

MERCY OF GOD SERIES

FROM THE MERCY SEAT

In the last message, we talked about the growth from the realm of manifestation to the realm of revelation into the realm of love and mercy. Let us start with the Old Testament in the book of II Chron. 5. We realized that mercy comes after judgment. Where there is no judgment, there is no requirement to show mercy. Mercy is only shown after sentence is imposed. There may be a penalty of a fine, jail term, or death, depending on the gravity of the crime. Mercy comes in and says, "Cancel the penalty," and the guilty one is now freed. When mercy is really shown, the penalty is not required anymore. Of course, judging is easy. It is easy to judge good judgment based on a clear interpretation of the law. It is also easy to fall into poor judgment because of insufficient facts or evidences. Subconsciously, in our daily experiences with people, we judge them into different categories. But yet, we need to learn an important quality called mercy.

How do we withhold judgment and not allow our hearts to judge others? Allow mercy to come forth in our hearts. Jesus says in Matt. 7:1 Judge not and you will not be judged. He requires us to learn the secret of withholding judgment and showing mercy. Mercy is the quality required when judgment is due. Kindness comes forth where there is a need. It does not mean that there is no guilt or penalty involved but it means extending kindness to one who is in need, whether it is a spiritual need, a physical need or financial need. When one does something to meet that need, that is kindness. Compassion is something different. Compassion is the constant presence of God that we feel for His creation. Mercy relates to a king sitting on a throne or to the Pardons Board. After a judge has

passed his judgment on the guilty and stipulated the penalty, the case is forwarded to the king or Pardons Board for review. After studying the case, the king or Pardons Board may grant pardon to the offender.

Kindness gives us a picture of a father. Mercy is a picture of a legitimate authority that withholds punishment. Kindness is a picture of a father and mother who show care. Compassion is a picture of a Creator who bleeds and yearns for His creation. That is what compassion and the love of God is like. It is that awesome sense of the Father when He looks at His creation that did not turn out good as He intended it to be.

As we look at II Chron. 5, we want to focus on a special word here called *mercy*. As the children of Israel completed the temple of Solomon, the choir came together and sang. In verse 13, *Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, "For He is good. For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud.*

Now we could enunciate many principles for the glory of God to come to a place. But I want to focus on the principle of mercy. Mercy is the quality related to the glory of God. If we want the glory of God to be on our life, we have to develop mercy in our lives. Remember, the bible prophesied in Isaiah that His glory would be seen upon us. Now before the glory can come the mercy must be there. We are not just talking about the mercy of God for us. We are talking about how we need to show the mercy of God to one another. If we want the glory of God to be on our lives, then we must learn to show mercy. Mercy is to withhold judgment. It is to refuse to judge another person. It is to look at the person from a different point of view.

In our earlier message, we saw how mercy and love are related to the power of God. The power of healing, the signs and wonders are related to mercy and love. This morning we want to point to the fact that mercy is related to the glory

and the presence of God. When the choir in the Temple was singing and emphasizing on the mercy of God rather than on the judgment of God, the Shekinah glory of God came down. Humans are always trying to focus on judgment. Humans are constantly judging one another. But God says that if we learn to show mercy, if we learn to emphasize mercy to one another and in the presence of God, God will release a greater measure of glory into our life. Sometimes, people can feel condemned in church. They feel condemned because they are lectured what they have not done and what they have done wrong. When we meet for fellowship, we may quarrel and talk about all the wrong things about each other and forget to show mercy. Mercy I believe is a quality that we need to emphasize all the time. We need to extol the mercy of God.

If we understand the debt that God forgives us, we can forgive every debt that people owe to us. Nothing that other people may have done to you; that other people may have hurt you and you can't forgive them can be equal to what we have done before we know God and God forgave you. Just like the parable of the servant that Jesus talked about. The master has forgiven the servant of a great debt but the servant could not forgive a small debt that another servant owed him. Every time you find it difficult to forgive somebody, remember this - you have been forgiven. God is not asking for something that we have not experienced. Whatever you have experienced, you can pass on to somebody else. We have the greatest experience of being forgiven of all our sins by God our Father. Out of righteousness, He now requires us to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

We need to emphasize on mercy because mercy brings the presence and the glory of God in our lives. If you do something against somebody in your heart and in your mind, it is going to affect the glory of God and the presence of God in your life. We must do whatever we do with a sense of love for everyone and that will release the glory of God in our life.

In Exodus 25, when the tabernacle was built, the instructions for the ark are mentioned there. Verse 16 *And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. You shall make a mercy seat.* Now why didn't God call it a *glory seat*, which was actually what it was. If you were to make a piece of furniture knowing that the piece of furniture was going to symbolize the fullness of your

power on earth what would you name it? We could give it many names. We might name it *the seat of authority*. We might name it *the seat of power*. We might name it *the awesome seat*. We might name it *the energizing seat*. Of the six pieces of furniture and all the ceremonies that took place in the Old Testament, the whole life of Israel revolves around the tabernacle. And the whole tabernacle exists and revolves around the Ark of the Covenant. All the ceremonies revolve around it. If the Ark is not there, there is no point for anything else. The central point of the Jews in Moses' time was not called the seat of power although it was powerful. It was not called the seat of authority although it has authority. It was not called the seat of God's presence even though God's presence was there. It was not called the seat of God's name even though God's name was there. If human beings were to name that seat we would probably name it something else. But when God named it, He calls it something that boggles our mind. Something that we never thought was powerful. He calls it the Mercy Seat.

And there is a revelation in that. Mercy and power are related. Mercy and glory are related. If you want to learn the secret of the most holy presence of God, you must discover mercy. You must discover how to show mercy to those who hate you and to those who judge you. You must show mercy to your enemies. You must show mercy to your fellow brethren who may have accidentally or ignorantly harmed you or hurt you. You must discover mercy to discover the Holy of holies. So many Christians desire to live in the Holy of holiest but so few have discovered the way to it – through walking a life of mercy.

We speak about living in the Outer court, the Holy place and the Most Holy place. We speak about the awesome presence of God that is now inside transforming us. We can imagine all kinds of power that we desire. How many of you desire the presence of God in your life? We all do. Yet the secret of God's presence, - listen carefully; this one sentence contains the whole bible, - the secret of God's presence dwells in mercy. If you want the presence of God to increase in your life, in your ministry, in your business, if you want to increase your anointing by ten times, increase your mercy by ten times. Increase ten times in mercy and then you will increase ten times, in whatsoever your hands lay upon.

The secret of the universe is the mercy of God, who is Yahweh in the Old Testament, who is the God of our salvation revealed in Jesus and our heavenly Father in the New Testament. Deep in the heart of God, deep from where the wells of the presence of God flow into the universe is a point in His being called mercy. No wonder in the Old Testament they were extolling His mercy. *He is good and His mercy endures forever.* It touches the Niagara Falls of God's presence and glory and it overflowed into their life. How great that mercy of God is. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. That is from Psalms 23. The whole of Ps. 23 revolves around God's mercy. The Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want, He leads you besides still waters, His rod and staff give you comfort, He prepares the table in the presence of your enemies revolve around the fact that His goodness and mercy will follow you. When you take away mercy, you take away the Lord being your Shepherd, you take away the green pastures, you take away the still waters, you take away the rod and the staff. You take away all these blessings of God if you take away His mercy following us. We need to learn His mercy.

And yet, mercy is not something hard or difficult to learn. It is only our willingness to let go and forgive. Forgiving is more letting go. How hardened can the human heart be when they will hold on to everything that hurts and grieves them and will not hold on to the mercy of God. It is better to live in the mercy seat of God than anywhere else.

In Exodus 33, Moses said to God, "Please show me Your glory." That is the desire of everyone who has walked with God. They want to see more of God's glory. When God showed His glory to Moses, He told him, "You cannot see My face but I will show you the back parts of My glory. Exodus 34:5-6 *Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth."* You know He starts with Mercy. Mercy is the meeting point where we contact the other parts of God's presence. If we want our lives to continue to flow with that mercy, we need to contact God at that point.

In the book of Acts 15, there is a prophecy about some things that will take place in the last days that we want to read about. In the Jerusalem council James quoted some scriptures as they discussed the Gentiles question. Verse 15-17 *And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: "After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up (Now that is the prophecy that in their time it has not come to pass yet) so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord. Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things."*

Now what is this tabernacle of David that will be restored? Of course, we know it is related to praise and worship. We also know that it is related to the restoration of the temple to the Jewish age. We also know it is the restoration to the Jewish nation. But it is also the restoration of the fullness of the church of Jesus Christ in the last days. And part of that is expressed in Acts 13:34 *And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoke thus: "I will give you the sure mercies of David."*

Now a cross reference will tell you that this passage comes from the book of Isa. 55:3. If you study it, you find that it is related to the covenant that God has made with David, which was also the basic covenant that they quote in Acts 15 the restoration of the Davidic covenant to the Jews. Now the whole restoration of God's covenant revolves around one word and the word is the word *mercy*. In these last days that we live in where the love of many has gone cold and became cruel, the people of God need to rest strong in mercy. We have to understand the high realm of mercy that He desires to bring upon our lives and on the lives of others.

How is it possible for God to show us such mercy as is found in the book of Romans? In Rom. 8 even though the word *mercy* did not occur but that's the fullness of the act of mercy. In Rom. 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* And part of that is expressed in chapter 8:7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* So even when our minds were in enmity against God and we were enemies of God, God showed us His love and mercy. He forgave us before we ask for forgiveness. John didn't write, "For God

so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son but before He sent His Son to the world, we have to ask Him for forgiveness." If God had waited for us to ask Him for forgiveness before sending His Son to die for us, we would never be saved. Before we knew how to repent, before we knew how to ask for forgiveness, God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. We were forgiven before we ask because He is a faith God. That is point one: He is a faith God and therefore, He forgives before we ask.

Now Heb, 11:6 tells us, *Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that He is and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* The first point applies to us because we have faith in people. Since you are a man or woman of faith, you forgive before people ask for forgiveness. Be like God. God forgave us before we ask. He acted out His forgiveness; He acted out His redemption before we even asked for forgiveness and redemption. We must be a faith people who give forgiveness even before forgiveness is realized or asked. Are you a man or woman of faith? Then we must act the way God acted. Be like God. God forgives us before people ask. Before people know they are in need of redemption, He acted out His forgiveness and redemption by sending His Son, Jesus to the cross to take our place in punishment. We must be a faith people who give forgiveness even before forgiveness is realized or asked. Are you a man or women of faith? Then we must act the way God act.

Firstly, you forgive before forgiveness is asked – it is in your heart. You act as if a person has been forgiven even before they ask. How many Christians have hurt you? If you say that it is so hard to forgive, you are not acting like God. What happens if God act like that to us? Whatever you want man do to you, do unto them also. What would have happened to us if God acted that way to us? We are finished. Because we are people of faith, we forgive and then we write off the debts. It is important to guard our hearts from unforgiveness and to always have tenderness and mercy in our hearts. When you act in faith, it becomes possible.

Secondly, part of acting in faith is seeing the blood of the Lamb applied on

others. Because God is a faith God, He does things before we ask. Because we are faith man and woman of God, we act in love and we forgive. It is not just pretense; it is not mere acting; it is really from your heart. You really release it to God and you act it out in love. This second factor is important. The blood of Jesus Christ is our camera to look at people. Many times, we have always looked at the blood of Jesus for ourselves. We always want God to look at us through the blood. Not a single one of us would dare to ask God to look at you without the blood. We always need the blood to cover the sin of commission and omission. We always need the blood to cover all our imperfection. We always need the blood of the Lamb. How is it that when we want God to look at us we ask Him to look at us through the blood? And when we are looking at one another, we do not look at them through the blood of the Lamb? This is inconsistency. We should be generously applying the blood of Jesus to people as much as to ourselves.

Every time you think that somebody had sinned against somebody else, whether you were involved or not, wherever there is sin, you must see the blood. And through the blood offer that sacrifice which was paid once and you will not need to pay again. Plead the blood. When you look at the faults of people, what are you pleading? The blood of Abel cried for vengeance. The blood of Abel wanted revenge. The blood of Jesus Christ cried for forgiveness. We must look at them through the blood of the Lamb. These are little secrets to exercise mercy. When you look at people through the blood of Jesus, you don't see their sin any more. If you can see people's sin, it means that you have forgotten to put on Jesus' glasses to see His blood. I like to see people through the blood of Jesus. I don't want to see people minus the blood. If that's the way I expect God to look at me, that is the way I look at people. Many people are not wearing the glasses of Jesus to look at His blood upon other people.

I am sharing with you a very practical way to exercise mercy and to practice seeing and applying the blood of the Lamb in our daily lives. Do not just think about it for your own life. Hundreds and thousands of Christians see the blood only for themselves. But switch it around. You already have the blood, thank God for it. But see the blood on people covering them. Think about anybody you may have a grudge against or may have some difficulty with. Think about somebody else whom every time you remember them, you always see their wrongdoings.

Do not look so innocent. There are people like that all the time. This is human life. That is why He provided the blood of the Lamb. There are people whom you think about or the moment their names are mentioned to you, your face turns red with anger. Every time you remember them, you can only see their sin and their iniquity. Why not look at them through the blood? The next time you remember them, remember the blood. The blood is freely given for them as it is for you. You say they did not receive the blood yet. Neither did you when God first saw you. Remember the first point is faith. And practice this in your life.

Whenever I think about people, I must think about the blood and I cover them with the blood. No matter what faults they have, I see them under the blood and I see them forgiven. I see them cleansed where the blood of Jesus is. Look at people cleansed the way God sees them in faith all the time. You will not have an angry thought against them anymore. You are redeemed from your anger. You will not have a thought of hatred in your life again. You will not have a single negative emotion against people. Isn't that a wonderful life to live? It is as good as living without sickness and disease. It is a wonderful life to live without any wrong emotion towards people. Every time a negative emotion arises in your heart towards anyone, see the blood of the Lamb applied on him or her and your heart will soften. Every time you forget the blood, you will see people differently. (Singing "What can wash away my sin; nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again; nothing but the blood of Jesus. O precious is the soul that washes white as snow. No other fault I know; nothing but the blood of Jesus.") The next time you sing this song, don't just think about yourself. As you sing it, remember it is being applied on others too whom you cannot see the blood on. You must see the blood upon them as much as upon yourself. The second point: put on the blood of the Lamb.

God shared with me these little secrets about looking at people the way He looks. I have never seen that before. In the past, I have always seen the blood of the Lamb as only applying to me, I and myself. Even in the Old Testament, there is a pattern. On the Day of Atonement, the lamb was sacrificed for the high priest and another sacrificial lamb for the whole nation for whatever sin the whole nation may have committed against God. On the Day of Atonement that blood is for every single man, woman, and child in Israel. They had to see the blood for them. After the high priest had carried out the necessary rituals in the Holy of

holies, he comes out and he could bless the people because he now sees the blood on them. Seeing that they are cleansed and forgiven through the blood of the lamb, he could bless them by faith. They would then have another year of blessing in God. We must put on the blood of the Lamb and we will change the way we see things.

Thirdly, we must see like the Creator, as He sees things from the beginning. Look at Genesis chapter 6 even though the people were sinning against God yet the heart of God was grieved. Gen. 6:5-6 tell us something that is quite astounding if you look at it from a different point of view about how this feeling can be in Almighty God. *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.* Now what was actually causing that grief? Read the next verse. *So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."*

See them through the eyes of the Creator. Now this is how it applies here. God saw man from the beginning. He worked with man from the beginning. He saw every little weakness and every faulting step that mankind took as civilization progressed. Now that sin has greatly increased, God has to pass a sentence because He is a righteous God though His heart was grieved. It is like spanking your own children. It is like having to cut off your own arm. Understand that was what God felt like. He was remembering from the beginning.

Now every time you look at somebody, try to recall how long you have known him or her. Some of you know each other over a period of a few years and some a few days. Didn't something happen in your life when you know someone over a period of years? Perhaps, you first knew that person when he or she was born. You saw every faulting step that little baby took. You saw every mistake that the baby made. You have seen every bright side that the baby has. Now that little baby grows into a teenager and into an adult. You have been with that baby. You have been with that person. You know the good side and the bad

side. And there is something in you that love this child.

That is why no matter how hard a criminal is, no matter how cruel a man or woman has become, no matter how a monster society seems to view them to be, there will always be someone who weep, if that someone is still alive, for that monster. You know who? The mama. No matter how monstrous a human being has become yet in the heart of hearts, the mother still feels for her criminal son or daughter. Many were the times when that child was on his way to becoming a monster, many people had rejected that little critter. The mama is the first one to defend her little boy. The mama will scream, "DON'T TREAT MY SON THAT WAY." Some of us logical, intellectual, and analytical nerds would say, "It is not very logical for you to consider him that way. We have known him and worked with him for the past ten years." Yes but the mother was the one who nursed him from the breast. See the difference? At which point do you know a person?

Let me share something from my heart to you. Every person is loveable if you can see him or her from the beginning. After you hear the words *from the beginning*, the next word to focus on is *exchange*. Now what would happen if you had been through what that monster went through, if you had lived the life that monster had lived through? You have been through those incidences that monster had been through. Try exchanging your life for that monster's life. And I ask you this question. Would you have become a monster too? No matter who you could be thinking of that may resemble Saddam Hussein and Adolph Hitler to you. No matter who around you that you disliked intensely and find unlovable, nasty and a monster. (A) If you knew him or her from the beginning and (B) understand the exchange, you will never see that person the same way again. If you have seen that person from the beginning and if you had gone through all those things he had

gone through, you would not have so easily condemned and judged him. Maybe some of them have been deprived from childhood. And here is a sad thing. I weep for them. Every monster has been abused by some other monster. The cycle of abuse goes on since a seed of abuse gives rise to more seeds of abuses. Every human being on this earth was born loveable. But somehow, some had gone through a different path and had a different life, different family, different upbringing, different society, different kind of influence, and different kind of friendships. Do you see the hurt they have gone through? Do you see the suffering they had gone through? At first, that suffering was a cry of anguish. A cry for help but no one was around. They cried when they were little babies. They cried when they were little infants. They cried when they were teenagers. They cried in their loneliness, but no one was around. When they grow into adulthood that cry turned into anger and they became monsters.

But you and I never saw that cry for help. Think of any monster out there. Think of anyone who is so worried about judgment and hell that you could think of. Let me tell you, it is because before you knew them to be the way they are now, when they were crying there was no one to love them. When they were crying there was no one around to heal that hurt. The church was not where she was needed. There was no one to be Jesus to them. If somebody had been there to offer a hand of love and a word of love to them when they were hurting at that time, they wouldn't have become a monster today. It is because there was no one to love them. But maybe it is not too late. Maybe now if

somebody somewhere who learn, No. 1, you could be like God who love by faith; No. 2, you could see people through the blood of Jesus and No. 3, like the Creator you could understand and see them from the beginning.

Maybe now it is still not too late. Maybe now if you reach out in love even though at first that love was rejected countless times maybe now you still can turn that monster into a prince or princess. Maybe now love still can reach out. Sometimes the scars of life are so thick that it takes great love to reach into that monster's thick skin, touch the heart, and bring out the beauty. It is still possible since God can so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, having faith that somehow He can make something beautiful out of ashes. True Christianity is to have this power of love. Maybe if you and I would have that kind of love to reach out to the unlovable, where everything else has failed, love will not fail.

Are you hearing me? Love will still reach out despite many rejections. No, it is not going to be reaching out once and then giving up. It has to be that kind of love that Jesus loves us with that will go to great lengths and great sacrifices. Even sometimes to the extent of that person who try to save that monster and loving that monster and caring for that monster and that monster only repay with anger, in cruelty and finally that person who loves that monster dies for that monster. And the monster realizes that the person who was killed and destroyed was actually trying to love. Maybe sometimes many

lives may be lost. But one day I can assure you, love will break through. It may take the sacrifice of many lives to love, to win one terrible monster but in the end, love never fails. For the Word of God declares in Rom. 8:38 *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

If you can in No. 3 see that through the eyes of the Creator from the beginning you will always find the love for such people. Not even sometimes but you will always find the love for such people. Christianity is about love and mercy. Christianity is not about judgment, is not about the power that calls down fire from heaven and destroy people although that can be a sign under God's permission. It is not about the power to rule and reign and influence nations although that is possible because Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. But the essence of Christianity is about a love that we have found so powerful that changes our life and that we learn to release it through our life to change other lives. Faith is great. Hope is great but the greatest is love. And Jesus says, "This is My new commandment that I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you."

I want to end this message by reading a few pages of Rick Joyner's *The Final Quest*, an excellent book that has so much wisdom. What Rick Joyner wrote here confirms what we have been saying so far. However, his confirmation comes from meeting actual individuals in heaven, and understanding how Jesus viewed their lives. Rick Joyner began by narrating the vision of a man who was zealously

serving the Lord. He says:

He was continually witnessing to people, teaching, and visiting the sick to pray for them. He was very zealous for the Lord, and had a genuine love for people. Then I saw another man who was obviously a tramp or a homeless man. A small kitten wandered into his path and he started to kick it, but restrained himself, but still shoved it rather harshly out of the way with his foot. Then the Lord asked me which of these men pleased Him the most.

“The first,” I said without hesitating.

“No, the second,” He responded, and began to tell me their stories.

The first man had been raised in a wonderful family, which had always known the Lord. He grew up in a thriving church, and then attended one of the best Bible colleges. He had been given one hundred portions of His love, but he was using only seventy-five.

The second man had been born deaf. He was abused and kept in a dark, cold attic until he was found by the authorities when he was eight years old. He had then been shifted from one institution to another where the abuse continued. Finally, he was turned out on the streets. To overcome all of this the Lord had only given him three portions of His love, but he had mustered every bit of it to fight the rage in his heart to keep from hurting the kitten.

I now looked at that man, a king sitting on a throne far more glorious than Solomon could have ever imagined. Hosts of angels were arrayed about him, waiting to do his bidding. I turned to the Lord in awe. I still just could not believe he was real, much less one of the great kings.

“Lord, please tell me the rest of his story,” I begged.

“Of course, that is why we are here. Angelo was so faithful with the little that I had given to him, I gave him three more portions of My love. He used all of that to quit stealing. He almost starved, but he refused to take anything that was not his. He bought his food with what he could make collecting bottles, and occasionally finding someone who would let him do yard work. He could not hear but he had learned to read, so I sent him a gospel tract. As he read it the Spirit opened his heart, and he gave his life to Me. I again doubled the portions of My love to him and he faithfully used all of them. He wanted to share Me with others, but he could not speak. Even though he lived in such poverty, he started spending over half of everything he made on gospel tracts to give out on street corners.”

“How many did he lead to You?” I asked, thinking that it must have been multitudes for him to be sitting with the kings.

“One,” the Lord answered. “I let him lead a dying alcoholic to Me to encourage him. It encouraged him so much he would have stood on that corner for many more years just to bring another soul to repentance. But all of heaven was entreating Me to bring him here, and I, too, wanted him to receive his reward.”

“But what did he do to become a king?” I asked.

“He was faithful with all that he was given, he overcame all until he became like Me, and he died a martyr.”

“But what did he overcome, and how was he martyred?”

“He overcame the world with My love. Very few have overcome so much with so little. Many of My people dwell in homes that kings would have envied just a century ago because of their conveniences, but do not appreciate them, while Angelo would so appreciate

a cardboard box on a cold night that he would turn it into a glorious temple of My presence. He began to love everyone and everything. He would rejoice more over an apple than some of My people do over a great feast. He was faithful with all that I gave him, even though it was not very much compared to what I gave others, including you. I showed him to you in a vision because you passed by him many times. You even once pointed him out to one of your friends and spoke of him."

"I did? What did I say?"

"You said, 'There is another one of those Elijah's who must have escaped from the bus station.' You said that he was a 'religious nut' who was sent by the enemy to turn people off to the gospel."

This was the worst blow that I had yet suffered in this experience. I was more than shocked, I was appalled. I tried to remember the specific incident, but couldn't, simply because there were so many others like it. I had never had much compassion for filthy street preachers who seemed to me that they were specifically sent to turn people off to the gospel.

"I am sorry Lord. I'm really sorry."

"And you are forgiven," He quickly responded. "And you are right. There are many who try to preach the gospel on the streets for wrong, and even perverted reasons. Even so, there are many who are sincere, even if they are untrained and unlearned. You must not judge by appearances. There are as many true servants who look like he did as there are among the polished professionals in the great cathedrals and organizations that men have built in My Name."

He then motioned for me to look up at Angelo. When I turned, he had descended the steps to his throne and was right in front of me. Opening his arms, he gave me a great hug, and kissed my forehead like a father. Love poured over me and through me until I felt that it

would overload my nervous system. When he finally released me, I was staggering as if I were drunk, but it was a wonderful feeling. It was love like I had never felt it.

“He could have imparted that to you on earth,” the Lord continued. “He had much to give to My people, but they would not come near him. Even My prophets avoided him. He grew in the faith by buying a Bible and a couple of books that he read over and over. He tried to go to churches but he could not find one that would receive him. If they would have taken him in they would have taken Me in. He was My knock upon their door.”

I was learning a new definition of grief. “How did he die?” I asked, remembering that he had been martyred, half expecting that I was somehow even responsible for it.

“He froze to death trying to keep an old wino who had passed out in the cold.”

As I looked at Angelo, I just could not believe how hard my heart was. Even so, I did not understand how this made him a martyr, which I had thought was a title reserved for those who died because they would not compromise their testimony.

“Lord, I know that he is truly an overcomer,” I remarked. “And, it is so just for him to be here. But are those who die that way also considered martyrs?”

“Angelo was a martyr everyday that he lived. He would only do enough for himself to stay alive, and he gladly sacrificed his life to save a needy friend. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, even if you give your body to be burned, but do not have love, it counts as nothing. But, when you give yourself with love, it counts for much. Angelo died every day because he did not live for himself, but for others. While on earth he always considered himself the least of the saints, but he was one of the greatest. As you have already learned, many of those who consider themselves the greatest, and are considered by others to be the greatest, end up being the least here. Angelo did not die for a doctrine, or even his testimony, but he did die for Me.”

“Lord, please help me to remember this. Please do not let me forget what I am seeing here when I return,” I begged.

“That is why I am with you here, and I will be with you when you return. Wisdom is to see with My eyes, and not to judge by appearances. I showed you Angelo in the vision so that you would recognize him when you passed him on the street. If you had shared with him the knowledge of his past that I had shown you in the vision, he would have given his life to me then. You could have then disciplined this great king, and he would have had a great impact on My church. If My people would look at others the way I do, Angelo and many others like him, would have been recognized. They would have been paraded into the greatest pulpits, and My people would have come from the ends of the earth to sit at their feet, because by doing this they would have sat at My feet. He would have taught you to love, and how to invest the gifts that I have given you so that you could bear much more fruit.”

I was so ashamed that I did not want to even look at the Lord, but finally I turned back to Him as I felt the pain driving me toward self-centeredness again. When I looked at Him, I was virtually blinded by His glory. It took a while, but gradually my eyes adjusted so that I could see Him.

“Remember that you are forgiven,” He said. “I am not showing you these things to condemn you, but to teach you. Always remember that compassion will remove the veils from your soul faster than anything else.”

As we began to walk again, Angelo spoke, “Please remember my friends, the homeless. Many will love our Savior if someone will go to them.”

His words had such power in them that I was too moved to answer, so I just nodded. I knew that those words were the decree of a great king, and a great friend of the King of Kings. “Lord, will you help me to help the homeless.”

“I will help any who help them,” He responded. “When you love those whom I love you will always know My help. They will be given the Helper by the measure of their love. You have asked many times for more of My anointing; that is how you will receive it. Love those whom I love. As you love them you love Me. As you give to them you have given to Me, and I will give more to you in return.”

My mind drifted to my nice home and all of the other possessions I had. I was not wealthy, but by earthly standards, I knew that I did live much better than kings had just a century before. I had never felt guilty about it before, but I did now. Somehow, it was a good feeling, but at the same time, it did not feel right. Again, I looked back to the Lord, as I knew He would help me.

“Remember what I said about how My perfect law of love made light and darkness distinct. When confusion such as you are now feeling comes, you know that what you are experiencing is not My perfect law of love. I delight in giving My family good gifts, just as you do yours. I want you to enjoy them, and appreciate them. Only you must not worship them, and you must freely share them when I call you to. I could wave My hand and instantly remove all poverty from the earth. There will be a day of reckoning when the mountains and high places are brought down, and the poor and oppressed are raised up, but I must do it. Human compassion is just as contrary to Me as human oppression. Human compassion is used as a substitute for the power of My cross. I have not called you to sacrifice, but to obey. Sometimes you will have to sacrifice to obey Me, but if your sacrifice is not done in obedience, it will separate us.

“You are guilty for the way you misjudged and treated this great king when he was My servant on earth. Do not judge anyone without inquiring of Me. You have missed more encounters that I have set up for you than you have ever imagined, simply because you were not sensitive to Me. However, I did not show you this to just make you feel guilty, but to bring you to repentance so that you will not continue to miss them. If you just react in guilt you will begin to do things to compensate for your guilt, which is an affront to My cross. My cross alone can remove your guilt, and because I went to the cross to remove your guilt, whatever is done in guilt is not done for Me.

“I do not enjoy seeing men suffer,” Wisdom continued. “But human compassion will not lead them to the cross which alone can relieve their real suffering. You missed Angelo because you were not walking in compassion. You will have more when you return, but your compassion must still be subject to My Spirit. Even I did not heal all those for whom I had compassion, but I only did what I saw My Father doing. You must not just do things out of compassion, but in obedience to My Spirit. Only then will your compassion have the power of redemption.

“I have trusted you with the gifts of My Spirit. You have known My anointing in your preaching and writing, but you have known it much less than you realize. Rarely do you really see with My eyes, or hear with My ears, or understand with My heart. Without Me, you can do nothing that will benefit My kingdom or promote My gospel. You have fought in My battles, and you have even seen the top of My mountain. You have learned to shoot arrows of truth and hit the enemy. You have learned a little about using My sword. But love is My greatest weapon. Love will never fail. Love will be the power that destroys the works of the devil. And love will be what brings My kingdom. Love is the banner over My army. Under this banner you must now fight.”