

RIGHTEOUS LIVING
BLIND BARTIMAEUS OF JERICHO

December 3, 2017
26th Sunday after Pentecost
Revision E

Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Today's Epistle lesson is used often in the West, either for the 4th Sunday in Lent or the 20th Sunday after Trinity.

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Background to Ephesians

Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians from house-arrest in Rome in about 62 AD. He had first met with and reasoned with Jews in the synagogue there in about 52 AD on his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 18:19). Although Paul did not stay there long in 52 AD (Acts 18:20), he left Aquila (of the Seventy) and his wife Priscilla there and promised to return (Acts 18:18-21). About 53 AD, Paul returned on his Third Missionary Journey and spent two years in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10). At this time, the church took a separate direction distinct from the synagogue. On his return to Jerusalem at the end of his Third Missionary Journey in 57 AD, Paul had a very emotional farewell meeting (Acts 20:37-38) with the elders of the Church (Acts 20:17), knowing he may never return.

Ephesus had had a number of distinguished visitors over the years. The Apostle John and the Virgin Mary had gone there to escape the bloodbath of Herod (Agrippa) trying to please the Jews – which resulted in the martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee and the imprisonment of Peter (Acts 12:1-4). That bloodbath began in 44 AD and ended with the death of Herod soon thereafter (Acts 12:20-23). Apollos (of the Seventy) also was in Ephesus in 53 AD and vigorously refuted the Jews showing from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:24-28).

After the death of the Virgin Mary in the mid 50's AD, the Apostle John returned to Ephesus and worked with a number of Churches in that area: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (Revelation 2, 3). John may have been in the area when Paul wrote his Epistle.

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We might note that Paul, in his humility, had been preparing the saints of Asia Minor for the Apostle John between 46 AD and c. 55 AD. When the Apostles in Jerusalem divided up the world after Pentecost and drew lots to see who should go where, John had drawn the lot for Asia Minor. But John was also constrained from going there by the Lord until the death of the Virgin Mary (John 19:25-27).

The Saints as Light to the World (Ephesians 5:6-14)

Paul had just finished encouraging the saints to be imitators of God, offering themselves as an offering for a sweet-smelling aroma (Ephesians 5:1-2). Paul had similarly encouraged the Roman Church to do so (Romans 12:1). On the other hand, the world around them was involved in other uses for their bodies: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, etc. (Ephesians 5:3-4). Paul reminded them not to be partakers with them (Ephesians 5:7) since

- No one who does these things has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5).
- Don't let empty words deceive you about this (Ephesians 5:6).
- Because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (v.6).

The context implies that some of the believers in the Ephesus area were involved with the things mentioned (Ephesians 5:3-5). Paul thus encouraged the saints to walk as children of light since **they now are light in the Lord** (Ephesians 5:8). Christ, the Head of the Body, had come as Light overcoming darkness (John 1:4-9). If the saints are to imitate Him, they need to be light also. In being light, all they need do is exhibit the fruit of the Spirit: good works, righteousness and truth (Ephesians 5:9); this is well pleasing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10). Part of this is remembering our baptism (Romans 6) and that we were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23).

One aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, namely truth, involves the responsibility not to ignore the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11), but reprove them. Paul said not to have any fellowship with them, but don't just ignore them either. Speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) was a major factor in the maturity of the Church. Speaking the truth with one's neighbor (Ephesians 4:25, Zechariah 8:16) was supposed to be part of the Old Covenant and is of major importance now that we are members of one another (Ephesians 4:25) in the Body of Christ.

Besides exposing the unfruitful works of darkness, Paul said that, "it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12). This admonition extends even to gossip about someone's sin; the gossip-minded person shares in the sin of the unfruitful works of darkness. Even this is shameful, and is not what Paul is encouraging the Ephesians to do.

John Chrysostom points out¹ here that Paul said to reprove, not to judge. So long as the wound is concealed in darkness, it is secure; once it is brought to the light, the darkness is cleared away.

"The Lord had said, 'Judge not, that you be not judged' (Matthew 7:1) and He spoke this with reference to very small errors. Indeed, He added, 'why do you

¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XVIII, vv. 11-13.

look at the speck in your brother's eye but do not consider the plank in your own eye' (Matthew 7:3). But Paul did not say to judge; he said to reprove. What Paul is saying is that sin is sometimes like a wound; so long as it is imbedded and concealed outwardly, and runs beneath the surface, it receives no attention. So long as it is concealed, being as it were in darkness, it is daringly committed in full security. But as soon as 'it is made clear' (Ephesians 5:13), it becomes light – not indeed the sin itself but the sinner. For when he has been brought out into the light and admonished, and then he has repented, have you not cleared away all darkness? Have you not then healed his world?"

Chrysostom adds² that some people fear that they will be hated for convicting a brother of sin. Doing so can represent showing true love to our brother. Even if he is incorrigible, we need to do our duty before God; a man will listen differently to a friend than a chance acquaintance.

“If a man robs someone we justly convict him, but yet we may fear being hated by him. Convict your brother; incur enmity for the love's sake which you owe to Christ and for the love's sake which you owe to your brother. Stop him as he is on his road to the pit of destruction. When we see him lying prostrate in the furnace of wickedness, let us raise him up. 'But', they say, 'it is no use; he is incorrigible.' However, we need to do our duty and then we have excused ourselves to God. It is for this that we have speech, and a mouth and a tongue that we may correct our neighbor. It is the dumb and reasonless creatures only that have no care for their neighbor, and take no account of others.”

“There is no evidence of friendship so true as to never overlook the sins of our brethren. And it is not on our neighbor, but on ourselves that we are conferring the chief benefit. It is for this that we are friends that we may be of use to one another. A man will listen in a different spirit from a friend than from a chance acquaintance.”

In this same vein, Ephesians 5:14 has been called an early baptismal hymn that may have been adapted from parts of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:19, 60:1). The message of the hymn is to awake from the sleep of sin (Romans 13:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8) and arise from being dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12) and walk in the light (John 12:35, 11:9, 9:4).

Redeeming the Time (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Having awakened out of the sleep of sin, Paul encouraged the saints to walk carefully, not as unwise but as wise and to redeem the time. The term “redeem” and “redemption” had connotations in 1st century Israel that have been largely lost today.

According to Mosaic Law, every firstborn from man or animals was to be redeemed (Exodus 13:11-12). The firstborn of clean animals were offered as a sacrifice (Numbers 8:17). The firstborn of unclean animals (e.g. a donkey) were redeemed with a lamb (Exodus 13:13, 34:20). And the firstborn of man was redeemed with a price: five shekels in silver (Numbers

² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XVIII, Moral.

18:16). Initially, the firstborn of every family was designated to serve the Lord as a priest (Exodus 13:2, 11, 12). But when only the Levites responded to Moses' call for repentance at the time of the golden calf (Exodus 32:26), the Levites replaced the firstborn in the Temple service (Numbers 3:12-13).

The principle behind redemption was a buying back; Christ did this for us by buying us back from the penalty of our sin (Hebrews 9:12-15). In the context of Ephesians 5, Paul spoke of the days being evil (Ephesians 5:16) and therefore needing to be redeemed or bought back. Paul used this same expression in his letter to the Colossians, which was written about the same time (Colossians 4:5).

Chrysostom stated³ that the time needs to be redeemed from the evils that men do. We are just passing through on our way to the Kingdom of God. By bearing all things, we redeem the time.

“Christ had said, ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof’ (Matthew 6:34). In what sense does He call the time evil? It is not the essence of the day, or the day as so created, but it is the things transacted in them. Now the events which take place in it are good things from God and evil things from bad men. So then of the evils which happen in the day, men are the creators and hence it is that the times are said to be evil.”

“Therefore, the time is not yours. At present, you are strangers, sojourners, foreigners and aliens (cf. Hebrews 11:37-38, Ephesians 2:19); seek not honors, seek not glory, seek not authority or revenge. Bear all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) and in this way ‘redeem the time’ or buy up for yourselves the opportunity”.

So how does one redeem the time? In the latter part of Ephesians, Paul details a number of specifics:

- Worship in the Church (Ephesians 5:18-21)
- Husbands and wives (Ephesians 5:22-33)
- Children and parents (Ephesians 6:1-4)
- Slaves and master (Ephesians 6:5-9)
- Spiritual warfare, weapons and readiness (Ephesians 6:10-20)

The bottom line to all these is walking carefully, not as unwise but as wise (Ephesians 5:15), and understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17). This involves not growing weary of doing good (Galatians 6:9) and conducting ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear (1 Peter 1:17). We can then use earthly goods and actions to store up treasure in heaven (Luke 18:22, 12:21, 33).

Being Filled with the Spirit – Ephesians 5:18-21

Chrysostom pointed out⁴ that wine has been given us by the Lord for cheerfulness and for medicinal purposes. “Give strong drink to him who is perishing and wine to him whose life is bitter” (Proverbs 31:6). “Wine can mitigate bitterness and gloominess and drive away clouds

³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 15-17.

⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 17-18.

from the brow; thus the Scripture says, ‘Wine makes glad the heart of man’ (Psalm 104:15). Paul also wrote to Timothy, ‘Use a little wine for your stomach and your frequent weaknesses’” (1 Timothy 5:23).

Wine is also good for external medicinal purposes. In treating the man left for dead, the Good Samaritan poured wine and oil on his wounds after applying bandages (Luke 10:34).

But like the covetous, some people are not satisfied with just a little and use God’s gift for drunkenness, rioting and their own self-destruction. Paul contrasts this with being filled with the Spirit. About seven years earlier, he had written to the Romans about how the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

Other ways of redeeming the time and being filled with the Spirit that Paul mentions are:

- Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19).
- Singing and psalming in your heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).
- Giving thanks always for all things (Ephesians 5:20).
- Submitting to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21), that is, out of humility (1 Peter 5:5).

Chrysostom stated⁵ that we can use spiritual drink and be filled with the Holy Spirit by singing Psalms. We do this with understanding, not just mouthing the words.

“Do you wish to be cheerful; do you wish to employ the day? I give you spiritual drink. For drunkenness even cuts off the articulate sound of our tongue; it makes us lisp and stammer and distorts the eyes and the whole frame altogether. Learn to sing Psalms and you shall see the delightfulness of the employment. For they who sing psalms are filled with the Holy Spirit as they who sing satanic songs are filled with an unclean spirit.” Chrysostom adds that “singing and psalming in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19) refers to doing so with close attention and understanding, and not just mouthing the words while our heart is roaming elsewhere.”

“And is then this Spirit within us? Yes, indeed, within us! When we have driven away lying, bitterness, fornication, uncleanness and covetousness from our souls, when we have become kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, when there is no coarse jesting, when we have rendered ourselves worthy of it, what is there to hinder the Holy Spirit from coming and lighting upon us? Not only will He come unto us, but He will fill our hearts; and when we have so great a light kindled within us, then will the way of virtue be no longer difficult to attain, but will be easy and simple”.

Giving Thanks for All Things – Ephesians 5:20

Another aspect of being filled with the Spirit is thankfulness. The Greek word meaning to give thanks (*eucharisteo*) has been transliterated into English as the word Eucharist referring

⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 18-21.

to the Lord's Supper. When the Lord first instituted the Lord's Supper, He used the same terms: giving thanks (*eucharisteo*) over it and blessing it (Matthew 26:26-39, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:15-20). Following the Lord's Supper, Jesus and the Twelve sang a hymn before leaving for Gethsemane (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26). This hymn was probably part of the liturgy that was sung after the Passover meal.

But Paul said to give thanks for all things, not just those that we consider blessings. Remembering the story of Job, there were things going on that Job had no knowledge of. The Lord had pointed out Job's righteousness to Satan; but Satan had challenged the Lord's judgment (Job 1:8-11, 2:3-5). Satan was allowed to afflict Job with every evil imaginable such that Job was destitute and in great pain (Job 1:13-19, 2:7-13). Yet Job's words were "Blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

John Chrysostom stated⁶, "If you give thanks when you are in comfort and in affluence, in success and in prosperity, there is nothing great, nothing wonderful in that. Compare this to a man giving thanks when he is in afflictions, in anguish, in discouragement". As an example, one might recall Paul and Silas, broken and bleeding and sitting in a Philippian jail, but praying and singing hymns to God – at midnight (Acts 16:23-25).

Chrysostom encourages⁷ us to give thanks even for hell itself and for the things that we don't want. Hell can be good as a bridle on our hearts; some things we receive keep us from sin.

"Surely it is a thing beneficial to those who attend to it, when the dread of hell is laid like a bridle on our hearts. Let us therefore give thanks not only for blessings which we see, but also for those which we don't see and for those which we receive against our will. Many are the blessings He bestows upon us without our desire, without our knowledge". In this regard, we need to remember how the story of Job ended. Job benefited greatly from his affliction both in this world and in the age to come (Job 42:10-17, James 5:10:11).

Chrysostom also encourages⁸ us to increase our thanksgiving whenever poverty, sickness or disasters affect us.

"Let us increase our thanksgiving when evil comes our way; thanksgiving, I mean, not in words nor in tongue, but in deeds and in works, in mind and in heart". Chrysostom reminded us of the words of our Lord and of the Prophet Isaiah: "What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him" (Matthew 7:9, 11). "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget you but I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15).

Submitting to One Another – Ephesians 5:21

⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 18-21.

⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 18-21.

⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 18-21.

Paul's statement, "submitting to one another in the fear of God" belongs Ephesians 5:20 as a fourth part of the definition of being filled with the Spirit. [The other three are (1) speaking to one another in Psalms; (2) singing in your heart and (3) giving thanks always]. To illustrate this, the Lord had taken a young child in His arms. (According to tradition the child was Ignatius of Antioch, later the 3rd Bishop of Antioch). "Whoever receives one of these little children in My Name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me." The point was that "if anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant (literally deacon: Greek *diakonos*) of all" (Mark 9:35, 37). The above statements Jesus made following a dispute between the Twelve over who would be the greatest.

A little later, James and John (along with their mother Salome – Matthew 20:20) asked Jesus to grant that they might sit on His right and left in His Glory. This caused another dispute among the Twelve, to which Jesus replied: "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant (Greek: *diakonos*). And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served (*diakoneo*) but to serve (*diakoneo*) and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45). Thus submitting to one another is not a new teaching that Paul came up with, but is just part of basic humility.

Chrysostom pointed out⁹ that mutual submission – all waiting upon one another – makes for a much happier, more pleasant life than a forced domination by one individual including fear and apprehension. What then if someone does not choose to submit to us?

"Continue to submit to him, not simply yielding, but really submitting. Entertain this feeling towards all, as if all were your masters. For you will soon have all as your slaves. This is 'subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ' in order that we may subdue all the passions, be servants of God and preserve the love we owe to one another".

⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XIX, vv. 18-21.

BLIND BARTIMAEUS OF JERICHO
Lord Have Mercy

December 3, 2017
14th Sunday of Luke
Revision C

Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

In the West, today's Gospel lesson is also used in the weeks preceding Easter on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:35-43 – Blind Bartimaeus of Jericho

The healing of a blind man is covered at two other occasions in the Orthodox lectionary: The man born blind (John 9) on the 6th Sunday of Pascha and the two blind men of Galilee (Matthew 9:27-35) on the 7th Sunday after Pentecost. In each case, including today's Gospel, a recurring theme is that some people who are physically blind have spiritual insight and that some who have good physical eyesight are completely blind to spiritual things. As John Chrysostom (4th Century) said, "Let us listen to these blind men, who were better than many that see" (Homily LXVI on Matthew 20).

Whereas today's Gospel took place in the Spring of 30 AD just before Holy Week, the man born blind was healed the previous Autumn and the two blind men of Galilee were healed a year before that. All of these have Messianic implications for those who have eyes to see it. Referring to the coming of the Messiah, Isaiah wrote: "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped" (Isaiah 35:5; see also Isaiah 29:18, 42:7).

The context of today's Gospel lesson is the final journey to Jerusalem, 30 AD. Jesus announced to the Twelve that they were going to Jerusalem and that Jesus would be delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, insulted, spit on, scourged and killed. And He would rise on the third day. But this was hidden from them and they understood nothing (Luke 18:31-34).

As they passed by Jericho, they met a blind man who was begging. In the parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark, some additional details are given. In Mark 10:46-52, the blind man was named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. In Matthew 20:29-34, Bartimaeus had a friend with him who was also blind. Together they continuously cried out, "Lord have mercy!" and neither the crowd nor the disciples could shut them up until Jesus responded to their request. Following his healing, Bartimaeus glorified God and so did all the people.

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Bartimaeus Teaches Us

Cyril of Alexandria (4th-5th Century) comments on the Faith of Bartimaeus by examining his use of the term Son of David. He stated that the blind men had some amazing insight into the identity of Christ. “In what character then do they address to Him their prayer? Is it as to a mere man, according to the babbling of the Jews, who tried to stone Him with stones, saying in their utter folly, ‘for a good work we stone You not, but for blasphemy; because that You being a man make Yourself God’? (John 10:33). But must not the blind men have understood that the sight of the blind cannot be restored by human means, but requires, on the contrary, a divine power, and an authority such as God only possesses? For with God nothing whatsoever is impossible. The blind men drew near to Him, therefore, as to the Omnipotent God; but how then did they call Him the Son of David? What therefore can one answer to this? The following is perhaps, as I think the explanation. As they had been brought up in Judaism, and were by birth of that race, the predictions contained in the Law and the Holy Prophets concerning Christ of course had not escaped their knowledge. They had heard them chant that passage in the book of the Psalms: ‘the Lord has sworn the truth unto David, and will not reject it, that of the fruit of Your loins will I set upon Your throne’ (Psalm 131:11). They knew also that the blessed Prophet Isaiah had said, ‘And there shall spring forth a shoot from the root of Jesse, and from his root shall a flower grow up (Isaiah 9:1). And again this as well: ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us’ (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). As ones, therefore, who already believed that the Word, being God, had of His Own Will submitted to be born in the flesh of the holy virgin, they drew near to Him as unto God, and said, ‘Have mercy upon me, Son of David (v.38). For Christ bears witness that this was their state of mind in offering their supplication, by saying unto them, ‘Your faith has saved you’ (v.42).

Cyril also pointed out that Bartimaeus:

- Referred to Jesus as Lord as well as Son of David (v.41)
- Asked Him to perform an act only God could do (v.41)
- Confessed his faith in spite of many rebukes (v.39)
- Glorified God following his healing (v.43).

Chrysostom pointed out that Christ did not ask the blind men, “Do you believe?” as He had done with many others (e.g. Mark 5:36, 9:23, 11:22-24, John 11:40). Because their cry and their coming to Him was sufficient to make that obvious (Homily LXVI on Matthew 20). From this, Cyril concludes: “Understand from this, my beloved, that faith sets us also in Christ’s presence, and so brings us unto God, as for us to be even counted worthy of His words. For when the blind men were brought to Him, He asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” (v.41). This is an important question in that it directs us to what is our real desire. Do we just want something physical or does our desire go beyond that to true spiritual insight? Do I really want to be free of being enslaved to the passions or do I really like the passions and just want something temporary?

Cyril referred to Bartimaeus as being freed from a double blindness: first from the blindness of his eyes, and second from a blindness of heart and mind (Commentary on Luke, Chapter 18). The vision of his heart was infectious also in that it caused “all the people when

they saw it, to give praise to God” (v.43). Thus even the people that had rebuked Bartimaeus now began to see spiritually themselves. This happens to us also: as we see and hear from God, we help those around us to do so also. However, there will always be those who refuse to see: like the Scribes and Pharisees who crucified Jesus a few weeks after this.

Lord Have Mercy

The Church has taken the persistence of Bartimaeus and his friend to heart and the term “Lord have mercy” appears frequently in the Orthodox Liturgy. But there is a depth to this usage that often goes unappreciated.

The Greek word *eleos* meaning compassion or mercy is used widely in the New Testament as a noun, verb (to have mercy), adjective (merciful) and as a noun directed toward someone (compassionateness). This latter use of the root word *eleos* is often translated “*alms!*” Following is a summary of the use of *eleos*:

People Continuously Crying Out “Lord Have Mercy”:

- Blind Bartimaeus and companion
- Two blind men: (Matthew 9:27-31)
- Canaanite woman for her daughter; (Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30)
- Ten lepers: (Luke 17:11-19)

People Begging, Imploring, Trembling, Prostrating:

- Man for epileptic son: (Matthew 17:14-21, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-42)
- Jairus for daughter: (Luke 8:40-56, Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43)
- Woman with hemorrhage: (Luke 8:43-48, Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-34)
- One leper: (Luke 5:12-16, Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45)

In these last three cases, *eleos* isn’t mentioned but is implied.

Many Times the Lord Shows Mercy Without Specific Requests:

- Virgin Mary at Incarnation (Luke 1:46-55)
- Elizabeth at the birth of John (Luke 1:57-58)
- Zachariah, regarding John’s mission (Luke 1:67-79)
- The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 7:25, 1 Timothy 1:13-16)
- The Gadarene Demoniac (Mark 5:19)
- Epiphroditus (Philippians 2:27)
- The Gentiles (Romans 15:9, 1 Peter 2:10)
- All believers (Romans 11:30-32, 2 Corinthians 4:1, Ephesians 2:4, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:3, Jude 21)
- God has mercy on whom He will (Romans 9:15-18)

The Lord Desires Mercy, Not Sacrifice:

Under the Old Testament Law, animal sacrifice was required for forgiveness of sins. The animal sacrifice represented judgment on the animal in place of the offerer, and this foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice for us. However, without mercy in one's heart, sacrifice is pointless. For example:

- The Prophets Hosea and Micah had said it (Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8)
- The Scribes and Pharisees didn't understand it (Matthew 9:13, 12:7, 23:23)
- Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy (James 2:13)
- The wisdom from above is full of mercy (James 3:17)

***Eleos* (Mercy) is Often Translated "Alms":**

Exploring further the depth of the word *eleos*, it is often translated "alms" from its use in context. But "alms" are merely mercy shown from one person to another in terms of money. Following are some examples where *eleos* could be translated either "mercy" or "alms":

- The Good Samaritan showed mercy (Luke 10:37)
- Dorcas of Lydda was full of good works and of mercy (Acts 9:36)
- Cornelius of Caesarea showed much mercy to the people (Acts 10:1-2). His mercy went up as a memorial before God, (v.4) and was remembered in the sight of God (v.31).
- Paul took a collection in Achaia and Macedonia (Romans 15:25-28) at the end of his third missionary journey. He called this mercies and offerings for his nation (Acts 24:17).
- By showing mercy, we gain treasure in heaven (Luke 12:31-33)
- Jesus spoke to the Pharisees: "You clean the outside of the cup or dish, but the inside is full of robbery and wickedness. Give mercy and the inside is clean also" (Luke 11:39-41). Showing mercy cleans out our insides also.
- When we show mercy, we are exhorted to do so cheerfully (Romans 12:8). There is a lot to be cheerful about.
- And also secretly, that our Father who sees in secret will reward us openly (Matthew 6:1-4), where only God sees the good stuff.

All this is quite a depth to the simple request, "Lord have mercy" that we say so often for ourselves and others. Mercy was a major focus of the message of the Twelve Apostles. We see this in their greetings in their writings: "Grace, mercy and peace..." (2 John 3, 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4). "Mercy, peace and love..." (Jude 2). "Peace and mercy on the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). With this as a background, it's hard to imagine that we could say "Lord have mercy" too often.