

“MERCIFUL HELP”

- + Everyone needs help because everyone has problems. Challenges. Weaknesses. Liabilities.
 - * In some cases, it's **NON-ESSENTIAL HELP** → problems we consider **NEGLIGIBLE**. “Minor problems.” Help we **want** but don't **need**: with your basement; your golf swing; your marathon pace.
 - * But in some cases, it's **ESSENTIAL HELP**. e.g. with a relationship; with your health. **NON-NEGLIGIBLE**
 - * Imagine a **NON-NEGLIGIBLE PROBLEM** that we do neglect because we don't know we have it.

Here's a paragraph in the Bible about **THAT** sort of problem. And about **HELP** for that sort of problem.

Hebrews 2:14-18 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but **he helps the offspring of Abraham**. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might **become a merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, **he is able to help** those who are being tempted.

Here is a case of help being offered to solve a problem that **SOME PEOPLE** know nothing -- or almost nothing -- about, and that **SOME PEOPLE** think of as a **minor NEGLIGIBLE problem**.

HELP THAT EVERYONE NEEDS

1. The **HELP UNIQUELY SHOWN** by **the Son of God**. → Jesus.

JESUS IS UNIQUELY ABLE TO HELP

~ **because of who he is:** **Hebrews 1:1-4** ... the heir of all things [OWNERSHIP] ... upholding the universe by the word of his power [POWER] ... at the right hand of the Majesty on high ... [AUTHORITY]

~ **because of what he became:** **Hebrews 2:14-18** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things [HUMAN] ... he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become **a merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God ... because he himself has suffered when tempted, **he is able to help** those who are being tempted.

HELP THAT EVERYONE NEEDS

2. The **HELP EXCLUSIVELY SHOWN** to **the “sons of Abraham.”**

Hebrews 2:16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but **he helps the offspring of Abraham**.

“**EXCLUSIVELY**” sounds bad! *Isn't the good news of the Bible intended for the whole world?*

“**THE OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM**”? **Galatians 3:16-29** Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. [The promises were made to bless the whole world through Abraham's descendants. However:] It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. [So then **WHERE** is the help for the whole world?] ... in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [That is, you who have committed yourself to Christ! And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.]

Faith = trust = trusting God enough to commit yourself to him and to obeying him:

VIDEO TESTIMONY

HELP THAT EVERYONE NEEDS

3. The **HELP MERCIFULLY SHOWN** in every case.

AGAIN: Imagine a **NON-NEGLIGIBLE PROBLEM** that we don't know we have.

OR PERHAPS, a relationship problem that we think of as **a negligible sort of thing**

West London Alliance Church, www.wlchurch.org

Scripture references: HOLY BIBLE, **English Standard Version**, © 2001, CROSSWAY PUBLICATIONS

Turns out: we all DO have **A NON-NEGLIGIBLE RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM**, whether we know it or not.
→ Our relationship problem is with God, whether we know it or not. → There is NO getting away from it.



C. S. Lewis (1898-1963): Irish-born author, teacher and professor at Oxford & then Cambridge University

"In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. ... How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except insofar as it is related to how He thinks of us. . . . — **"The Weight of Glory"**

~ HOW God thinks of us is **"MERCIFULLY."**

~ WHAT he thinks of us is that we can't solve this fix this problem by ourselves.

~ GOD CAN. Specifically, God the Son, Jesus, the Son of God can.

~ WHAT the Son of God thinks of us is that we are **WORTH SAVING**.

~ WHAT he knows about himself is that **IS** able to do it.

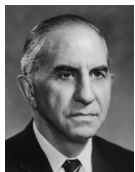
"~ **because of who he is:** Hebrews 1:1-4 ... the heir of all things ... upholding the universe by the word of his power ... at the right hand of the Majesty on high ..."

"~ **because of what he became:** Hebrews 2:14-18 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things"

→ Here is the HELP we need in regard to our MOST SERIOUS **NON-NEGLIGIBLE** RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM:

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Our INABILITY AND UNWILLINGNESS to obey and serve God is THE PROBLEM.
God's help is referred to in the Bible as "PROPITIATION."



John Murray (1898-1975): Scottish-born theologian, Princeton & then Westminster Seminary

"The doctrine of the propitiation is precisely this that God loved the objects of His wrath so much that He gave His own Son to the end that He by His blood should make provision for the removal of this wrath... "
— **The Atonement**

IN HIS MERCY, CHRIST UNIQUELY PROVIDES THE HELP THAT EVERYONE NEEDS.

ONE MORE THING: What God in his mercy does regarding our most serious problem,
He is willing and able to do with every other problem of ours.

AND HE ALWAYS DOES IT IN **ONE OF TWO WAYS**.

1. Sometimes, he helps us **OUT** of our problem. e.g. PROPITIATION. **That's Christ's MERCY on us.**
2. Other times, he helps us THROUGH our problem. **THAT'S** Christ's MERCY on us, too.

Psalms 23 The LORD is my shepherd ... He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me ... **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life**, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

A little memory trick: **23 X 2 = 46** → **Psalms 46** God is our refuge and strength, **a very present help in trouble**. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea ... "Be still, and know that I am God."

He became human and died to destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

NEXT SUNDAY: **"Faithful Help"** Hebrews 3:1-6 (Jude St. John)

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DIGGING DEEPER

MANDATORY MERCY

I. WHY IS SHOWING MERCY MANDATORY?

Matthew 9:13 *“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ “*

Matthew 18:33 *“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”*

Matthew 6:12 *“... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

ALSO: **Jude 1:22,23**

II. WHAT DOES SHOWING MERCY PROVE?

Matthew 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

ALSO: **James 3:17**

III. WHAT DOES MERCY TRIUMPHING MEAN?

James 2:13 *Mercy triumphs over judgment.*