



**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Saturday, March 6, 2021**

**Scripture: Hebrews 4:16 / John 1:16 / Ephesians 1:3**

**TITLE: Focus on the Blessing**

What comes to mind when I say the words mercy and grace? My mind immediately goes to *Les Misérables*. There's this great scene where Jean Valjean steals from a bishop who has shown him great compassion. Justice comes quickly, as Valjean is arrested and brought back to the bishop. In a move only powered by God, the bishop says, "My friend, you left so early. Surely something slipped your mind. You forget I gave these also. Would you leave the best behind?" And the bishop hands Valjean two silver candlesticks. The police release Valjean, and the bishop forgives Valjean.

Mercy was in denial of the theft. Grace was the gift of the silver, but also a second chance. If you're in need of a dose of mercy and grace, then look no further than God.

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) says, "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

Think about what the writer of Hebrews just said. We, who are sinners, because of what Christ has done, can boldly approach God. God is King of the universe, yet as His children, we can come before with him with boldness. Some translations say "confidence." And what is it we will experience for approaching the King? Grace and mercy when we need it most.

Mercy is the withholding of what's deserved. Grace is receiving something we don't deserve.

God, who is the holy and perfect Creator of the universe, welcomes us into an intimate relationship with Him. And when we enter into His presence, He withholds our just punishment, and instead, pours out grace.

John 1:16 says, "From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another."

Ephesians 1:3 says, "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ."

Friend, I don't know about you, but I've made a lot of bad decisions. I've sinned a lot and hurt a lot of people. If it wasn't for God's mercy and grace, I'd be homeless, alone, divorced, rejected, and hopeless. But instead of this, I come home to a beautiful wife. I come home to a home full of boys who love and respect me. I get to be part of a ministry unlike any other. And I could keep going.

What about you? How has God's mercy and grace overwhelmed you? Maybe you don't have the nicest car or the biggest house. Who cares? Whatever you do have is grace upon grace.

So here's my challenge for you today:

Count blessings. Make a list of God's grace in your life today. What are the spiritual blessings? The relational blessings? What are the physical gifts?

Relish in the mercy and grace of God - And thank Him.

Focus on mercy and grace. Then, share it with us below. Let's celebrate our gracious and merciful God and King.

Now, together, let's go win the day!