

“THE FAVOR OF THE LORD”

Text: Exodus 25:17-22 / Hebrews 9:1-12

Subject: “The Favor Of The Lord” (or) “The Power Of The Mercy Seat”

Introduction

Question: Why the Favor of the Lord?

Answer: Because of the two ditches that border the narrow road that leads to heaven.

- Ditch #1 (on one side) is license; the only way to stay out of this ditch (of thinking we have license to sin) is to know the fear of God.
- Ditch #2 (on the other side) is legalism; the only way to stay out of this ditch of guilt (condemnation and performing well to gain favor with God) is to know the favor of God.

Question: What do you mean by the favor of God?

Question: How do I know that God’s view of me is okay?

Question: What proves to me that God can look upon me with mercy?

Question: And what difference does it make in my life today?

(Is Mercy That Important In Scripture?)

- Genesis 19:19: *“Thou hast magnified thy **mercy** in saving my life.”*
- Exodus 25:22: *“I will commune with thee above the **mercy seat**.”*
- Ezra 3:11: *“They sang and gave thanks to God saying, the Lord is good, for His **mercy** endures forever.”*
- Psalms 25:10: *“All the paths of the Lord are **mercy** and truth.”*
- Psalms 86:5: *“For thou Lord art good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in **mercy** unto all them that call upon thee.”*
- Proverbs 20:28: *“**Mercy** and truth preserve the king, and his throne is upheld by mercy.”*
- Isaiah 54:10: *“My peace shall not be removed because of my **mercy** upon thee.”*
- Jeremiah 31:20: *“I still remember Ephraim my son; I will surely have **mercy** upon him.”*
- Romans 15:9: *“That the Gentiles might glorify God for His **mercy**.”*
- Ephesians 2:4: *“But God, who is rich in **mercy**, for His great love wherewith He loved us.”*
- Titus 3:5: *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His **mercy** he saved us.”*

And Finally

- I Peter 2:9,10: *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people...which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained **mercy**.”*

What Is Mercy?

- The Hebrew word in the Old Testament for mercy (KHEH-SED) means “favor”.
- The Greek word in the New Testament for mercy (EL-EH-EH-O) means “to have pity on by Divine Grace.”

Question: How can I have favor with God when God is holy and I am sinful?

(It's True)

- Romans 3:10, *“There is none righteous, no, not one.”*
- Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”*
- Psalm 14:1, *“There is none that doeth good.”*
- Romans 5:10, *“For by Adam’s disobedience we all were made sinners.”*
- I John 1:8, *“If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.”*

Elizabeth C. Clephane expressed it well in her hymn, “Beneath The Cross of Jesus”)

*“Upon that cross of Jesus, mine eye at times can see,
The very dying form of One, who suffered there for me.
And from my stricken heart with tears, two wonders I confess,
The wonders of redeeming love, and my own worthlessness.”*

Question: How can God’s wrath against my sin be replaced by His mercy that gives me His favor?

Question: What removes all of my guilt, condemnation and unworthy feelings?

Question: What enables me to have access to God and a clear conscience today?

(The Process of Having Favor With God)

I. The Container (Which Is the Ark Of The Covenant)

Question: What was the Ark of the Covenant?

Answer: It was the throne of God in the Old Testament.

(Exodus 25: 10, 11, 22) *“And they shall make an ark of acacia wood...and overlay it with pure gold...and I will meet with you and commune with you.”*

What Was The Ark?

1. The ark was a wooden box 4 feet long, 2 ½ feet wide and 2 ½ feet high.
2. It was the presence chamber of God throughout the years the tabernacle was in existence.
3. It was the place where God’s visible brightness (or Shekinah) was dwelling in the Holy of Holies.
4. The other five pieces of furniture in the tabernacle were empty pieces if the ark was not there.
5. Wherever Israel traveled, Israel was to carry the Ark (symbolic of the presence of God dwelling in their midst).

Question: Is the presence of God really that important in my life?

Answer: It is more important than we realize:

- The Jordan River rolled back when Israel stepped in with the Ark. (Joshua 3:15-17)

- The Jericho walls came down when the Ark was carried around the impossible walls. (Joshua 6:9-20)
- When the ark was placed by the Philistines in the house of their idol (Dagon), Dagon was crushed to pieces in God's presence. (I Samuel 5:1-5) Why?
- Because no life is complete without the presence of God.
- Because life is void, empty and vain without the presence of Jesus!
- Because church isn't church unless the atmosphere testifies that Jesus is in this place.

Question: How many of you want the manifest presence of God all the days of your life?

(Let's Go From The Container To...)

II. The Contents (Which Is The Broken Law)

Question: What was in the Ark of the Covenant?

Answer: Three articles that speak to us all. (Read Hebrews 9:4)

1. The Jar of Manna:

- This was a reminder to Israel of their grumbling and desire to go back into Egypt. (Exodus 16)

2. Aaron's Rod that Budded:

- This was a reminder to Israel of Korah's rebellion. (Numbers 16)

3. The Tables of the Covenant

- This was the broken law of God because of Israel's failure when they danced a jig to the golden calf. (Exodus 32)

(Deuteronomy 31:26 reads) *"Take this book of the law and put it in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God that it may be there for a witness against you."* **(In other words)**

- The Ark with the broken law was a testimony of two things:
 1. The law testified of the righteousness, the holiness and expectation of God.
 2. The law testified of the sins, failures and backsliding of Israel.

(Three words leave us in a dilemma)

Word #1: Holiness which means God is holy in character and nature (and without fault).

Word #2: Sinfulness, which means we've all been marred by sin and disturbed the personal relationship between God and ourselves.

Word #3: Wrath, which means God's holiness and our sinfulness demands satisfaction of the violated law of God.

Fact: To excuse sin means that God would cease to be God.

Fact: To not punish sin means that God becomes unholy.

Fact: So, to remedy the past, cover our sin and assure us of God's favor is the initiative of God.

Question: Why do we need the Mercy of God?

(The Three Articles In The Ark)

1. The broken law reveals failure in **relationship** with God.
 - And we've all broken the law of God and need a Savior to pay our penalty.
Question: How many here have ever sinned against God?
2. The jar of manna reveals failure in **fellowship** with God:
 - And we've all murmured and complained and stewed at some time (which doubts God's wisdom).
3. The rod of Aaron reveals failure in **service** with God.
 - We've all rebelled at some time and failed to quickly obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
Question: What is the answer to our dilemma?
Question: What unites our sinful hearts with a Just, Holy and Perfect God?

III. The Covering (Which Is The Mercy Seat)

Exodus 25:17, 21: *"Make a mercy seat of pure gold...and put the mercy seat above, upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put..."*

Hebrews 9:4, 5: *"The Ark of the Covenant overlaid with gold and the cherubims shadowing the mercy seat."*

Question: How do we overcome the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelations 12:10, 11) and find favor with God?

Answer: The mercy seat above the ark, guarded by two cherubims and covered with blood.

(Why The Mercy Seat?)

1. The law condemned us because we broke the law when Adam sinned.
2. God said, place the mercy seat over the ark, so that I won't see the broken law.
3. Cover the ark with pure gold and place all of your past failures in the wooden box.
4. Tell the priest to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat.
5. The golden mercy seat (with blood) will reveal how the holiness of God is vindicated (or satisfied) by the death of Jesus.

(Romans 3:25, 26)

"Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. To declare at this time his righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus."

Fact: The word "propitiation" in Romans 3:25 is the Greek word for "mercy seat".

Fact: It means "covering" with an atoning sacrifice.

Fact: The "mercy seat" with blood teaches us all that God, who is righteous, can pardon our sin because of the blood of another.

Question: Who is the other?

Answer: Hebrews 9:12, it's Jesus!!!

Question: Why the cherubims overshadowing the mercy seat?

Answer: Two reasons:

1. They symbolize that mercy has been extended from God's point of view toward us.
2. When man fell into sin in the garden, the cherubims (angelic beings) were witnesses of his guilt and exclusion from paradise. (Genesis 3:24)
 - And now, the cherubims are consenting witnesses above the ark, that God forgives and restores those who come His way.

In other words

- 1. God's justice is now satisfied and, 2. Man's forgiveness is now offered.

One more step

- The word propitiation also comes from the Latin word "PROPE" which means "near".
 - So, the word means "to bring together" "to bring near", "to reconcile" and "to make favorable". **(It means)**
 - We've been brought near to God, have had our sins atoned for (covered) and now have favor with God because of the blood sacrifice of another!!!
1. We've been "redeemed" which is the buying back by the paying of a price.
 2. We've been "reconciled" which is the act of bringing us back into right relationship with God.
 3. We've been "restored" into fellowship with God and are no longer at a distance.

All Through The Cross!!!

- The blood of the cross supplies the motive to live for God and forsake every sin that crucified Jesus!

Isaac Watts wrote the hymn...

*"When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride."*

Jennie Hussey wrote the hymn...

*"May I be willing, Lord to bear, daily my cross for thee,
Even Thy cup of grief to share, thou hast borne all for me."*

Conclusion

1. Everyone here needs mercy (for all have sinned).
2. Everyone can find mercy (whosoever shall call on the Lord shall be saved).
3. Everyone must ask for mercy (Luke 18:13) *"God be merciful to me a sinner."*

AMEN!
Bill Kirk