

Psalm 86:6 – “Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy.”

Sometimes there are no immediate answers. We have prayed and cried and tried. Nothing works. We have gone sleepless and mourned and shouted. Still there are no answers. The days roll by in agonizing pain. We still can't identify any answers. What do we do?

David found himself in that predicament....(and we thought we were the first...physical, relational, emotional suffering began with us...right!) David sought refuge from God who was faithful and merciful. The Hebrew word for mercy used here is '*cheched*', and it is used 248 times in the Old Testament to describe God's mercy, kindness, loving-kindness, goodness, favor, etc. toward his people.

As we go to the Psalms of David and other psalmists, we see their constant cry for God's mercy, and their acknowledgement of His goodness toward them. He is faithful.

Have you ever heard how a pearl is formed? It is truly fascinating. A foreign object, often a grain of sand, somehow makes its way into the tightly sealed crack of an oyster. Instead of spitting out this irritating object, the oyster covers it with layer upon layer of a substance secreted from its own body. After months or even years, a beautiful pearl is formed. The longer the pearl stays in the oyster, the more valuable it becomes.

What a picture of God's mercy toward us! The Lord doesn't spit us out when we come to Him! "We are accepted and beloved!" God has every right to cast us out because of our sin but instead, He brings us into His body and covers over our sin with His beautiful covering!

When God found us we were nothing more than an irritation but by His grace He keeps us under His covering, so that we can be made into something of value to His Kingdom! God is using our time now under His covering to conform us into His image!

Let's cherish this time under God's covering and take this opportunity to grow more and more beautiful — that we attract many for His Kingdom in these trying times! How can we do that?

"Just as God has shown us mercy, He asks us to show mercy to others. Haven't we all needed extra grace from God? So He puts EGR (extra grace required) people in our lives so that we can learn how to show mercy to irritating people.

"Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you." Eph 4:32

Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy." That means that when we show kindness and overlook offenses, that we in kind, will receive kindness from others."

As we look forward to Easter, we see that God has truly shown us the ultimate in kindness and mercy!



