

## Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Your Mercy Reaches Unto the Heavens – 10-16 Feb 2024

**C**hrist would have us know that we depend on the Lord's mercies. The psalmist says, "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds" (Psalm 57:9-10). "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds" (Psalm 36:5). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). All things have come into existence by the breath of the Lord; there is nothing that is not the offspring of His own life. The air is an atmosphere of mercy. Everybody on earth lives and moves in the atmosphere of the Lord's grace. If we believe this, and take the constant gift as from Him, we shall breathe in righteousness; as well as drink it. "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). But everybody in the world lives by breathing. Breathing is something that cannot be omitted for a moment. It must be kept up constantly. Now if we glorified the Lord not only with our breath but in our breath, if we acknowledged that the breath which we have is His, thus allowing Him to direct the life that comes by breathing, our life would be one of faith, and it would be righteous. The just hence live by faith only by breathing faith. Jesus is the truth and the life. There is no life but His. We live by breathing. Thus, we breathe His life. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." This is true of everybody; but only those who recognise the fact get any real benefit from it. "Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:20).

**Sunday: His Mercy Endures Forever** – How does the psalmist in Psalm 136 teach us that God is both infinitely just and merciful to both the righteous and the wicked? When man sinned, had God at once blotted him out of existence, the universe might have stood in awe and acknowledged the justice of the transaction, but they would not have seen Him as a God of mercy to the offender, and would not have known Him by His true nature: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgressions and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:6-7). In being infinitely just to man, God must also be infinitely merciful, and in being infinitely merciful, He must also be infinitely just. And this is what we see in the wonderful plan of salvation. The death of Christ, which was the great central act of this plan, speaks in awful eloquence of both God's justice and His mercy; His mercy in that He gave His Son to die rather than that man should be lost; and His justice, in that He would not pass over sin, even though it would cost Him the life of His only begotten Son. God's mercy endures even to the midst in the execution of His judgments. "O give thanks to the Lord; for ever.... To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn; for His mercy endureth for ever; ... to Him which divided the Red sea into parts, for His mercy endureth for ever; and made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for His mercy endureth for ever; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; for His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136:1, 10, 13-15). God's mercies endure for ever, even though there are some who will have none of it. In His mercy He bears long with them, but God could not tolerate rebellion for ever in His dominions and be just to His loyal subjects. So, in justice no less than mercy to those who willingly yield to His control, He must let the wicked suffer the punishment which they have worked for. Indeed, it would be doing the wicked an injustice not to give them that for which they have so long and diligently laboured. They have taken counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." All their desire has been to be left to themselves and now God gives them their desire. But as there is no place in the universe where God is not, the only thing for them is extinction. The psalmist says, "For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Psalm 37:9-10).

**Monday: Create in Me a Clean Heart** – Considering that the story of David's sin was "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4), how can we avoid doing such sin or any other sin? A power that is able to save is able also to keep us from sin. The Peter apostle speaks of the believers as those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5). The faith that does not claim the power of God in the daily stress of sin is not a saving

faith. Whenever we fall into sin, it is because for that moment our faith has let go of the Lord, and we are not believing in Him. For “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1) — whosoever is believing. It is not a thing accomplished once for all time, but a continual process, if only we were but constant in believing. While believing, the power of God keeps us. For we read, “We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but He that is begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not” (verse 18) – the “He” that keeps us is Christ, the literal “begotten of God.” One believing is shut in the arms of Christ, and the evil one cannot touch him. A covert from the storm. Oh, that we might learn to abide in the shelter; for we know well enough by bitter experience that we have not power to keep ourselves – not for one moment. In a world of sin and wickedness the one who is believing is being kept from the iniquity that surrounds him, that is even in his very flesh ready to spring upon him. When the three Hebrew captives were thrown into the furnace of fire, the fire had no power upon their bodies, “nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” There was with them in the furnace One who had said, “I will be with thee,” and “when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned.” The begotten Son of God is pledged to keep the believing one during the consuming fire of sin. We cannot endure it alone; we always fall, the fiery darts strike into the soul. David’s prayer must be ours continually, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a constant spirit within me.” Thank God, when our faith has not held Him fast, and we find the enemy has found us and touched us, there is still the promise following the injunction, “sin not.” “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” He looses and sets us free again. But He sets us free that we may hold steadfastly by a firmer faith to Him. In the bitterness of sin we are taught our own weakness and worthlessness, and in sweetness of His forgiveness we are taught His power to save.

**Tuesday: “If You, Lord, Should Mark Iniquities”** – What does the question, “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” (Ps. 130:3) mean to you? “Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord” (Psalm 130:1). And he did not cry in vain. The depths from which he cried were the depths of sin; for he said, “If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.” “Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” So out of the depths of iniquity we may cry to the Lord, with the assurance that He will gladly help us. We cannot be too low down for Him to reach us. The Pagan maxim, which too many quote as though it were Bible, is, ‘God helps him who helps himself.’ But the truth revealed in the Bible is that God helps the man who is not able to help himself. Read the account of a storm on the sea, and of deliverance from it, in Psalm 107:23-30. Of the men in the storm it is said: “Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses.” So, it was when Jehoshaphat, in behalf of the people, said to the Lord, “For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee” (2 Chronicles 20:12), and the Lord sent deliverance.

**Wednesday: Praise to the Majestic and Merciful God** – How great is our God? We are told, “The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. “The Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand” {Ed 132.2}. “Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!” {Ed 132.3}. “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: If I make my bed in the grave (see Psalm 139:8, R.V.; Job 26:6, R.V., margin), behold, Thou art there” {Ed 132.4}.

**Thursday: Forget Not All His Benefits** – How can we ensure that we do not forget the benefits that the Lord has bestowed upon us and all His mercies? Let every one therefore continually say to himself: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psalm 103:1-5).