

UNDERSTANDING GOD SERIES

We have looked at certain principles that Moses and Abraham had that showed their deep understanding of God and His ways.

We have looked at the prayer in the Holy of Holies. Sometimes our prayers are in the Outer Court, where we are only concerned for our needs. Sometimes our prayers can move deeper into the Holy Place where we yearn for the ministries of God. But there is a deeper realm of prayer, which is in the Holy of Holies and that is where we call the boardroom meeting with God, where we are able to converse with God in His planning stages. He allows human beings to be a part of His plan like we see Abraham in his prayer. And he reasoned and prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah saying, "If there were 50 righteous, would You spare the city?" God said, "Yes." Abraham went right to asking, "10?" and God said He would still spare the city if ten righteous persons were found there. It was a similar experience that Moses had when he came before God. God said that He is going to destroy the Israelites and when Moses prayed for pardon, God changed His mind. God was also going to destroy Aaron but just because Moses prayed for him, God pardoned Aaron. We are talking about moving into the realm of God's boardroom where a lot of decisions are still in the process of been made. And the decisions still are opened to change. And God does not allow just any human being to enter into there. But it takes human beings that would go all the way with God. And we have looked into the 3 qualities so far of human beings that have walked with God in the Holy of Holies. They are No.1 humility. No.2 zeal. No.3 patience. These are the qualities that God admires most in human beings. So if we could develop our lives in these qualities, we would be very pleasing to God. We would be able to move into the realm that God moves in since these are also qualities of God Himself.

Tonight we see the fourth quality and attribute that God admires most in man. Lets

look into the book of Exodus the life of Moses. Exodus 33:11, *So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp but his servant, Joshua the son of Nun a young man did not depart from the tabernacle. Moses said to the Lord, 'See, You said to me, 'Bring up this people but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have also found grace in My sight.'*

Now Moses is making use of his privileged position. He has become a friend of God and God said you have grace in My sight. When you have grace in God, there are a lot of things you can speak to God. And Moses is using that privilege that he had with God that was developed. It was not something that comes instantly. As we teach these series we are not saying that we can instantly reach into that position. Although we know that when we are born again we have access to God, but yet growing to know God and developing and understanding God is a constant work. And it's not something instant that we could just suddenly develop. The qualities of humility, qualities of zeal, qualities of patience are only developed through time. As we walk with God day-by-day, year-by-year, we grow into this depth with God.

The fourth quality that we see that God admire most in human beings and He would bring them into that realm of the board room if they could measure up to that quality is the quality of mercy. The quality of mercy, I believe is born in God's very Presence. Mercy is an attribute that belongs fully to God. It's not natural for human beings to move into mercy without God's help or God's Spirit working. And the qualities of mercy are an attribute of God. In fact in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle of Moses, there is a piece of furniture called the Ark of the Covenant. And on it the very place where God's Presence dwelt is called the Mercy seat. So there is one tremendous quality of mercy God looks for in human beings who walk closely with Him.

Lets look in the background of Exodus 32. As Moses was in the Mount Sinai praying and talking with God, and as he was receiving the law of God in Exodus 32: 9, *And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen these people and indeed it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.'* God is very angry here. In verse 11 *Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God and said, 'Why does Your wrath burn*

hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt in great power and with a mighty hand. Why should the Egyptians speak and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth.'? Turn from Your fierce wrath and relent from this harm to Your people.'

Now Moses was basically interceding for God to show mercy. Moses wanted God to pardon his people. In fact God gave him a very good offer. God said, 'I will destroy all the Israelites and I will take you and I will start again. I will make of you a great nation.' Moses did not want anything to do with that. Moses preferred that God forgive His people. That God will pardon His people. In fact when he was talking with God in Exodus 33 he was pleading with God on behalf of the people in Exodus 33: 13, *'Now therefore, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider this nation is Your people.'* So Moses pleaded with God for his people. He wanted God to show mercy.

Exodus 34 when God's Presence manifested to Moses, Moses in verse 9, again repeated the same request. *'If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people and pardon our iniquity and our sin and make us as Your inheritance.'* Moses interceded for his people.

That's a quality of mercy that is coming up from Moses' life. Mercy is one who forgives. He was someone who pardons and overlooks wrong. It's a tremendous quality. Mercy is an attribute close to the heart of God. I believe it's because of that quality in Moses that God began to treat Moses as a friend. Moses began to understand the depths of God's heart. That even though God's judgment comes, right at the depths of God's heart is His willingness and His desire to show mercy.

How and what exactly is mercy? Mercy is not only just the ability to withhold judgment. When people sin or do wrong thing without affecting your lives you may not even be concerned. Supposing people do sinful thing or wrong things and you are the brunt of their action when they sin, then mercy would definitely be required of you. Vengeance is purely human. But mercy is fully divine.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks about mercy in Luke 6:35, *But love your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Highest.* Notice the ability to forgive. The ability to show mercy brings you to a very high position with God. God Himself is speaking through Jesus here and said that when you love your enemies, when you could show mercy, he says, 'your reward will be great.' We realize that it's God giving the rewards. God promises us not only reward but great rewards to those whom chooses to walk in mercy. He says, "You shall be called sons of the Highest."

See what we saw in the Old Testament that when men of God learn to walk in mercy, they not only reach a privilege position with God, they also receive blessings from God. And the New Testament confirms that principle. That wherever people would learn to walk in mercy and pray in mercy and follow in mercy, they began to move out from the Outer Court and the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place where mercy is found. When Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem and passed by many villages, James and John who were angered by the rejection of Jesus say, "Lord do you want us to call fire down from heaven?" And Jesus said, "You do not know what spirit you are of.' If Jesus wanted to call down fire, He could have done it himself. He didn't need James and John to do it for him. James and John said, 'Lord do you want us to do it. For you it's our pleasure.' But it's not His pleasure. It was His displeasure. He said, "No, I don't know what spirit you are of.' It is certainly not the Holy Spirit.

See the quality of mercy is something that Jesus advocates. In fact Jesus coming down from heaven, going to the cross to die for us is a very expression of mercy in its fullest form. It's mercy at its highest work. Now mercy is not just withholding judgment. Mercy is more than forgiveness. To forgive means to forget about it. But mercy goes beyond that. Mercy does not just say, "That's all right whatever was wrong. Let's just count it as forgiven and forgotten." But mercy says, "I want to now bring a blessing to your life." That is why Jesus is saying "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who revile.' Mercy is not just withholding judgment. It is praying blessings and raining blessings on others. It is not just raining blessings on those who are good to you. But it's the ability to rain blessings on each and all regardless of their work and judgment against you. In

other words you do withhold judgment but you go beyond that. You reach out into the realm of doing good. Mercy is the very opposite of vengeance. Instead of sending death and judgment, you send a loaf of bread. You send blessings of God.

Luke 6:36, *Therefore be merciful just as your Father also is merciful.* Now this same verse is described in Matt. 5 in a different way. Let's read verse 7 of the Beatitude, *"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."* Please note in proportion to how much you show mercy that is the exact proportion that you will receive mercy back to your life. Then he continues speaking in the same manner in verse 48, *"Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."* You see the perfection God regards in us is when we are able to show mercy.

That verse in Matt. 5 verse 48 is related to Lk.6:36 where he says, *"Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful."* And here he says, *"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."* As we tie those verses together we understand that the perfection that God is talking about is perfection of the heart where your heart is a heart of love like the Father's and you are able to show mercy. When we are able to show mercy, we enter into a realm of perfection. See your inability to forgive and your inability to give mercy to others is a sign of your imperfection. The perfect can give mercy but the imperfect needs to show vengeance. God is perfect so He can give mercy. He can pour mercy on all. People mistake the quality of mercy and think that God is so merciful so loving that He would never punish sinners. He would never send sinners to hell. But that is not true. Because with the quality of mercy God, goes together with the quality to being just.

God has to mete out judgment not because He enjoys it but because He has to. Sometimes we think that when flood came during Noah's time, God was having such fun time killing men. He was not. The Bible says in Gen.6 He was grieved. So the quality of judging is more a quality that is required of Him as a just God. If the government of any nation were to suddenly say, "We will no longer punish any criminals. We will no longer send to jail anyone who does wrong. We will no longer bring judgment on any wrong doer, thief, robber, etc - do you know what that does to society?" Immediately robbers will become worse. Those who are not robbers but who have an inclination to do wrong will go ahead, knowing that they would never be punished at all. You cannot run a society without some form of

punishment for wrong doers. If wrong doers get away with wrong, and the society advocates it, in the end it will self-destruct the whole society.

So we know this cannot be done. To have a fair society we have good laws that bring punishment and judgment on wrong doers so that people are motivated to do right and they realize that wrongdoing has its consequences. Then we bring this up to God's government over the universe. If God were to stop punishing sin, immediately God would be a bad ruler. However in the midst of judgment, there is where His mercy comes in. But He knows that there is a certain limit that He can permit. Beyond that limit, He cannot permit. If He permits, He would encourage wrongdoing. So God is a just God. He will always bring judgment to a certain extent. What we want to understand is that the mercy of God is inherent and underlying current all the time. And the mercy of God is His quality to always want to do good. To always want to bless. To always want to forgive. To always want to be benevolent. To think the best, to think the highest of each one of His creation. That is the quality of mercy inside Him. And when any human being begin to move into that quality and to move into the ability to show the same characteristic as God, you begin walking in the same perfection that God walks in.

Let's read on in Lk.6, the quality of mercy. Bear in mind the one we read earlier in Matt. *'Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.'* Lk.6: 35 in the last sentence, *'for He is kind to the unthankful and evil.'* So God continually shows kindness to each and all. He causes rain to come on the just and on the unjust. That's the quality of God and He asks us to follow along. Now in the same context, He moves on to verse 37, *'Judge not and you shall not be judged, condemn not and you shall not be condemned, forgive and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you with measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you.'* Notice He is talking about mercy and forgiveness. Of course Luke 6:38 can be used for finances. But look at the content. He is especially emphasizing on mercy and forgiveness. He is telling us the same verse in Matt. 5 that says, *'Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.'* So God is saying that as you show forth mercy, you are able to move deeper into the realm that He moves in. You shall receive more of His blessings and more of His rewards. And you shall bring yourself into the position of perfection that He wants you to move into.

Now having this background of mercy, let us look at Moses' life. We see that the reason why he walked and became a friend of God was because of his attribute of mercy in his life. Many times an ordinary man would have pronounced judgment on people.

Let's look at the book of Numbers 12. Notice there is a little problem here. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman. It was the same woman that he married earlier when he was 40 years old. For that area and region that he came from is Ethiopia. At a time like this suddenly Miriam and Aaron found problem with Moses in this area. And they said in verse 2, *"Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?"* And the Lord heard it. Now the man, Moses was very humble more than all men who were on the face of the earth. Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Miriam and Aaron, *"Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting."* So the three came out and the Lord came down in the same cloud. Stood at the door of tabernacle and called, *"Aaron and Miriam."*

They stepped forward and these are the words. This is when the Lord makes a difference between Moses and an ordinary prophet. Because of the close walk Moses had with God, He says, *"If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make Myself known to him in a vision. And I will speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant, Moses. He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly and not in dark sayings. And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, Moses?"*

Notice that God is pointing to the walk that Moses had with Him. Like we have said earlier in this series, when you reach a very close walk with God, God Himself protects you. You don't have to worry about that. You become God's pet, the apple of God's eye. Verse 9, *"So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed."*

But what I admire was Moses' reaction. Here were his elder brother and his elder

sister. Moses was the youngest among them. Verse 11 *So Aaron said to Moses, 'Oh my lord! Please do not lay this sin on me, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb.'* So Moses cried out to the Lord, *Please heal her, O God, I pray!*"

Now any normal human being will say, "She deserves it." But not Moses, see he had developed a quality of mercy that God admires in him. Now all the men of God, whom you observe in the Bible, who walk close with God, seem to develop that. They have the quality to pardon even sin against them. You remember Stephen; when the Jews were stoning him he prayed, "Lord, lay not this charge on them." That's mercy. What about Jesus when he died on the cross? He said, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they were doing.' What about Joseph after what his brother did to him? He could have brought judgment on them. But he forgave them and fed them and protected his brothers and families during the famine. That's the quality of mercy that Moses had too.

When the Israelites refused to go into the Promised Land, in Numbers 14 verse 10, *And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.* When the entire congregation refused to go into the Promised Land, they found a scapegoat in Moses and Aaron. They were picking up stones and they said, "Let's stone them." And suddenly God's glory came in verse 10, *Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.* If God didn't come and show up on the scene, that would be the end of them. Remember there were about 3 million of them out there and they said, "Stone them." You better need God to show up.

God was also very angry. In verse 12, God says, *"I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."* God offered that to Moses again. Remember God offered that to him in Exodus 32. God is giving him the same offer. Remember the scene in which God offered him. The whole 3 million Israelites have rejected Moses. God was about to fry them and kill them off. And God was going to take Moses and makes a new nation out of him.

Moses in verse 13 says, *"Then the Egyptian will hear it."*

In verse 17, Moses says, *“And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, ‘The Lord is long suffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray.’*

Now the people were going after Moses and yet Moses was the one who said, “Lord please forgive them.” That’s mercy at work. If he had been angry, humanly speaking, with the Israelites, he would have said, “Lord go ahead.” But Moses said, “Pardon them.”

See the people were coming against Moses and not coming against the Lord, although they were indirectly since Moses were representing God to them. Yet Moses was the one who says, “Pardon them according to the greatness of Your mercy, even as You have forgiven these people from Egypt until now.” The Lord says in verse 20, *“I have pardoned, according to your word.”*

Now Moses was in the boardroom with God. That’s why he could make boardroom decisions with God. God said, “Let’s do away with them.” Moses was a board member. He says, ‘Lord, please consider.’ This is the quality that God admires in Moses. That quality of mercy brought Moses into a close walk with God. I want to remind you that a person who walks closely with God will receive favors and rewards from God. It is not because God changed His principle. God does not show favoritism. But He does reward based on principles.

Now if Moses failed to keep his principles, Moses would also fall into disfavor. Sometimes we have the impression just because Moses began walking very buddy-buddy with God, that he could do anything he wanted. No way. If ever Moses failed in the four qualities – humility, zeal, patience and mercy, he will also forfeit some of his reward. We have to look at that. That God plays fair and just. He doesn’t just take a person who walks with Him like Moses and showers blessings

on him without principles. See God is a God who works on principles. He is a God of order and not a God of confusion. And that is fair. When people want to please Him and be the apple of God's eye, they could; if they don't want to, they also can. But He gives opportunity for all to be in His favor if they want.

So in spite of his close walk with God, only once did Moses really get upset with the people. He blew his fuse in Numbers 20 in spite of the fact that he was the most patient man in the whole earth. Remember this is the umpteenth times that the people had done it. The people came to him again saying the same thing and talking about Egypt again. And this time they talked about the grain, the figs and the vine in verse 5. So the people put the blame on Moses whenever they have a problem. There was no water. So the people in verse 4 says, *"Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness that we and our animals should die here"*

In verse 7-8, *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."*

Verse 10, *And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now you rebels!"*

Here we see the meekest man in the world lost his cool. This is the one small part where he failed God. And this is what I want to show you that God was not a respecter of person either. He is mainly a respecter of principles. The reason why Moses had such a close walk with God is because he kept the principles of God. He bore the consequences too. Up to that time God allowed him to go to the Promised Land.

But that time God said, *"Moses, I told you to speak to the rock. But you disobeyed Me and hit to the rock instead. You need some punishment so that I will be hallowed."* So that God will be seen as a fair God. That you don't get away even

though you are His friend. He said in verse 12, *“Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”*

“Moses the punishment for this is that you will not be allowed to go to the Promised Land because you have not hallowed Me in front of these people.’ That was the basic principle.

The other thing also is because the rock is a symbol of Christ and Christ has to be crucified once. When the rock was hit at the first time and the water came, that was all right since it was the symbol of Christ taking the judgment for us. But Moses hit the rock twice symbolizing that Christ the rock would be crucified the second time. Christ does not come to die a second time and Moses did not keep to the divine pattern of things to come.

Now Moses tried to use his friendship with God to enter the Promised Land still. In Deut. 3: 23-25, *Then I pleaded with the Lord at that time saying, ‘O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your Mighty hand for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? I pray let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountain and Lebanon. But the Lord was angry with me on your account and would not listen to me.’ So the Lord said to me: “Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.’*

God is a good friend with Moses. Moses must have asked the Lord many times, ‘Please, let me go in. We are friends.’ God said, “Enough of that. Principles are principles.” When he showed mercy to the Israelites, he got mercy from God. When he didn’t show mercy and he failed a little bit, he had a minus reward.

But God gave him something else. Deut 3: 27, *“Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east: behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan.”*

God is saying to Moses, "I will at least show you the place since you are always asking Me so much. But I won't let you go in. I will let you have a glimpse of that place."

Remember Moses walked so close with God that (as we have covered a few weeks back) after Moses died, God sent Michael the Archangel (as recorded in the Epistle of Jude) to raise Moses up from the dead so that he could be eternally with God. And later he and Elijah appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. So we realized that he still had that close walk with God. But yet all these incidences are preserved to show us this fact that God is a God of principle.

No matter who we are, no matter what background we are from, if we were to live on the principles of God, there are the four basic important qualities that God look for:

1. Humility;
2. Zeal for God and looking for God's glory and looking after God's glory;
3. Patience and
4. Mercy.

We will begin to tap on some very powerful principles in our walk with God. That it would almost seem to people looking from the outside, who live in the Outer Court and the Holy Place and who are not living in the Holy of Holies, that God just favor you. And they don't understand the reason for it. They will think I don't know why God made you His favorite and not me. But principles are principles. The reason why God shows such blessing, such favor, such grace is because Moses kept his principles, humility, zeal, patience and finally mercy.

We need a merciful heart. We need to show mercy to receive mercy. We need to give forth mercy to receive great reward. We need to be people who pardon easily.

We need to be people who forget wrong done against us. Forgetting is not enough. You must count it as if it's not done at all. That's difficult for human being. Because when people sin against them, they will remember for life. And if they forgive, they will say, 'I forgive but I don't forget.' But when God forgive He forgets. And not only He forgets. He counts as if you have not done it before. And the fullness of that expression is found in Jesus Christ.

If we want to move into the depths of God, we have to move into the quality of mercy. When you pray you could be in a position to bless and to bring forth mercy to people. See people need mercy all the time. If not for the mercy of God, none of us would have been here in this auditorium tonight. If not for the mercy of God, none of us would be saved. If not for the mercy of God, the Body of Christ today would have been wiped out and finished. Thank God for His mercy. And we need to learn how to enter into the throne of grace boldly to receive grace and mercy.

Let us look at Heb. 4: 16, *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."*

The wonderful thing in the New Testament is this, that Jesus Christ has paid the price to enter the Holy of Holies. But I believe that the privileges that He had come to give have not been fully tapped. We have far more privileges than we have realized. Far more authority than we has realized. Far more inheritance in Christ than we realized. Far more blessings in Christ than we realized. And we have not because we never dare to ask. We never dare to move into that realm.

See it takes a bold character like Moses when he developed a heart of mercy to plead for pardon for the Israelites even though God was angry. He says, 'God, please forgive them and God forgave.' Then he said, 'Lord, I have found grace in Your sight. Please show me Yourself.' Moses goes for the extra. He pressed on into the deep thing of God.

And I challenge each one of you to ask for deep things of God. Like Percy Collette for many years he prayed, "Lord I want to go to heaven." Not that he wants to die but he wants to visit there. He talks about how in the woods he would pray, "God I want to go to heaven." At one time there was a hunter with a gun who came by and said to him, "Do you want to go to heaven?" And when he was old, God brought him to heaven and showed him a lot of things that were similar to what other people who had gone to heaven have written but there were extra things that were not shown before. And I will say, there are a lot of things in God that we can go deeper into.

Remember these 4 qualities. Walk in them. They are not instant. But we got to continually walk in them. And some of these principles are not easy on the flesh. Let the flesh die, walk in the Spirit and continually walk in that realm. There is a realm of great rewards and great blessings for those who do so. And when you walk in that realm, you will have tremendous power with God. When God wanted to destroy the Israelites, one man could stop it. You got tremendous power when you walk into that realm. Perhaps a true prophet may have come and prophesied judgment and disaster over a city or nation. Because you walk in that realm, you could even stop the judgment from happening. You could ask for things that are beyond what people ask. If somebody walk in the Outer Court realm they could be praying for certain things but no results were forthcoming. But when you start asking, suddenly the results start coming. It's a tremendous realm where we could walk into when we learn to walk closely with God.

Let's go to God in prayer.