

Got Questions: What is the Difference Between Mercy and Grace?

Is There a Difference between Mercy and Grace?

Exodus 34:6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

Ephesians 2:4 – 9

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,
5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Mercy - we don't get what we deserve.

Grace - we get what we don't deserve.

Man's Presumptions of Deservedness Vs. God's Mercy and Grace

- The Metaphysical Optimist:
 - We are living in a universe of inherent justice (as I judge it myself to be)
 - Good things happen to good people
 - Bad things happen to bad people
 - I'm totally a “good person” (as I judge myself to be)
- The Metaphysical Pessimist:
 - We are living in a universe devoid of justice (as I judge it myself to be)
 - The notions of good and bad don't really exist
 - Things happen to people without meaning
 - But still, I'm totally a “good person” (as I judge myself to be)
- The Christian:
 - We are living in a universe ruled over by a God of justice (He is the judge, not me)
 - Mercy keeps us from getting what we deserve
 - Grace provides for us what we don't deserve
 - I am not a “good person” (but justice was satisfied for me at Calvary)

Why Do Humans Presume Themselves to Be Their Own Judges?

Genesis 3:1 – 6

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- Sin within us deceives us into presuming that we can know and judge good and evil on our own, without God. After all, are we just like him?



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Who is a “Good Person?” - What Do We All Actually Deserve?

Romans 3:10 – 18, 23

10 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;

11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

13 “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.”

14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 in their paths are ruin and misery,

17 and the way of peace they have not known.”

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

- Ours is a gospel of mercy and grace
 - Mercy - Christ took for us what we earned; the penalty we all deserved.
 - Grace - Christ offers to us what he earned; the reward only he deserved.

An Example of Despising God’s Grace

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard - **Matthew 20:1 – 16**

Verse 1 - early in the morning (*prōi*): at dawn, at about **6:00 AM**

Verse 2 - denarius: a fair wage for a day’s worth of work

Verse 3 - The third hour was about **9:00 AM**

Verse 5 - The sixth hour was about **12 noon**. The ninth hour was about **3:00 PM**.

Verse 6 - The eleventh hour was about **5:00 PM**. There is one working hour left in the day.

Question #1 - *Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?*

Question #2 - *Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?*

Question #3 - *Or do you begrudge my generosity?*

An Example of Despising God’s Mercy

Jonah 2:7 - 9

7 When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.

9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

Steadfast love(*hesed*): steadfast love, loving-kindness, compassion, mercy

Jonah 4:2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love(*hesed*), and relenting from disaster.

