

GOD OF MERCY (CHESD)

God lovingly, faithfully cares for His covenant people, summarized in the Hebrew term **chesed**.

SCRIPTURE*	MUSIC†
Exodus 15:1-13 Exodus 20:5 Psalm 63:3 Psalm 103 Psalm 118:4-6 Psalm 119:57-64 Psalm 119:73-77 Psalm 130:1-4 Psalm 130 Lamentations 3:21-24 Luke 18:35-43 Ephesians 2:1-10 Hebrews 4:12-16 (Occurs ~245 times in O.T.)	Compassion Hymn From Everlasting to Everlasting (Berry) SATB God Is So Good Great Is Thy Faithfulness Hymn of Mercy (Forrest) SATB I Will Sing of the Mercies Mercies Anew Merciful God (arr. Ijames) SATB My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness O God Beyond All Praising Praise to the Lord, the Almighty Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven Still, My Soul, Be Still (Koerts) SATB You Are Always Good



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* Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

† Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

BEYOND WITHHOLDING PUNISHMENT

Psalm 23 | *Mercy is not just withholding punishment. God is often viewed as grudgingly showing mercy to allow us into heaven, but that is not how God shows Himself in His Word. In Psalm 23, David describes God as a Shepherd who gives everything he needs, “prepares a table,” and fills his cup to overflowing. God’s mercy is emotional and relational. (Include example of Siberian Christians preparing a meal and joyfully giving all they had.) “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Revelation 19 tells us that one day there will be a marriage supper of the Lamb. God’s mercy invites us to sit at His table, and He has sacrificed his own Son to allow us to do so.*

CHESSED

Explain the meaning of the Hebrew word chesed. Often translated “tender mercies” or “lovingkindness,” this term carries the idea of a deep commitment to the good of another person. It includes the idea of sternness, but that sternness is always coupled with a deep loyalty and care. Mothers often demonstrate this kind of special care, but God is the perfect source of chesed.

When we think of God’s mercy, often the first concept we think of is His forgiveness. Many times, God does not give us what we deserve, and we call this His mercy; we thank Him for it, and rightly so! But God’s mercy actually entails even more than forgiveness. In the Old Testament, the word frequently translated “mercy” is the Hebrew word chesed. This particular word is used regularly to describe how God relates to His people, and understanding its meaning can help us to better understand God’s disposition toward His children. Besides “mercy” or “tender mercies,” chesed can also be translated “lovingkindness,” “favor,” or “steadfast love.” As the various translations of the word indicate, this is a multi-faceted concept rather than a single way in which God interacts with us.

Chesed carries the idea of a deep commitment to the good of another person. It doesn’t give up loving that person, even in the face of rejection or rebellion; instead, it remains steadfast. It also includes the idea of sternness, but that sternness is always coupled with a deep loyalty and care. It acts for the good of the other person, and sometimes that good comes in the form of correction. Chesed is an unfailing, kind, and merciful love. For many of us here today, on a human level, our mothers have demonstrated this kind of special care toward us. Maybe Mom was the one who always encouraged you to do what was right, the one who cheered you on through successes and setbacks. For many of us, Mom was one of the first people to correct sin

in our lives and also one of the first to shed tears of joy when she witnessed a heart of repentance.

Of course, some of us have not had mothers who reflected God's chesed in our lives. Or perhaps, as a mother yourself, a deeper understanding of God's character has caused you to recognize your failure to treat your children with the same mercy that God has shown to you. Whatever your situation, there's good news today. First, God has revealed Himself to us as the perfect source of chesed. Without Him, we wouldn't even have a true concept of what a good mother is or how we can imitate His lovingkindness in our relationships with others. Second, He offers this incredible love and mercy to us individually. Your mother may or may not have loved you loyally, but God extends His gift of loving mercy for all who will accept it by faith. And this mercy, God's chesed, is an immeasurable, endless love. Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Amy Tilson)

WHAT WE DESERVE

Ask the congregation to take time to think about what it is that we really deserve. Do you deserve a good marriage, your children, a house to live in, a vacation or time to yourself? Many people may say that they don't deserve anything from God, but actually that is not true either. What we do deserve is eternal punishment for our sin and the full natural consequences of the wrong/foolish choices we make as we live in a fallen world. In His mercy, God spares us that "evil" and gives us many blessings.

"WORSE THAN HE THINKS ME TO BE"

Use a quotation from Charles Spurgeon to introduce the concept of God's mercy: "If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him; for you are worse than he thinks you to be." Realizing how much we need God's mercy is humbling, but it should also make us grateful. We don't deserve anything that God gives us, yet He continue to show us mercy - new mercy every morning. This mercy is precious to us when we see that what He is giving us is truly mercy instead of being upset that we are not getting what we think we deserve.