

Upcoming Events...

Galatians Class: Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

Barnabas Group Meeting: January 30

Welcome New Member!! Mike Atkins

Address: 67 Rio Street, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

Phone: (760) 409-5080

God's Mercy

"The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23

January Birthdays

5 John Aguiar 14 Juanita Small

January Anniversaries

8 Bob & Debbie Pescador

February Birthdays

8 Zoie Perales 25 Mike McKnight

February Anniversaries

5 Mike & Morgie McKnight

Indio Informer

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God Delights in Mercy

(Part One of Two)

A reporter asked Winston Churchill what prepared him to risk political suicide by speaking out so strongly so early against Adolph Hitler. Churchill said he thought it might have been the time he had to repeat a grade in elementary school. "You mean you failed a year in grade school?" the reporter asked incredulously. Churchill retorted, indignantly, "I never failed anything in my life. I was always given a second opportunity to get it right."

Most of us need a "second opportunity to get it right." God is more than willing to give us that opportunity. He is rich in mercy, love, and grace (Ephesians 2:4). He especially delights in mercy: *"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy"* (Micah 7:18).

A God Who Runs: A Place at God's Table

One of the all-time greatest stories ever told is that of a son who ran away from home with his pockets full of his father's hard-earned money. Predictably, he famously and foolishly spent it all.

Read again Jesus' lovely story (Luke 15:11-20). Let's try to imagine how it might have happened in that Jewish family so long ago.

Hungry, sad, and alone, the boy finally resolved to go back to his father's farm and see if he could get on as hired help. As he trudged mile after mile, he rehearsed what he would say and wondered what the reaction would be. Would his father refuse to see him? Would he send out a servant to tell him that he had made his bed

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Sunday.....6:00 p.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Church of Christ

81-377 Ave 46
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(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

Preacher:

Mike McKnight

and now he had to lie in it? As he rounded the last curve, he saw the home place far in the distance. With his heart in his throat and a knot in his stomach, he thought...Here we go.

His father was the first to spot him—his dim old eyes out-seeing far younger ones because they were sharpened by longing and love. He had glanced down that road a thousand times before. This time he did a double take. Is that a dot on the horizon? Who is coming to the farm? It looks like ... could it be? Yes!

Then something unusual happened. Perhaps field hands leaned on hoe handles to watch. In the barn, a worker stopped with a hay bale halfway to its landing spot. Kitchen staff stepped on the porch to better see. The master was running. They had never seen that before. He had pulled up his long robe and taken off down the road toward town. Their eyes followed his path to see where he was going, and they saw in the distance a lone silhouette.

As the father drew near, he threw his arms around the boy, kissing him—and you can almost see his wide smile as he sized up the young man. Then a cloud crossed his lined face as a closer examination noted the loose fit of the clothes, the rank smell of his body odor, and the new sadness around those once-innocent eyes.

The father interrupted the boy's prepared speech about wanting a servant's job if one was available. The master barked commands to the servants as they neared the house: Get the boy something to eat! He needs new clothes! Get ready for the party we'll soon have. My son that was dead is alive!

Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son was given to show us that God gives second chances. To some extent, we have all worn that prodigal's clothes. We've all smelled of the pig pen and felt hunger gnaw at us as sin's feast turned into its inevitable famine (James 1:15). We can vividly recall the excitement of the trip to that distant sin-city, and many of us have lived long enough to long again for what we left behind. We've seen the disappointment in

our Father's eyes over our bad decisions and foolish mistakes. We've come back with hat in hand.

We may be wondering if the welcome mat is still out for us. No matter, we picture the Father saying. Just come back. My love is unwavering. We could never be *persona non grata* here. Come home. There's plenty of bread on the table, plenty of love to go around. God just longs for the family to be complete again. He pines away waiting for us to make the first move (Revelation 3:20). When we do, He enthusiastically rushes to meet us well on our side of the halfway mark.

A God Who Waits: Filling Heaven's Mansions

Christ's second coming is presently delayed by God's long-suffering. Peter wrote of the Lord's promised return: "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9).

Of course, if we received what we deserve for our sins, we would all be swiftly and summarily condemned (Psalm 37:38; James 2:13). There would be no second chances. But God gives us both grace and space to repent (Ephesians 2:8–9; Revelation 2:21). Desiring that no person be eternally lost, He leaves the door of repentance open to all (Acts 17:30–31; Romans 2:4–5). He wants as many with Him in heaven as can be persuaded to make a reservation for a mansion there (John 14:1–3; Revelation 21:1–4).

Our sins could never be greater than God's grace. Our failures could never surpass God's love. The mistakes in our past do not predict our future. Remember, "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

...To be continued next week: **A God Who Stays: Trophies of God's Grace.** You could say that the Bible is a "trophy case" that contains the greatest feats of grace the earth saw in its first four thousand years. Evidence next week!