



Week 39

Joel 2 Lifestyle

*God's Mercy
and the Perhaps of
God*

Joel 2:13-14

... Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...



God's Mercy and the Perhaps of God

Even when His voices have spoken...

Even when shakings have begun...

Even after we see devastations before our eyes...

If we turn to Him in repentance, in wholeheartedness,
we can lean on the "perhaps of God" - perhaps He will
relent.

*This is the amazing truth of our merciful God. In
righteousness, He will judge the earth;
yet in His loving kindness He will extend
His tender mercies.*

We need to develop confidence in His nature so that
even in the worst of all crises we can have confidence to
turn to God and lean on His mercy.

Man's sinful nature and the righteousness of God

To fully grasp the full extent of God's mercy, we must have a correct view of our sinful nature as well as a Biblical view of God's righteousness and justice.

In this day and age where humanism pervades our culture, even Christians often think of ourselves as being intrinsically decent and good. Psalm 51:5 states that we all come into the world as sinners: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Eph. 2:2 tells us that all who are not in Christ are "sons of disobedience". In verse 3, Paul continues by saying that we are all "by nature children of wrath."

If we are all with sin, then we are all deserving of punishment and even hell.

*The righteousness of God demands that sin be punished.
If God does not judge and punish sin,
He cannot be righteous.*

Thus, the sinner must bear the judgments of the righteous God. If we are all sinners, then what we rightly deserve is hell.

Man's sinful nature and the righteousness of God

If we understand this truth, we will never accuse God of being unfair in His dealings with man. Our murmurings against His actions against sin cannot stand.

Yet in His mercy He extends forgiveness to us. If we repent from our sins and turn to Him, He is quick to forgive us.

This is the goodness of God. In all of God's dealings with man, we see His five-fold nature at work; He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness and relents from doing harm. It is because of this that man has hope. We all deserve death and hell but in His mercy, He offers a way to eternal life with Him.



The Book of Jonah – a picture of God's five-fold nature.

The book of Jonah, gives us a picture of His five-fold nature and shows the outworking of the “perhaps of God”. God’s message to the people of Nineveh through Jonah was, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4).

God had seen their wickedness and was going to judge this evil people. But before He sent judgment, in His grace and kindness, He sent His prophet Jonah to warn them.

When the king heard of God’s coming judgment, he repented and set a decree for all in the land, including the animals, to fast and for all men to turn from their wicked ways.

“...Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands”

(Jonah 3:7-8)

The Book of Jonah – a picture of God's five-fold nature.

The king was leaning on the “perhaps of God”. He continued by saying:

“Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?”

(Jonah 3:9)

The king did not know Yahweh, but he knew that what the prophet had pronounced over them was right. His people were evil, and the judgment God was about to mete out was just. He did not question the righteousness of God or the coming judgment. Instead, he heeded the warning of the prophet and made a decree that all should fast and turn to God.

God saw their response. His heart was moved and He relented from the disaster that He said He would bring upon them. Yes, God's anger is kindled when nations turn to wickedness or when His people turn away from Him.


*But if we repent,
there is the “perhaps of God”.
If we repent, He may relent.*

Our confidence is that His
anger lasts only for a moment,
but His mercy is for a lifetime
and that He relents from
doing harm.

This is the "perhaps of God."

We do not get what we
rightly deserve because He
extends His tender mercies
towards us when we recognise
our sins and turn.





For He is good, and
His mercy endures
forever...

The knowledge of God's tender heart and His mercy for us gives us courage and confidence to turn to Him and rend our hearts. It draws us to the place of prayer and fasting pressing in for the "perhaps of God".

May we be like David, a people who know our God, who will draw near to Him in confidence even when we sin, trusting not in ourselves but in His merciful nature.

Let's come together, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways. For He is good, and His mercy endures forever.



Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 39

Search out verses in the Scripture which talk about the five-fold nature of God that was mentioned in Joel 2:13-14. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to encounter these five aspects of who He is.

Ask the Lord to reveal areas of compromise in our lives. Turn to Him and bring these before Him in prayer, leaning on His tender mercies.

Prayers for Week 39

Pray Eph. 1:17, asking the Father of glory to reveal His five-fold nature to the Church.

Pray that as the Holy Spirit reveals to us our areas of compromise, we as a Church will respond with 2 Chron. 7:14. May we humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways, trusting that in His mercy, He will forgive our sins and heal our land.