saw in John 14, that the Father and the Son—the two parts of the Spirit of God—are dwelling in us! That is Their abode, Their dwelling place. Paul wrote that each one of us are mini ‘Temple of God’; that is where the Spirit of God is dwelling. We know that that is to become the sons and daughters of God. But it has to be from the Father and Son, both working with us. So, Jesus said:

Verse 2: “He takes away every branch in Me that does not bear fruit... [We’ve seen that, haven’t we? *Yes, indeed!*] ...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit.” *God wants us to bear a lot of fruit!* Remember the parables:

- of the pounds
- of the talents
- of the sowing of the seed

That’s what God is interested in, and that with using our free moral agency and will to love God back, and then to love one another.

That’s a key command given in John 13 on the Passover night, and what we’re reading in John 15 is a continuation of that Passover night.

Verse 3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me...” (vs 3-4). *That’s the important thing!*

- How do you dwell in Christ? *By loving Him and loving the Father, because the Father is the One Who is directing the Vine, and Jesus is the Vine!*
- How do we do that?
 - ✓ through prayer
 - ✓ through study
 - ✓ through living
 - ✓ through whatever we go through

It doesn’t matter what we go through! Paul writes that ***all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose***—which we have been.

Verse 4: “Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can you bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, *and you are the branches...*” (vs 4-5).

Can a branch tell the vine what to do? *Think on this!* There are a lot of people ***who think*** that they can do something that is so ‘good’ that God ***must*** bless them! God ***must*** work with them! God will take care of it!

“...The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him...” (v 5). *It’s always reciprocal*, constantly moving, constantly between God and us and us and God. Just like alternating current all the time!

“...bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing” (v 5).

Why don’t you do this, just to learn a point, especially with your children: We have the Feast of Unleavened Bread coming up. Go out and break off a branch of a tree or plant and bring it in the house and just lay it on a shelf, and have it there all during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Every day look at that branch cutoff from the tree. What happens to it? *The first couple of days it looks pretty good!* But the third day it starts to look bad, and by time you get to the eighth day—which it is when you count Passover and seven days of Unleavened Bread—it’s worthless!

So, think about that spiritually; we must always be connected with Christ! ***“...The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing.”***

Verse 6: “If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned. ***If*** you dwell in Me... [that applies to us] ***...and My words dwell in you...***” (vs 6-7)—*a very*

important statement!

Why? Because with the Spirit of God is writing His laws and commandments in our heart and mind! That's the whole purpose of Unleavened Bread. The Truth of God in our heart and mind, to get rid of the carnality and the sin within.

If you're dwelling in Him, "...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples" (vs 7-8).

If you think that you don't have enough of the love of God coming to you, take these sections of Scripture, open it up and get on your knees and read them and pray about them and ask for God's love and Spirit to stir you up, to lead you, to guide you and help you in everything.

Verse 9: "As the Father has loved Me..."

- Did the love of the Father ever diminish? *No!*
- Did it ever cease? *No!*
- Did Jesus ever not love the Father? *Of course not, He always loved Him!*

"...I also have loved you; live in My love" (v 9). *That's what God wants!*

John wrote more about love than of the other apostles. He and his brother James were called *the sons of thunder!* They were the ones who came to Jesus when one of the villages of Samaria did not really receive Jesus as they wanted them to receive Him. They came to Jesus and said, 'Do you want us to call down fire from heaven and burn them up like Elijah did?'

That was before they were converted. So, John had to learn an awful lot about love! His brother James was beheaded in 44_{A.D.}

Notice, here's the qualifier and here's how you know. Not only prayer and study, but:

Verse 10: "**If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love.**"

Let's see something really, really important here. In Job 31 there are 28 *my, me*; 23 *I's*; 15 *if's*. In the letter of the Law Job was one of the most righteous persons on earth, but what did his righteousness—motivated by what he was doing—do to his relationship with God? *Instead of always looking to God, he began to look to himself, and what he would do!*

So when this terrible trial that he was going through he couldn't understand why it was happening. 'I haven't sinned. I haven't done anything wrong.' **But he didn't see his own**

rebellion, and he didn't see that he was thinking he was as good as God!

Job 31:1: "I made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin? For what *is* the portion from God above? And *what is* the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? *Is* not destruction for the wicked, and calamity to the workers of iniquity?" (vs 1-3). *Oh, look at me, I'm suffering!*

Verse 4: "Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps? **If** I have walked with vanity, or **if** my foot has hurried to deceit, let me be weighed in an even balance so that God may know that **I am blameless**" (vs 4-6).

Nothing here that God gave him the ability to do this or that! Nothing here that he thank God that he could help this person or that one!

Verse 7: "**If** my step has turned out of the way, or my heart has walked after my eyes, and **if** any spot has cleaved to my hands; *then* let me sow, and let another eat; and let my harvests be rooted out. **If** my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have laid wait at my neighbor's door, *then* let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her. For that *would be* a heinous crime; yea, it *would be* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judges" (vs 7-11).

Verse 13: "**If** I despised the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they complained against me; what then shall I do when God rises up? And when He calls me to account, what shall I answer Him?" (vs 13-14). *Job didn't know that he was prophesying his fate in just a little bit! God is going to call him into account!*

Verse 15: "Did not He who made me in the womb make him *also*? And did not one fashion us in the womb? **If** I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it—for from my youth he grew up with me, as *with* a father, and from infancy I guided her—**if** I have seen any perish for lack of clothing, or there was no covering for the needy; **if** his loins have not blessed me, and he warmed himself with the fleece of my sheep; **if** I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless when I watched over my help in the gate; **then** let my arm fall from the shoulder blade, and let my arm be broken from the elbow" (vs 15-22).

- How righteous was he?
- What if we do something that is marvelous thing?

or

- Do what God has commanded us to do?
- Should we take that and go to God and say,

‘Look at how great I am’?

NO! We need to ***go to God and thank Him that we were blessed*** to do it, and ***that God did it!***

Verse 23: “For calamity *from God* is a terror to me, and by reason of His majesty I could do nothing. ***If*** I have made gold my hope, or have called fine gold my confidence; ***if*** I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because my hand had gotten much; ***if*** I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart has been secretly enticed, or my mouth has kissed my hand; **this also would be an iniquity for the judges to punish; for I would have lied to God who is above**” (vs 23-28).

Look at all the things that happen there! Read the rest of it!

Verse 33: “***If*** I covered my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, ***then*** let me tremble before a great multitude, and be terrified by the scorn of families; ***and I will be silent and not go out the door***” (vs 33-34). *I am so good, I can take anything!*

Verse 35: “Oh, that I had one to hear me! Behold, **my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and the indictment that my adversary had written**. Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, *and bind it like a crown upon my head*. **I would declare to Him the number of my steps; like a prince I would come before Him**” (vs 35-37).

This kind of attitude requires the trouble that he went through. He went even more, and keep in mind Isa. 66:1-2, because we see a change coming right here, beginning:

Job 38:1: “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said... [God gave Job his desire] ... ‘Who *is* this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me. **Where were you when I** laid the foundations of the earth? Declare it if you have understanding! Who has determined its measurements if you know? Or who has stretched the line upon it? On what are the foundations fastened to? Or who laid its cornerstone” (vs 1-6).

Who did all of this? That’s why today it’s marvelous that we can have these wonderful pictures of the universe and the great beauty that God has made. After God got done talking with Job, then Job got the point. So, let’s see this and understand this. As difficult as this was for Job, it was for his betterment because God blessed him with double of what he had in the beginning. Look at any trial that you have, God will bless it in the long-run if you learn from the trial.

Job 40:1: “And the LORD answered Job and said, ‘Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?...’”

This is a great lesson, because ***one of the greatest sins*** of human beings is that ***they think they can do something so good that God has to accept it, because He didn’t think of it or do it!*** That’s nonsense!

“...He who reproves God, let him answer it.’ And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘Behold, **I am vile!**... [Repentance!] ...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.’ And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said” (vs 1-6).

Here is the great lesson that we never get lifted up and puffed up in vanity and greatness of how good we are or what we’ve done. God said:

Verse 7: “Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand of you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment?...” (vs 7-8).

Isn’t that what men do when they change what the Word of God says and means? *Yes!*

“...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?” (v 8).

- Isn’t that what men do?
- What do we have constantly all of these attacks on the Word of God?
 - ✓ the doctrine and nature of God?
 - ✓ the Sabbath and Holy Days

Because there are men out there who think that they know more than God, rather than saying, ‘Yes, God, these things You have commanded, please help us understand what they mean.’ *Repent like Job!* Then God challenges Job, ‘If you think you’re so strong, if you think you’re so mighty, if you think you’re so good:

Verse 10: “Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. **Then** I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 10-14).

Job had to learn that lesson! That’s a great lesson for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Think of how through the years Job built this up and was raised to the highest levels of whatever he was doing; ***that he thought that he was close to being God!***

Then God answered him and what did Job say? Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You’” (vs 1-2).

Verse 5: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; **but now my eye sees You**.... [in other words, Job really understood how bad he was] ...Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.”

That’s how even the most self-righteous can overcome. Even the one who has done terrible and horrible things can repent and overcome. That’s what repentance, mercy and forgiveness is all about.

(go to the next track)

Let’s understand something very important: Why love, mercy and forgiveness are kind of three that go together! Here is a verse that a lot have misunderstood.

Proverbs 10:12: “Hatred stirs up strife...” Isn’t that true? Look at all the hatred going on in the world, and all the strife and commotion.

“...but **love covers all sins**” (v 12). *That’s quite a statement!* That doesn’t mean that it overlooks all sins.

Let’s see how Peter explains it. Without repentance there’s no forgiveness. They’re missing the point of repentance in that equation.

1-Peter 4:8: “But above all, have fervent love among yourselves because love will cover a multitude of sins.” **Why?** *Because love will encourage people to repent!* Then with the sacrifice of Christ the sins are covered.

Luke 17:1: “Then He said to the disciples, ‘It is impossible that no offenses will come, **but you to the one by whom they come!**’”

With that there are some people who are easily offended in a lot of things they should never be offended over. That’s their problem and one difficulty. But there are some people who come along and they don’t care who they offend. So, you have those extremes and they will come.

Verse 2: “It is better for him that a millstone be put around his neck and he be cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to offend. Watch yourselves; and if your brother commits a sin against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him” (vs 2-3)—**forgiveness!** That is the key!

Verse 4: “And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” *That’s an important thing to understand!*

Sometimes you come across difficulties that you can’t talk to the person directly, *yet*. What do you do? *You pray about it and forgive the individual who offended!* That is love covering a multitude of sins. Then when an opportunity presents itself, you can discuss it without having the sharp edge of an immediate offense.

Some sins affect other people, and yet, that is a sin against God. Let’s see the attitude of David, because this tells us an awful lot about how God covers our sins through repentance, **but we have to come to God to repent!**

If you’re unable to talk to a person who has offended you, then pray and ask God to help him repent of it and come to you.

Psa. 51 is David repenting after his affair with Bathsheba, and here we have it all together: God is love, and we have mercy and forgiveness.

Psalm 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions.”

Did God do that? *Yes, He did!* God also had a penalty against David for a while: for many years David’s household was divided, fighting and warring even against him.

Verse 2: “**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.**” *That comes with continual prayer, the acknowledging of it!*

Sometimes when we repent the first time, we do repent, but later we see even deeper consequences of our sins. Then we repent of that, because God in His mercy and love in covering the sin reveals to us how deeply it can hurt.

Verse 3: “For **I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned** and done evil in Your sight...” (vs 3-4).

- Did David sin against Uriah? *Yes, he did, he had Uriah killed!*
- Did he sin against Bathsheba? *Yes, he committed adultery!*
- Why are those sins against God? *Because they’re transgressing His Laws!*

So, it’s against God though the other people are affected and suffer because of it!

“...that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge” (v 4).

Remember how God judge David. God sent Nathan the prophet to tell David that **he was the one who did it!**

The David acknowledges what human

nature really is, v 5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Not that it was an adulterous affair, but that human beings, by nature, are sinful from birth. That’s a fact of life! Those of you who have children, you learn that.

- What’s the result of all of this?
- What does God want as a result of this kind of repentance and prayer?

Washing away the sin within!

Verse 6: “Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...” *Not just the outward actions, because the outward actions reflect the inward choice of our thoughts in our mind!*

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [cleanse me; scour me] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7).

Something has to happen in addition to make it complete; v 10: “**Create in me a clean heart, O God...**” *That takes work and prayer, and studying of the Word of God!* Getting your mind focused in the right way. All of that is part of ***mercy, forgiveness and love!***

“...and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (v 10). *An important and astounding thing to happen!*

Let’s see what God say, and how David approached God, and let’s see how he understood. I just want to bring out one thing that Jesus did when He was dying on the cross. What did He say to those who:

- hated Him?
- mocked Him?
- scourged Him?
- beat Him?
- crucified Him?
- rejected Him?

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do! That is the most profound forgiveness. They never asked for it, they never wanted it. We don’t know how many repented, because it’s not written in the New Testament.

If they hadn’t, think about what’s going to happen when they’re raised in the second resurrection. That’s why the love of God reaches out way beyond anything that we comprehend or understand.

Psalms 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.” *Quite a different attitude than Job!* Job’s attitude was that he was important and had done all these great things.

Verse 2: “Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long” (vs 2-3)—*continuous prayer!*

Verse 5: “For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and **rich in mercy to all those who call upon You**”—*and will upon repentance!*

Too many times when we do something wrong, we think that we’ll work it out and get it right and then pray. ***NO! That’s not the way it works!*** You pray and then God will help you repent of it, and help you work it out. But if you sin, how do you think you’re going to work it out unless you’re with God and God is with you? It’s not going to happen the way that it should!

“...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You.” *You go to God and call upon Him; He will forgive!*

Verse 6: “Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (vs 6-7). *Quite a wonderful thing!*

If you don’t go to God when you know you should, and think you’re going to work it out, and perhaps you forget all about it. What’s going to happen? *Because God wants you to repent, He will remind you of it and cause you to understand that it was a sin so that you can repent!* This is how He’s ready to forgive! What happens then? *You have a change of attitude toward God!*

Verse 10: “For You are great and do wonderful things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O LORD...” (vs 10-11). *That’s an important thing!* We have to always be learning, and God is always teaching.

John 6:45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’....”

How is that done? *With those who are converted, through His Spirit, His Word, prayer and study!* That’s a perfect combination that God has set up that is a ***spiritual work, which God will do!*** That’s marvelous to understand, especially with the Feast of Unleavened Bread coming up.

Sometimes if you haven’t been praying and studying like you ought to, come to Psalms 103, and get on your knees and open up the Bible and start your prayer and make these words *your* words, and you’re going to be amazed how much God’s Spirit is going to work with you to bring you to understanding and repentance! How to understand how ***gracious, good, compassionate, righteous and forgiving*** that God is!

Psalms 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, **and forget not all His**

benefits” (vs 1-2).

This is a good place to stop and start counting the benefits, the blessings, the things that God has done! One of the greatest blessings is that we can come to Him in prayer at any time. That’s an amazing thing!

Note our sermon series with Transcript Books and CDs:

- *The Grace of God in the Bible*
- *God’s Grace of God and Commandment-Keeping*
- *Grace Upon Grace*
- *Love of God*
- *Keys to Answered Prayer*

Get those series and go through them, and put all of those things together and make those things the center of your study in the coming months. There’s a lot to learn and know. That will help you get on your knees and pray every day, and thank God every day, and understand that ***in Him we live, move and have our being!*** It’s a fantastic thing, because ***grace upon grace is the greatest act that God can give:***

That you and I—and anybody else who has the Spirit of God—have direct access to God the Father in heaven above, with Jesus Christ at His right hand!

Anytime, day or night! Think on that!

Verse 3: “Who forgives **all** your iniquities... [all of them; but you have to repent] ...Who heals **all** your diseases.”

Even when you get old and weak, and you’re ready to go to your place of safety in the grave, He is going to heal you of that death by resurrecting you and annulling death as if it never happened!

Verse 4: “Who redeems your life from destruction... [salvation through grace] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies”—*all the time!*

Think about what would have happened if Job would have thought of this *instead of all the good things that he did*, and that God was obligated to raise him to the level of being as good as God! There would have been quite a difference, indeed!

Verse 5: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy.” In Psa. 136 it says ‘His mercy endures forever.’ Every verse ends with that phrase to show the great mercy of God is there constantly, continually, all the time. Not to be taken advantage of that you go sin directly and say that God will forgive me, so I’ll do it. *That’s not the reason!*

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (vs 9-10).

Why? *Because love*—God is love—*covers a multitude of sins!* That’s quite something to really grasp and understand.

Verse 11: “For as the heavens are high above the earth... [and they’re finding out that it’s greater than we have ever thought] ...so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.”

- that you love God
- that you fear to disobey
- that you keep His commandment
- that you are grateful for His Holy Spirit
- that you are thankful for the knowledge of understanding that He has given to His Church and people

He wants you to know that He is sharing that with you! Those are the ***secrets of God that He’s sharing with us!*** The knowledge and understanding:

- of His Word
- of His Sabbath
- of His Passover and Holy Days

Verse 12: “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” ***Not there!*** And in the final analysis through the resurrection, ***as if they never existed!***

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man...” (vs 13-15).

What are we as people? *We’re just of the dust! You have to eat food, breathe air, and drink water. That’s all of the earth—earthly!*

“...his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. **But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them**” (vs 15-18).

That’s really a fantastic Psalm and blessing for us, that this reflects the love of God. Now you understand what it means that love covers a multitude of sins. Don’t you think that the sins of the whole world—all combined together—are a multitude of sins? *Yes, indeed!*

Through the second resurrection God is

going to cover them all, except for those who refuse to repent.

2-Cor. 1—here’s what God also give in addition to it. This is something to really remember and understand. Always remember how Paul introduces every epistle. This is to flow through the whole epistle. That’s why he puts it first.

In other words, if he were building a house, this would be the foundation, and then he builds on top of it. But since it’s an epistle, he puts it first so that it flows through the whole epistle.

2-Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the Church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in *the* entire region of Achaia: **Grace and peace** be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 1-2)—*blessing, grace and peace!*

The carnal mind is hostile against God, meaning that it’s always fighting against God and there’s no peace with God. But we are to have peace with God, and that’s why Paul is writing it so that we can find the peace with God when we understand it.

Verse 3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* God of all comfort.”

When we go through trials, tribulations, difficulties and strifes like this Coronavirus, we need peace, mercy and comfort; **God will comfort us!**

Verse 4: “Who **comforts us** in all our tribulation, in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial, through the comfort with which **we ourselves are comforted by God.**”

God doesn’t give you blessings and things that you just keep them and hold them to yourself. It is so that you can help others, and you can. Matt. 6 fits right in with it. Once we receive all of these things:

- mercy
- forgiveness
- comfort
- cleansing
- getting rid of the sin, *removing it as far as the east is from the west*

Here’s the daily prayer outline or model:

Matthew 6:7: “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do* ...”

I need to mention here that *vain repetitions* are like something you’ve memorized, like the beads of a rosary. Most religions have beads to pray, recited; not authentic prayers from the heart.

“...for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard....”

Tie in 1-Kings 10: The prophets of Baal *vs* Elijah. They prayed all day and they cut themselves and jumped up and down and shouted, yelled and screamed, but Baal didn’t answer. Elijah’s prayer... We timed it one time and it took 21 seconds.

It’s the degree of the faith, love and understanding toward God that you have that will bring the answer. That’s what Jesus is saying here.

Verse 8: “Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him”—*but He wants you to ask!* Why? **So, that you acknowledge that it comes from God!**

Verse 9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: ‘Our Father, Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name... [you can add a lot of things in there: praising and thanking God] ...**Your Kingdom come...**” (vs 9-10).

Why is that important? *Because that’s the main reason why God has called us to be in His Kingdom to save the world!* So, everything we do is to be based on that.

“...Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven... [in our lives and everything on the earth that God is doing] ...give us this day our daily bread” (vs 10-11).

Living in the world of supermarkets, Costco’s and Sam’s Clubs, and an abundance of food everywhere, we don’t get the full value of what this is saying compared to what it would be if we had to grow and produce all our own food. That’s why God says, ‘When you have eaten to the full, and you have no scarceness of bread and food, do not become haughty-hearted.’ *That’s exactly what’s happening to this generation!*

Even though we have all the things like the supermarkets to get whatever we need, remember, someone had to grow it, milk it, pick it, cut it and process it, so that each one of us can have whatever we desire.

That’s quite an amazing things, that today it’s almost like in the supermarket, the world has come to us (the United States). We need to be very grateful and thankful that God has provided that for us.

Verse 12: “And forgive us our debts... [Luke 18 says sins, but it means the same thing] ...as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one....” (vs 12-13).

No human being can fight the devil and win

unless you have the Holy Spirit of God and even then you may have to give your life. So, let God take care of Satan and let God rescue you from him and his devices.

“...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (v 13). Then you have to read on because here’s very important part with mercy and forgiveness, etc.

Verse 14: “For, if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 14-15).

That’s important and another whole topic itself, but that follows. ***If you are forgiven, then you must be merciful!***

Rom, 5—this is kind of a summary of Christian living. To understand about justification, it means *you’re put in right standing with God!* Isn’t that something? ***To be put in right standing with God through Christ through His sacrifice and shed blood!***

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we **have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

That’s what we need to have, that peace with God! Not fighting against God, not yielding to the temptations of the flesh and think that God is doing something against us by demanding that we not succumb to it.

Verse 2: “Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.” *That hope is eternal life!*

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...”—*because we will have difficulties!*

Look at all of the difficulties that every single one of us have had to go through in many different situations in our life while we were Christians and trusting in God. But what is the good news of all of that? ***He has delivered us from them all!***

“...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance” (v 3).

Jesus said that ‘the one who endures to the end shall be saved.’

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character... [the very character of God] ...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because **the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us**” (vs 4-5).

That’s quite a summary of entire Christian living in five verses! Psa. 138 is quite a wonderful Psalm, but fits right in with this. Notice the attitude that is here:

Psalm 138:1: “I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praise to You.”

This was David in relationship to the true *God and the gods of the other nations all around!* But this is also in relationship to us when we are the sons and daughters of God.

Verse 2: “I will worship toward Your Holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness, and for Your Truth; for You have magnified above all, Your name *and* Your Word.”

That’s more important and any thing or possession in the world. Why? *Because God will give you more than that at the resurrection!*

Verse 3: In the day when I cried, You answered me and made me bold with strength in my soul.” *Able to face any difficulty!*

Verse 4: “All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, when they hear the words of Your mouth.”

Who is going to reign as kings and priests? ***We are!*** So, this is a Millennial Psalm as well.

Verse 5: “Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD. Though the LORD is high, yet, He has respect to the lowly; but the haughty He knows afar off. Though I walk in the midst of trouble... [don’t worry about difficulties that you are going through] ...**You will revive me...** [that is true concerning the resurrection] ...You shall stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand shall save me. **The LORD will perfect His work in me...**” (vs 5-8). ***That’s what God wants to do!***

- His love
- His Truth
- His character
- His righteousness

In us!

“...Your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the work of Your own hands” (v 8).

We are His workmanship! That’s why we have love, mercy and forgiveness, and that all ties in with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 4:1, 5-10, 9-10
- 2) 1 John 2:1-2
- 3) 1 John 4:11
- 4) Matthew 9:10-13
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 6) John 15:1-10
- 7) Job 31:1-11, 13-28, 33-37
- 8) Job 38:1-6
- 9) Job 40:1-8, 10-14
- 10) Job 42:1-2, 5
- 11) Proverbs 10:12
- 12) 1 Peter 4:8
- 13) Luke 17:1-4
- 14) Psalm 51:1-7, 10
- 15) Psalm 86:1-3, 5-8, 10-11
- 16) John 6:45
- 17) Psalm 103:1-5, 8-18
- 18) 2 Corinthians 1:1-4
- 19) Matthew 6:7-15
- 20) Romans 5:1-5
- 21) Psalm 138:1-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14
- 2 Corinthians 2
- John 13
- Psalm 136
- 1 Kings 10
- Deuteronomy 28
- Luke 18

Also referenced:

truthofGod.org: *How to Keep the Passover at Home*

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