

Welcome to today's "Moments of Mercy." I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. Have you ever found yourself spiritually dry and lacking in spiritual appetite? What can you do when you don't desire God? God's Word encourages us today to feed our spiritual hunger by tasting God's mercies. After putting away all known sin in **verse 1, 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 2-3** say, *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—since indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

Notice Peter doesn't command us to read, or study, or memorize, or preach the Word. He commands here something more foundational to all those good and right behaviors. He commands us to *long for the Gospel*. To crave God's revelation of Himself. He commands you to desire or want more of God!!

Yet you object: "But I don't desire God. How can God command me to *want* something I don't honestly *want*?"

Dear child of God – God's Gospel creates in you what God's law requires from you! You must not wait passively for holy desires; you must now feed your hunger! You feed your spiritual desire for God by tasting God's mercies. You taste God's mercy every time you repent of sin, and experience His undeserved forgiveness. You taste God's mercy every time your soul truly enjoys some aspect of grace. You taste God's mercy every time you drink in the Gospel provisions of Christ which are yours by faith in Jesus and his death and resurrection.

The more good news from God's Word you drink, the thirstier you will get! The more you taste the undeserved kindness, mercies and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ – and really experience your new life in Christ... the hungrier you will become!

The gospel is His good news of how Christ accomplishes our freedom from sin and our eternal joy through a bloody cross and an empty tomb. So, long for this pure spiritual milk. Or to use the words of the Psalmist, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps 34:8)

Feed your sight by what you've already seen of God's goodness! Fill your ears with the good news that future grace is your inheritance! And by so doing, you will grow more and more into the measure of the statute of the fullness of Christ – who has shown us such great mercy.

Welcome to today's Moments of Mercy. I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. In **James chapter 2**, God's people are commanded to *show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory*. God's people are to be people known by our mercy and love – not partiality or judgment.

Yet we humbly must admit that it's quite natural to "hold court in our own mind" and pronounce unfair and wicked judgments upon others who are different than us. It's too easy to be like the discriminating usher in **James 2**.

This usher sees a rich man enter the church house, and he wickedly thinks – this is someone who can really help us out. It would be in my own best interest to scratch his back, so that in turn he might help us. This usher is self-justified in giving the rich person the best seat in the house. But when a poor man enters with shabby clothing, this same usher wickedly believes this man will cost me more than he profits me... so if I treat him poorly maybe he won't stain our premise with his neediness again.

Church of Jesus Christ – we must repent of all our subtle self-justifications behind our evil judgments. We wrongly value one class of people over others. Or one color, or one culture, or one political party, or one gender over the other. But those who have received such great mercy from God understand that Christ's mercy has triumphed over judgmentalism. We must overcome sinful partiality with the love and mercy that only God's Spirit produces.

We must learn from Nathanael's sin in **John chapter 1** when he asked Philip, *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?* Nathanael made an over-generalization – a stereotype – a "probability judgment" based on his former experiences and knowledge of the times...he held court in his mind, and wickedly concluded that Jesus could not be the Messiah for nothing good could ever come from that part of town.

Remember the majority culture always bears biblical responsibility to make minorities feel at home. So God's Word comes this morning to mercifully awaken us to sins of commission, and perhaps even more to sins of omission, regarding the partiality in our hearts.

After all, we who have received mercy, are called to minister God's mercy to all people. May God help us pursue faithfulness as His ministers of reconciliation.

Welcome to today's Moments of Mercy. I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. In **1 Peter chapter 2**, Peter describes Jesus as God's chosen and precious cornerstone, upon which the entire church is being built! The resurrection of Jesus testifies boldly that Jesus is a living stone – a secure foundation who gives living hope to all who rest their faith on Him.¹ *Salvation exists in no one else. There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*²

Peter wants troubled hearts to rest in the good news that God Himself is building His church on the foundation of the finished work of Jesus Christ!

In **verse 6** he quotes **Isaiah 28, verse 16**, saying, *Behold – look at this! – God is laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.*

So do you believe in Jesus? Not just with a mere agreement of fact. Remember, the demons believe in God.³ But they are not saved. Do you really believe in Jesus' death and resurrection for your relationship with God? Are you resting your eternal hope in something outside of you – done entirely for you – even while you didn't deserve it?⁴

Here's the good news of God's mercy for sinners like you and me: For the sake of His God's own glory,⁵ God only builds His church with the mortar of mercy!⁶ You and I didn't deserve eternal life and joyful fellowship with God. But God builds His church with mercy. God builds with sovereign grace towards undeserving and incapable sinners.⁷ Everything in God's house derives its life, and energy, and hope from His perfect person and finished work!

So have you received God's great mercy? Does your eternal destiny rest on the cornerstone of Jesus's finished work? Is there evidence of the Spirit of the living Christ stirring up within you a growing hunger for the pure spiritual milk of God's Gospel promises?⁸ Is the Spirit of Christ progressively bearing a supernatural fruit of His love in your life?⁹ O what a blessing to be united with the mercy of God simply by believing in Jesus!!

¹ 1 Peter 1:3

² Acts 4:12

³ James 2:19; <https://www.gotquestions.org/even-the-demons-believe.html>

⁴ Romans 5:8

⁵ Exodus 9:16, 34:9; Psalm 25:11, 79:9, 109:21; Isaiah 43:25, 48:9-11

⁶ Romans 9:14-18; Titus 3:5; c.f. Matthew 20:15-16

⁷ Ephesians 1:4-14; c.f. John 6:37, 44, 65

⁸ 1 Peter 2:1-4; Matthew 5:6

⁹ Galatians 5:22-24

Welcome to today's Moments of Mercy. I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. What defines who you are? Is it your troubles? Your accomplishments? Or your genetics? Today **1 Peter chapter 2** encourages us to rethink our spiritual identity – who we really are in Christ. In **1 Peter 2:9**, the apostle reminds Christians that by God's mercy we are now,

a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, ... who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Rejoice Christian! God called you from the moral darkness of sin to the righteous light of Christ!¹⁰ The world loves darkness – because they love sin.¹¹ But God's mercy has brought you out of the closet of sin. God's mercy has washed your soul with the renewal of Christ's Spirit!¹²

Now that you have received God's mercy, you are brand new!¹³ You are a chosen race – meaning you are an elect people. God's people are not limited to one ethnic race, or one skin color, or one culture. God's people are limited to one election – all the despicable sinners whom God has chosen to save for His own glory are His people now!

Rejoice! In Christ, you are a royal priesthood. That means you will reign together with Christ in His literal 1,000 year reign on the earth!¹⁴ Together with the rest of the redeemed you will judge the saints and angels according to **1 Corinthians 6**.¹⁵ God has mercifully united you not only with Christ's life, but also with His priestly dominion!

Now you are a holy nation – a set-apart people. You've been mercifully separated from the world to Christ – as God's very own possession for Himself.

Just as **verse 10** summarizes, *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people!* Dear believer, celebrate these lyrics today from the song, "His Mercy is More."

*Praise the Lord!
His mercy is more
Stronger than darkness, new every morn
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more!*

God's mercy has hung a sign on your soul that says, "under new management." New owner! I've been bought with a price – I no longer live for myself – so now because of great mercy, may God help us to live for Jesus – the One who died and rose again for our sake!¹⁶

¹⁰ Colossians 1:13

¹¹ John 3:19-21

¹² Titus 3:4-7

¹³ 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁴ Revelation 20:4-6

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:1-4

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:15

Welcome to today's Moments of Mercy. I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. Have you ever suffered from purpose amnesia? Have you ever forgotten the reason God showered you with His mercy? This can be a serious problem for Christians today. Because when we forget our purpose, we turn God's mercy into merit. We smugly exalt ourselves as better than others and get fat and drunk on ourselves.

So today we look closer at **1 Peter 2:9** to remember God's purpose for granting such stunning and saving mercy to us. The verse says, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, now listen carefully ... so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

God's mercies have a ministry purpose for you. God granted you mercy so that you may proclaim His excellencies to others!

The original word for *proclaim* is only used here in the New Testament. And it literally means, "to advertise." To publish. To tell forth something that is generally otherwise unknown. This is why God caused you to be born again by His great mercy! This is God's purpose for you now that you have received His mercy! He wants you to be a living advertisement for His excellencies! God's excellencies are all His saving actions of grace and mercy. His public holiness. His glory.

Don't forget God's mercy has granted you one of the highest privileges known to mankind – You have been made into moving billboards for God's glory!! You get to be the sweet-smelling perfume of Christ in this world!¹⁷ You get to be animated mannequins upon which God hangs the fruit of His Spirit!¹⁸ God has mercifully made you into His dwelling place on the earth – so now the nations no longer need to travel to Jerusalem to meet with God – but God intends for people to come face to face with His mercies through your life and lips today! You are now God's ambassadors – and God is making His appeal to others through your faithful proclamation!¹⁹

What a blessed privilege to be so united with Christ! Have you forgotten mercy's purpose? Dear believer in Jesus Christ – celebrate these precious words – *now you are God's people!* May your gratitude power your witness for God's greater glory in our communities.

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁸ Galatians 5:14-6:2

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:20

Welcome to today's Moments of Mercy. I'm Kevin Sauder, one of the pastors at New Castle Bible Church in Mackinaw, IL. **1 Peter 1 verse 3** excites our praise saying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope...*

Have you praised God lately that He is not fair? Sure God is righteous and just.²⁰ But if God was fair – every human being He ever created would end up destined for hell – since the wages of sin is death.²¹ But God is also a God of great mercy and love! And according to His mercy He causes sin-enslaved souls to be born again or converted²² so now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the converted person can please God with a progressively growing faith²³ and love.²⁴

Just as no human being can choose their earthly biological father – so likewise no one has the *ability* to choose their spiritual father.²⁵ But good news – God Himself has determined to be the spiritual father of the redeemed. God has caused us to be born again ... according to His great mercy.

Not just a little bit of mercy. But according to *great* mercy. It is an overwhelming outpouring of compassion and pity upon helpless slaves to sin. **Titus 3 verse 5** says that *God saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...*

Loved one – do you desire God's mercy today? If so – that's an evidence of God's sovereign grace in your life! Proud hearts never desire mercy. Only hearts who have been awakened to their lost condition through the preaching of the Gospel and the gracious work of God's Spirit will ever desire mercy. So if that's you this morning – today is a day for your salvation!!

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Cry out to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – for according to His great mercy He causes us to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus died our death in our place, so that by faith in Him we could receive His resurrection life!

May God cause your soul to rejoice in His great mercy that has saved you from sin.

²⁰ Romans 3:26

²¹ Romans 6:23

²² Titus 3:5; John 3:3-8;

²³ Philippians 1:29

²⁴ Galatians 5:13

²⁵ See earlier discussion on “not able to not sin”; c.f. John 8:42-47