

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### GOD'S MERCY

Romans 9:14-16 "What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy."

There were two thieves crucified with Jesus on Good Friday. To one Jesus said, "today you will be with me in paradise." He said nothing to the other. The one who received Jesus' promise of paradise spoke to the other thief a word of rebuke, "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Have you wondered why Jesus promised the one thief heaven and said absolutely nothing to the other? The answer is found in today's devotional verses where Yahweh said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion (pity) on whom I have compassion." Neither of the thieves, by the admission of the one who received the promise, deserved anything but death by crucifixion. It was because Jesus promised paradise that the one thief received mercy. Mercy flowed out of GRACE.

Mercy in the Bible is always found in the midst of human wretchedness and the sinful condition of humanity. To Moses Yahweh promised Moses without any recognition of Moses' right to claim, without any efforts of good works, with no activity of Moses, but completely based upon God's undeserved kindness (mercy.)

Both thieves were wretched, miserable, despicable men. Both had committed and been convicted of crimes worthy of crucifixion. One received Jesus' mercy because Jesus chose to give it to him. That is the way it is with mercy. Mercy is the activity of the giver of it not upon anything the recipient might say or do.

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions . . ." (Ephesians 2:4) You are no different than the thief on the cross Jesus promised paradise. You deserve to die because of your sins (Romans 6:23.) Only because God's undeserved kindness toward you caused Him to send His Son Jesus to save you and promise you the gift of heaven will you join the thief in paradise.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Your mercy is beyond understanding and certainly undeserved. Grant me through the work of Your Spirit faith in Your Son to hear those awesome words, "today you will be with Me in paradise." In Jesus' name. Amen.

Today Your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.  
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been.  
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,  
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.

Today Your gate is open, And all who enter in  
]Shall find a Father's welcome And pardon for their sin.  
The past shall be forgotten, A present joy be giv'n,  
A future grace be promised, A glorious crown in heav'n.

Today our Father calls us; His Holy Spirit wants;  
His blessed angels gather Around the heav'nly gates.  
No question will be asked us How often we have come;  
Although we oft have wandered, It is our Father's home.

O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,  
What should we do without You When heart and eye run o'er?  
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,  
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer.  
(LSB 915)