

Results Of God's Mercy

Ponder: Who benefits from God's mercy?

Scripture: "God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause his face to shine upon us" (Psa. 67:1, NKJV).

Has God blessed you and been merciful to you? I seriously doubt that anyone reading this devotional would answer in the negative. We might wish our situation was better than it is. Perhaps we see others whose circumstances seem more favorable than our own. Still, we agree with Dave Ramsey who, when asked, "How are you?" answers: "Better than I deserve!"

The inspired psalmist asked for three closely-related favors. We would do well to make his prayer ours. First, may God be merciful to us. While pity is a feeling of distress due to another's suffering, mercy steps in to remedy the condition. God doesn't just feel sorry for us; He acts to relieve our predicament. Jesus' atoning sacrifice tops the list, but God's mercy is shown in countless other ways too.

Then we pray with the psalmist, "May the Lord bless us." To bless is to give good things. Certainly God's mercy is a blessing, but there are countless other good things, both physical and spiritual, that He supplies. As the old favorite hymn exhorts, "Count your blessings!"

Finally, we pray that God will cause His face to shine upon us. As in seven other Old Testament references to God's face shining, this is a plea for God's approval. By contrast, "The face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (i.e. He doesn't approve of them, Psa. 34:16).

When God is merciful to us, blesses us, and causes His face to shine upon us, the effect is this: "That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations" (Psa. 67:2). Even under the Old Covenant, God wanted His dealings with His chosen people, Israel, to attract the favorable attention of the surrounding nations. They would see His excellence and desire a relationship with Him. Even more today, we who have been so richly blessed in Christ ought to share His good news with the world. Jesus said "all the nations" and "every creature" (Matt. 28:18; Mk. 16:15). That's a big order; but we serve a big God!

Hymn: "Count Your Blessings"

Prayer: Merciful Father, may we realize how blessed we are, and diligently work to tell others of Your excellence. In Jesus' name, Amen.