

# Saving Mercy

by Rolfe Barnard

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's sovereign mercy in salvation, highlighting that it's not something we can earn or demand, but rather a gift from God.*

**Duration:** 45:30

**Scripture:** Psalm 145:6, Matthew 5:46, 1 Timothy 1:11-16

**Topics:** "Mercy Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking God's mercy rather than taking it for granted. He highlights that God's mercy extends in three directions, as mentioned in Psalms 145 and Matthew 5. The preacher expresses a longing for people to recognize that they are not entitled to God's mercy, but rather it is a gift given out of God's goodness. He also shares his personal experience of receiving God's saving mercy and encourages others to repent and seek God's mercy.

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## Transcript

I want you to turn tonight to the book of 1 Timothy, at the first chapter of 1 Timothy. I want to read a passage of scripture, and then I want to say a word to God's people in this congregation about something that it looks like the Lord is getting ready to do. Then the message to the congregation.

I want to speak tonight on saving mercy, God's sovereign, saving mercy. We read in the first chapter of 1 Timothy, beginning at verse 11, down through verse 15, through 16. The apostle Paul never wrote anything out as hard doctrine.

He just wrote a letter to a church, put down on a piece of paper what he'd experienced. He talked about the grace of God. He knew what he was talking about because he'd experienced the grace of God.

Now he's talking about mercy. He'd received mercy. This is a tremendous passage of scripture, and I covet your prayerful listen as we read it.

He says, according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. I changed the reading there from the King James just a little bit to give you the exact meaning of it. According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.

There isn't any other gospel. If it doesn't give all the glory to God, take everything away from man, it isn't God's gospel. According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, that that brings glory to him, which

was committed to my trust.

I want to pause there a minute every time I read it and say slide over a little bit Paul. I want to get in on that too. I want it to be just as real to me and farming as it was to him.

That almighty God has committed a very precious thing to me. He's committed into my trust how solemn the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. I tell you that soul that makes life worth living.

Can't live little lives with that soul. By them I wouldn't have trusted such wonderful good news to a fellow like you Tommy, but he did. He said I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, wonder of wonders, miracle of miracles, grace upon grace, glory piled on glory. I obtained mercy. That made all the difference.

It fixed me where God would commit into my trust. It did something for me, the mercy of God. He said I counted you faithful now and I put you in the ministry and I committed into your hands proclamation of the good news of the glory of the blessed God.

He said the thing that made the difference. I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, I was an injurious person and I mended my ways. No he didn't say that.

Turned over and you leave. Didn't say that. Said I obtained mercy.

I obtained mercy. I obtained mercy. Three times since I've lived in Winston-Salem.

One time over Urban Street Baptist Church way back in the year 1948. Another time over North Winston Baptist Church. One time in Salem Baptist Church.

I saw a little revival break out. Saw crowds turned away. I saw in those, the only big church among them, Salem and North Winston, for a little while, conversation on the streets in Winston-Salem with what was going on.

And I live for the day. Pray some, cry a lot about it at night time. I want to see a revival of Bible preaching.

We have so little of it. Our churches seem determined that there's one book that cannot be preached in them and that's God's Word. We have man's interpretation and we whittle down God to suit ourselves.

We're paying the awful price for it. Winston-Salem is a sick bed of iniquity and sin. In the church and out, no reverence for God, nothing.

We desperately need some preaching. Radio, pulpits, street corners, one by one, that would set men to believing that they stand in need of God's Word. God being pleased to show mercy to them.

Nobody believes that they need the mercy of God now much. This generation never will seek God's mercy until the preaching is changed. I like to read about the time of the old Puritans when the sinner didn't have any place to hide, when all of the churches were shutting men up to faith in Christ.

But now if you attend one service and they preach a gospel that brings glory to God, this generation of church members will swear it's not so. And next Sunday they'll go hear a preacher who refuses to preach the gospel. I'm serious about this, my friends.

I've seen men crying to God to have mercy on them. I've been around where the telephone would ring and people couldn't sleep and people had quit work and people go to the insane asylum so worried about the troubles. I've seen that in this city.

I long to see it come again. When this generation will not take for granted the mercy of God, but will realize that instead of it being true that every man's entitled to an offer of God's mercy, that no man is entitled to it. And that if anybody ever is shown mercy by a sovereign God, he'll be out of the goodness of his own heart.

And that a man can't buy God's mercy. And a man doesn't deserve God's mercy. And a man can't bribe God's mercy.

And a man can't force God's mercy. I long to see it come again. Maybe it will.

When the Holy Spirit will raise up again in our Baptist churches the gospel of the glory of God that strips men and glorifies God. And brings men to the only safe place a man can possibly have. At the foot of the cross of Christ said, Lord, have mercy on me.

A few days ago in the month of February, I went to Kentucky for a conference with some people in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky, Mississippi. And it looked like God was in it. I'm incorporated as an evangelistic association.

In the month of April, I'm going to Pennsylvania to work out more details on it. And in June, we hope to set up for the first time in America, we think we'll have 50 churches to start with, many individuals. An organization devoted to the invading of our cities.

Churches or no churches. For the gospel of the sovereign mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must do it.

You're very small in membership here. As a church, I see no reason for your existence. You spit on other churches, large membership right close by.

But I love your pastor. He doesn't. He's not as old as I am.

He hasn't studied as much as I have. He's probably not as deep into the gospel as I am in that time. But he's preaching the gospel of the glory of God.

And I'm for him 100%. Aren't you? I want to see God begin to bring in men and women till they're brought to tremble. Oh, God must do right.

God may show mercy. Plans are underway. I don't know whether they're going to work out or not.

We're praying much about it to invade Louisville, Kentucky. Already have three pastors interested. Getting some businessmen.

Place where most of the Christians have to make a living making whiskey and beer. Stronghold of booze and sin. Where nobody's seeking the Lord because of the so-called gospel of our pulpits today that lets men and women think that God's under obligation to them and that any time on God's earth they decide to, they can make a decision and God will save them.

Don't you long, you know, don't you long to live, say six months. Wouldn't it be wonderful to live on this earth six months time when lost men and women were seeking the Lord. And they'd come and pull your coat tail, Brother Tommy, as you're out trying to sell some monuments.

And they'd say, Brother Tommy, you've got just a minute. Brother Tommy, you reckon God would show mercy to me. Can you folks take that, see what they call the gospel now is God's under obligation to give everybody a chance.

And I don't like it. And people tell me, my God wouldn't do so and so. And the God I worship, he's got to give everybody a fair chance.

But the God of the Bible doesn't have to give anybody a chance. And if he does show mercy, it'll be of grace and not of debt. God bless your heart.

If you can claim God's mercy, then it is mercy. If mercy is in a big old pool waiting for you to come with your little dipper and take a drink, that's one thing. But if mercy is in the hands of a God who says he does as he pleases on earth and in the heavens, then it's a white horse of a different color.

And it's something that you'll have to be humble about and become a seeker, not a demander, not a take for granted, but a seeker. And we'd see men come into our services seeking to the joy and to the Lord. Not much of that going on now, brother.

Where we get them converted Sunday morning and we don't get them baptized for Sunday night, we'll never see them again now. Oh, would you listen, brother Barnes, just a little while. The mercy of God is described in the word of God as extending in three directions.

Let me give you just one scripture for each direction. Don't turn to it in Psalms 145. I think the verse is 6, one of many scriptures.

God is in the direction, in tender mercy over all the works of his hands. In the book of Matthew chapter 5, I think the verse is verse 46, I'm not certain. He makes the sun to shine on the evil and the good and causes the rain to come on the just and the unjust.

There is a sense in which God shows tender mercy to all the works of his hands. There is a sense, the old theologians call it special mercy, in that he deals in mercy with all mankind. But hear me now, saving mercy is in the hands of a sovereign God who has taught us line upon line, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

And that's where it is, my friend. It's in his hands. And he don't have to show it to you.

And you can't make him show it to you. And it's not your right. It's God's grace.

It's God's grace. You reckon God would have mercy on me? Man, I've had them climb up on the pulpit where I am, want to mob me. They say that's terrible.

That's the message of this hour. Under the other kind of preaching, nobody's seeking the Lord. They don't think they've got to seek him.

All they think they've got to do is decide to accept him. Salvation isn't in an acceptance of a fact. Salvation comes to a man from the hand of a living God.

God's showing mercy to lost men and women. Brother, that kind of preaching will make unsaved church members spit and mad. But it will cause somebody to become a seeker.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. You know, this passage of scripture comes from the pen of a man who said the one thing that made all the difference in my life was that I obtained mercy. I didn't have it.

God showed it to me. Not going down the road to kill some Christian. And God showed mercy to me and showed me Christ.

And I saw him. And I heard him. And he changed me.

I obtained mercy. He never could get over it. He thought it was wonderful.

I obtained mercy. I obtained mercy. I needed it.

I didn't have it. Couldn't buy it. God gave it to me.

Mercy there was great. And grace was free. Pardon there was manifest for me.

There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary. God only knows, dear friends, what wonders we could see if we'd stand up and begin to tell men the truth. God must do right.

God may show mercy, but he don't have to. Oh, what a wonder that Jesus found me out in the darkness. No light could I see.

Oh, what a wonder he put his great arm under. And wonder of wonders, he saved even me. My soul, I love to hear ringing from the testimonies of church members today.

God saved me. I can't find nobody God saved. Now I ask a few Christians to come in and tell me what they did.

I'd like to hear what God did. Paul said, God laid over on me in mercy. He ain't talking about the profession of faith he'd made and about Brother Flynn converting him.

He said, God showed mercy to me. To God be the glory in the church world without end. God did it, praise his name.

The wonder of mercy. I need God to show saving mercy toward me. God commands me to repent.

I can't in my own strength. Yet if I don't, God will send me to hell. Oh, how I need God in mercy to give me the power to do what he tells me I've got to do.

God commands me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and there's no ability in me to believe in it. Oh, how I need to cry to God that he'll show mercy on me to enable me to literally and actually hold on one I've never seen who's in the spirit, the living Christ who was crucified. Paul said, I've attained mercy.

If there's one line of this book that's true, it's this, that under a holy God, men stand desperately in need of God showing saving mercy. Lord, remember me, said a man that thought that his hope was in Christ and not himself. Have mercy on me, said blind Bartimaeus who was in such a fix he didn't think he could get out of it himself.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole, said a man clothed in leprosy who couldn't cleanse himself. God said, I'll have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I want him to show mercy to me.

I'm not going to burn this Bible up because I don't like that. I'm going to humble myself and say, Lord, according to the Bible, mercy is in your hands. That's right, Rob.

According to the Bible, you show it to whom you please. That's right, Rob. Lord, show mercy to me.

Show mercy to me. I need it. I need God's saving, sovereign mercy.

I can't buy it. Oh, God, have mercy on me. Isn't it wonderful to read line upon line and precept upon precept in this book that God is R-I-C-H, rich in mercy.

Boy, he got plenty to spare. I'll tell you what's a fact. God is rich in mercy.

Oh, Paul said ye who were dead in trespasses and sin, hath he quickened? Has he quickened? Who in time past walked according to the course of this present world and were subject you were under the bondage of old Satan and you were children of wrath even as others. But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he hath loved us has quickened us together in Christ lifted us up to high places in the Lord. What is it? It's an act of God.

Who did it? It's the God who is rich in mercy. What to do? He quickened. He gave life to men.

Salvation comes as God in mercy raises dead men and pours the life of God into their souls. I can't give life to myself. God gives it as he pleases.

I'm willing to humble myself and say, Lord, you don't have to and I can't make you, but if you will have mercy on me. You'd rather go to hell than to humble yourself and call on him for mercy, wouldn't you? I'm not going to be an obligation to anybody. You'll have to be if you ever get saved because mercy is not something God owes you.

It's something he gives as pleases him. I'm so glad the Bible says he's rich in mercy. There's plenty to spare.

Not likely to run out for the time, especially in this day when nobody wants it. But if we ever have revival, there'll be plenty to spare. Every old hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner that drinks iniquity like water will stop his writhing and wriggling long enough to stop and cast himself on God's grace and cry out to God to have mercy on him.

He'll find mercy to spare. He's rich in mercy. Isn't it wonderful to read on further? In the book of Romans, for instance, that wonderful text that says, he is rich unto all who call upon him.

Oh, is that wide enough for you? If a fellow just humble himself a little bit and quit telling God what he thinks he ought to do and start believing a little bit about what God says he does do and just say, okay, I'm going to come down off my high horse, I stand in need of mercy. The scriptures say you give it to whoever you will. The scriptures say you're rich in it.

But the scriptures say something else. That you're rich unto all who call on you. And bless God I'm calling on you.

And I'm going to spend my life calling on you. And I ain't going to take no for an answer. And if you send me to hell, the last thing I say before I drop into hell, I'm going to be saying, Lord, have mercy on me.

I need mercy. I need mercy. I doubt whether you'll go to hell that way.

Ah, the scriptures say he's rich in mercy. He's rich in mercy. I remember I was down in South Carolina years ago and the preacher was in the church that was built on jazzy singing and hoop to hoop preaching.

They usually build fast and then tear up fast. The preacher made a mistake and he got me down there and the message is just tearing them all to pieces. But they weren't fighting me.

I was doing the best I could and they were coming to get me. And finally the dear pastor young fellow came to see me. He got saved before the meeting was over.

And he's as honest as he could be. He's never had heard a gospel that gives the glory to God. All he'd ever heard was something he could brag about, you know, take credit for.

And he said, Brother Barnes, the people just torn all to pieces. They loved you. They're trying to listen to you.

He said, would you meet with us Sunday afternoon? I believe my whole church will be there. They want to ask you some questions. See if they can get to where they understand what you're preaching a little bit.

And I don't usually have that happen. Usually I say something somebody don't like and he gets mad and he goes off and I never see him again and he cusses me and Gabriel blows his horn. But these folks wanted to know.

And they started in on me. The little old church building just packed on Sunday afternoon. And the pastor said, Brother Barnes is consented to answer your questions.

He wants to help and I did. My God, I wouldn't live on peanuts and corn bread. I'd have to go up and down this country just for the joy of making folks mad and acting a fool.

I believe what I preach. I'm trying to help folks. And the first question they asked, we never got that because it said a little thing.

The pastor said, Brother Barnes, I'm going to start the questions off. He said, isn't God under obligation to give every man a chance to be saved? And I answered him this way, salvation is not by chance. And God is not under obligation to do anything on God's earth to men and women except punish them for their sin.

And that settled the whole argument. Turned into prayer meetings. All their little questions of theology were gone.

If you'll ever see that, you'll quit telling God how to run his business. You'll find out salvation isn't by giving people a chance. Salvation is by God showing mercy to men and women.

And he's rich in it. And glory hallelujah, he's rich unto all who call upon him. But brother, if you don't feel your need of God having mercy on you, you'll never call on him.

And if you think that salvation's in your hand for something you do, you'll never seek him. You'll just do something yourself. Everything about salvation comes from God.

The very faith by which you lay hold on Christ, God has to give it. The very repentance he demands is a gift of God. The very blood that flowed from Christ's veins is a gift of God.

Everything about it comes from God and none from men. It's God's grace, it's God's mercy. No way on God's earth we can command the Holy Spirit to do his work.

We can only pray and hope and watch and rejoice. He blows where he will, says the scripture. We can't tell from whence he comes nor whither he goes.

Just pray. He's rich in mercy. I'll never forget an experience I had in the northern city, in the city of Detroit, Michigan.

I was holding meetings. I remember on a Sunday night, after the evening service, a great big old red-haired, freckled face, a fellow by the name of Childers, C-H-I-L-D-E-R-S. He moved up from Tennessee to Detroit to work in the automobile factories.

He came and tarried by my side until most of the people had left. He had a moment and he said, He said there's a man lives over in my side of the city who's dying of cancer of the stomach. He said they had him down in the sanatorium in Georgia.

They did everything that medicine could do and finally the doctors told him that they couldn't save his life and asked him where he'd like to die. And he said I got a sister, my only relative in Detroit, and I'd appreciate it if you'd put me on a train and send me back to Detroit and let me die in the home of my only blood relative. And they sent him back to Detroit.

He'd drunk so much booze that deep enough the lining of his stomach and cancer had set in. He's living on doping and terrible pain. And this old red-headed, freckled face fellow said I've been trying to witness to him, brother preacher.

He said that's the outcussing this man I've ever heard in all my days. He said the way he cusses me when I try to talk to him about the Lord is I've never heard anything like it. He said nobody can talk to him.

He said preacher, if I lay off from work tomorrow and come and get you, will you go over there and preach to that man before he dies? I said you want me to? He said I'll lay off from work and I'll come and get you. And it came a blizzard that night. The next morning the snow was everywhere and the roads were well-nigh blocked and it was 13 degrees below zero.

It was cold. And he came 20 miles across the city traffic of Detroit and picked me up and we chugged through and pushed and slipped and slid the 20 miles back. It was cold.

It was bad. We finally got out of the car and got up on the porch and snapped the snow off our feet and rang the doorbell. And directly the sister came and let us in the hall.

And the children said I brought the preacher before your brother dies. He's cussed us so I want the preacher to talk to him to see if he'll listen to him. And the young lady said I'm so sorry.

Said the doctors just left. Said my brother's in such terrible pain they gave him a double dose of dope. Said he's sound asleep and chances are he won't wake up for several hours now.

He's in such pain they gave him a double dose of dope. I remember old redheaded freckled faced uneducated went to school to the sixth grade children working as a mechanic there. Not much education.

Butchered the keys even. Couldn't know the difference between doxology and theology. But he knew the law.

He went into that room where that sick man lay on the dope. And like a little old child he got down on his knees and I can quote his prayer to this day. He said Lord this man died.

I brought the preacher through this snow and ice. I want him to preach this man before he dies. Lord wake him up.

And so help me he did. He did. He did.

And he was sane. He seemed to have his wits about him. And the sister went and stood at the head of the bed and old freckled faced stood at the foot and I dragged up the chair and started trying to preach to that man.

And he started cursing me. And the louder he cursed the louder I preached. And I began to quote every verse of the Bible on hell and wrath and damnation and judgment I could think of and I guess some I couldn't think of.

And I just preached hell and damnation to that man cussing and all. For 15 or 20 minutes I never let up. And finally I noticed something and he quit cussing.

And while I kept quoting scripture to him and warned him of the wrath of a holy God that's out yonder. I stopped and that old boy was crying like his heart would break. And I quit preaching.

And he said preacher the reason I cuss so loud I'm scared. He said I'm dying and I'm going to hell and I'm scared. I'm scared.

My soul if we could get everybody in Winston-Salem with a cancer as big as my head in their stomach if it scare them so they wouldn't be so anxious to meet a holy God without Christ. It would be worthwhile better to die of a cancer and go to glory about which the men sang than to have a healthy stomach and wind up in hell. And I'll never forget what that fellow said.

I said to him there's still time to be saved. I said that on the authority of a God who shows mercy to whom he will. He might show mercy to a man one second before he dies.

That's in God's name. And I'll never forget what the man said. No God wouldn't save me.

He said you don't know how I've lived preacher. He said I've been an awful sinner. He said there's not a bit of hope on earth for me.

Brother the fellow's getting in pretty good shape and he starts talking that way. It's these folks that say I'm alright and I'm as good as the church members and I don't this and I don't do that. But I have much hope for them.

But for the fellow that got to the place he decides he's such a big sinner God wouldn't have any mercy on him. I'd see a lot of hope for him. And I quit talking about hell and while that man lay down on the bed and

quietly saw I preached unto him listen to me the good news of the glory.

God gets glory out of saving old hell bound stinking rebellious sinners. God does all the saving. He said my glory I'll give to no other.

He laid the Savior all together and not Savior at all. And I didn't have any qualms about telling that man the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. God gets glory every time he saves anybody.

I knew there wouldn't be plenty for that man. And I never forget I just kept preaching. I didn't have to give him the invitation.

Directly he said preacher he's done it. I said done what? Oh he said he saved me. Well a God who doesn't do things like we think he ought to just lied to do something like that.

Wasn't any chance for anybody to do any bragging around there. If anybody gets saved in that kind of a mess God will have to do it. No chance there.

No deserving there. It's just mercy. Just a God who's rich in mercy showing mercy.

Somebody don't deserve it. And I remember after a while he said preacher he said you know when I was a kid my mother sent me to Sunday school. And he said there's an old song that we used to sing.

He said I can't quite get it on my tongue but he said it is something about grace. And he said I wish I could remember it. I said I wonder I wonder if it wasn't amazing grace.

How sweet the sound. He said that's it preacher. He said could we sing it?

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