

## February 13 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

### *Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 3: Rejoice in the Lord's Mercy*

**What do you think rejoicing in the Lord's mercy means?**

**How would you define mercy and grace? Do you think they are the same or different?**

**Where in your life have you experienced God's mercy and grace that you rejoiced in?**

We can rejoice in knowing that *our Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. (Psalm 145:8-9)*

We can rejoice in knowing that *the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases: His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is His faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)*

In our salvation, God extends both mercy and grace. *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—it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5)* By God's rich and endless mercy, withholding the punishment that is justly deserved, He forgives our sins. By God's amazing grace, giving us the greatest unmerited gift of all, He blesses us with abundant and everlasting life in and through His Son, Christ Jesus. It has been said that with God, mercy and grace are two sides of the coin called love. Mercy is a compassionate love to the weak, and grace is a generous love to the unworthy. We are weak and unworthy – we all need God's mercy and grace. Mercy takes us to the path of forgiveness, while grace leads us to reconciliation.

Mercy is one of the eight beatitudes. Jesus tells us, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."* The Greek word for mercy in Matthew 5:7 is *eleoo*, which refers to a "feeling," namely, the feeling of one who is moved by the sight of another's suffering and in a way shares in it. The merciful are those "who, through brotherly love, account another person's misery their own; who weep over the calamities of others; who, out of their own property, feed the hungry and clothe the naked; who admonish those that are in error, inform the ignorant, pardon the offending; and who, in short, use their utmost endeavors to relieve and comfort others."<sup>1</sup> As Christians, rejoicing in God's endless mercy, we can be thankful that in God's grace He is transforming us into His image, one filled with mercy and grace.

Lucado shares that a happy (rejoicing) saint is one who is at the same time aware of the severity of sin and the immensity of grace. Sin is not diminished, nor is God's ability to forgive it. *So, we can come boldly to the throne of our gracious God, where we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. (Hebrews 4:16).*

It is in our own experiences that we can best understand the magnitude of God's mercy and the grace that follows. In Psalm 32:3-7, King David speaks of his lack of confessing his adulterous sin with Bathsheba and the resulting spirit of despair and guilt – *"when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."* In finally allowing God's mercy to unfold, David acknowledges his sin and God forgives *"the guilt of his sin"*. It is then that God's grace pours forth, *"surrounding him with songs of deliverance"*; David rejoices in God's mercy praising, *"let the all the faithful pray to You while You may be found"; "You are my hiding place"; "You will protect me"*.

Through a personal encounter with Christ Jesus, Paul is convicted of the fallacy in his life of great persecution of Christ's followers and the *"blameless righteousness, under the law"*, which consumed him. God's mercy and grace allow him to understand fully God's righteousness and to rejoice in the treasure found in Christ Jesus. *"For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith."* (Philippians 3:8-9).

Lucado ends the chapter with this quote: "There is a reason the windshield is bigger than the rearview mirror. Your future matters more than the past." The Apostle Paul gives scriptural context in Hebrews 12:1-2 and Philippians 3:13-14: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith .... Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.* Praise God!

A song to reflect and pray on:

[Micah Tyler - New Today \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

## Looking ahead – Sunday February 20

Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World

Section 1: Celebrate God's Goodness

Chapter 4 – Rejoice in the Lord Always

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<sup>1</sup> Erasmus (28 October 1466 – 12 July 1536) was a Dutch philosopher and Catholic theologian, who is considered one of the greatest scholars of the northern Renaissance<sup>1</sup>