

**Psalm 5: 1-12; "In the Multitude of Your Mercy", A Communion
Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 7th, 2010,
in preparation for taking the Lord's Supper,
during the Morning Worship Service.**

We have come here, once again this morning, to partake of the Lord's Supper; to remember our Lord Jesus Christ, and all that He has done for us. Our God has given us all things in Christ. And He would have us to remember the many mercies that have been shown to us, because He gave His Son to us. It says in verse 7, "But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy." God's mercy is His not choosing to judge us or to punish us for our sins and mistakes, but rather to pity us and show us compassion, patience, and favor for Christ's sake. He sees that we are sinful and needy, helpless and dependent, and He chooses not to punish us or ignore us, but to save us and help us. If you have come into this house this morning as a believer, you come here with a multitude of mercy at work in your life. A multitude is a vast number, and so we must conclude that; for you and I to have come here this morning; for you and I to have become worshipers of the true and living God; has required on God's part, that he had to show us a multitude of His mercy. Notice the peculiar wording here. It is a multitude of His mercy; the word mercy being in the singular, not in the plural. It could have been worded: "in the multitude of your mercies." (plural) But it is not. I think that the reason for this is because all of the saving mercy of God is bound up in His one gift of Christ to the person who believes in Him. There are a multitude of mercies which God bestows upon a believer, but they are all found in the one person Christ; and that is why it is worded in that way. The old NASB words it this way: "But as for me, by Thine abundant lovingkindness I will enter Thy temple." "At Thy holy temple I will bow in reverence for Thee." I hope each person here this morning will bow in reverence and worship God, as I make mention of 3 of the mercies which are mentioned here in this Psalm; 3 out of a multitude, which I hope will permit you to better remember what God has done for you, a sinner, in giving you Christ. We will look first of all at the truth that it was a very great mercy to you that you came to realize that God is a prayer-hearing God. We will look secondly at the truth that it was a very great mercy when you came to realize that God leads you in His righteousness. And thirdly, I want you to see that it is a very great mercy to you when you realize that God would have you to be joyful in Christ forevermore.

1st of all – It was a very great mercy when you came to realize that God is a prayer-hearing God. (Verses 1-3)

"Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation." "Consider my groaning," it says in some translations. "Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, for to You I will pray." My voice you shall hear in the morning, O

Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up." Let me ask you this question. When did you first learn to pray to God? Was it on your mother's knee? Was it by your father's side? Mine was by my father's side. We would kneel down next to my bed at his request, and he would have me repeat after him verses which he had memorized from the Scripture. Deuteronomy 6, verse 4 – "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." And he had me repeat these words after him, and also the words of other verses, as he said them. Neither he, nor I, knew the Lord at that point in time. A person may be a person who is praying, but they may not be a person who is finding God. Some people may be praying out of a sense of duty. They know, and they are saying to themselves, "This is what I should do if I would approach God or make progress in doing what He commands." They are praying, but they are not finding God or the answers to their prayers, because their heart has never really been changed by grace to know God. They have rejected the idea that they need to be converted; what is called being born again. Their knowledge of God is not personal. But the Psalmist David calls God, "his King and his God", in verse 2. He calls him, "Lord", in verses 1 and 3. But how does a person come to the place where they find God to be their God? It is when they get dead serious about it and are groaning in their heart to find the answer to their many questions about the meaning of life. Verse 1 says, "Give ear to my words, consider my groaning, and give heed to the voice of my cry." There is a seriousness here, not a casualness. There is a begging of God to consider the thoughts and the meditation of his heart; a pleading that God would have mercy and show him the way of life. David was a person who wanted God to rule over his life, and he declares to Him that it so. Has this been something that you have done? Have you said to God that you want Him to be your God? If you are unsure of whether you are a Christian, or you want to become a Christian, you must ask God to give heed to the voice of your cry," as it says in verse 2. You must learn to pray with your heart, your mind, and your voice. You have come here into God's house today, but will you pray? If you know the multitude of mercy that awaits you in Christ, you will. Have you prayed already this morning? When you arise in the morning, do you pray to God and ask him to bless you this day? Do you ask Him to give you grace to worship Him and honor Him? Or, are you so casual about the idea of knowing God, that you never really get around to it?

Words spoken in prayer are very important to God. They are how you come to Him and they are how you honor Him. If you as a person would have the guilt of all your sins removed, and come to know God, then you must begin to speak to Him, and to ask Him to take away all your iniquity. Don't rest satisfied in a confession of the sins of the nation that you live in, or the confession of your own sinfulness in a general sense, but get down to brass tacks with God. Tell Him of all the other things which have charmed you most, and which you have put in front of Him in the line-up of your priorities; of what is most important. Ask Him to take

away your iniquity; the guiltiness and the shame of your sins of having other gods before Him. And if you as a Christian feel that you are far from God, you also must come to the place where you will seek Him again as you sought Him the first time, when you found Him. The words that you speak in prayer must come from your heart once again, and not simply be words without feeling or meaning behind them. I want to spend a few minutes now, coupling the truth of Psalm concerning prayer, with the truth of another passage which will relate well to it. Turn with me to Hosea Chapter 14 verse 1, and you will find God's exhortation to the people of Israel in that day, to do that very thing. "O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; take words with you, and return to the Lord." Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips." "We will not ride on horses, nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, 'you are our gods.'" "For in You the fatherless finds mercy." Now the nation of Israel in that day had fallen under the judgments of God against them because of their iniquity, it says in verse 1. They had stumbled in thinking that if they could just have the nation of Assyria help them out militarily that they would be saved from their national calamities. The work of their own hands had become their god. They had become more interested in worshiping these false gods which men's hands had made, instead of the true and living God who had made them, and had given them every good thing, materially and spiritually in their lives. We are living in a nation like that today. But don't blame others; I want you to think about yourself.

Do you see what is most important to God? It is that you give Him your heart. It is that you give Him the highest allegiance in your life; that you will not let anything or anyone be more important to you than God. It is that you would love Him with all of your heart, and that your heart would not be divided between Him and all of your worldly interests and entertainments. If you are at work, you learn to pray in your work. If you are at home, you learn to pray while at home. If you time on your hands, you pray as to how God would have you to use it. Remember what it says in Psalm 5, verse 2 - "For to You I will pray." "My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord." This is love to God through Jesus Christ your Mediator; it is that you would direct your prayer to Him in the morning and look up to Him for the answers. It is that out of this prayer relationship with God that you would come to pay greater attention to His Word in all the things that He commands of you. In all the things that He expects of you; that you would pursue the good things which God gives in our Lord Jesus Christ, rather than the vain and empty things and the passing pleasures of sin that worldly people pay attention to. They find all of their satisfactions in life by pursuing the world and things of the world without a second thought of God. What they are pursuing are modern idols. Modern idols are those activities and pursuits where Christ's name is never mentioned, where his Word is never considered. It is the worship of those gods of self-interest, money, fame, and pleasure. It is the worship of the strength of the body without any consideration of Christ, who alone is the salvation and strength

of the soul. When you live with a worldly philosophy of life like this; a philosophy that leaves God and the words and commandments of the Bible out; then you are ungodly. Don't fool yourself; if all of your activities in life are pursued continually without a prayer to God for His help and His guidance, His wisdom and His grace; then you are actually pushing God out of your life, and out of your family's life if you are the head of a household. But your goal in life if you are a Christian, or if you would be a Christian, will be to make God's expectations your highest consideration. You will begin think of what He would be pleased with, in terms of the way that you live your life. What will cause you to change, to become like this if you are not currently seeking Him as David does in Psalm 5? What will change your unthinking, unfeeling heart toward God if you are doing this; leaving God out of all of your thoughts? And what will change you, if you are a backslidden Christian? It is only by coming to Christ and returning to God through Him. It is that you would take words with you and return to the Lord. It is that you would say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; receive me graciously;" for Christ's sake. This is how you come to know God, and this is how you come to honor God with your lips and with your life.

Now let's think about this for just a few moments more. You may be a backslidden Christian. You know what you should be doing according to the Word of God, but you are not doing it from a heart filled with thankful love to God for what He has given to you in Christ, and what He has shown you in His Word. You are not in some outward and obvious sin, but you have no heart to serve God in the way that I have just described. But I am saying, and our text is saying, that if you pray in all sincerity; believing that Christ will change you; that things will change for the better for you, and God will be pleased with you. This is what you should be doing when you come to the Lord's Table. When you come remembering the dying love of Jesus, the merit of what your Savior did at the cross, and His suffering in your place; when you remember that He rose again for your justification and that you might have abundant spiritual life and strength; then something tremendous begins to happen. God does exactly what He says He will do for Israel in Hosea 14: 4: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him." You should know, if you do not know, that God's anger is turned away from you in Christ. How can God punish you if He has punished Christ? How can God remain angry with any believer for more than a moment, because of what Christ has done to satisfy His wrath. No, although He may hold His anger for a moment, over the believer's sins, His favor is for a lifetime, and indeed for all eternity.

And what can possibly prevent God's blessing you with all the life and the grace that will lead to greater godliness if you pray? This is why Jesus died. Verse 5 of Hosea 14 says, "I will be like the dew to Israel. Do you know that when you pray in the name of the Lord Jesus that you really can expect God to do wonderful and powerful things in your life? Verse 3 in our Psalm 5 speaks of this when it says, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct

it to You, and I will look up." That is; David would look up expectantly to God in prayer to know the reality of the dew of the Holy Spirit's gracious influences upon his life. Proverbs 19: 12 says, "The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion." "But his favor is like dew on the grass." So it is with our God as well. All of the refreshment of your soul, all of the nourishment of the plant of faith in your life, comes from the grace of Christ, which comes to you by His blessed Spirit on the basis of prayer. This is what we thank God for in the Lord's Supper. We know the reality of the dew of heaven upon our souls because of Christ's death. We now know the reality of His blessed grace falling like dew upon our hearts. Do you know the reality of these other things mentioned in Hosea 14; the lengthening of the roots which you have put down in Christ? Your roots must go downward into what He has done for you at the cross before you can bear fruit upward for God. This will come about over time when you continue to pray and look up. The promise of verse 6 is that you shall lengthen your roots like Lebanon and the spiritual growth of the branches of your obedience to God shall indeed spread out. Your spiritual beauty will be like an olive tree, and your fragrance like Lebanon. In the words of verse 7 of Hosea 14: "Those who dwell under the shadow", (That is of Christ's tree; His cross), shall return." They shall return to God; they "shall be revived like grain and grow like a vine, and the scent of their graces and the taste of their good works shall be like the wine of Lebanon to everyone who knows what Christ can do, and even to some who don't. Jesus says in John 15: 5 and following, "I am the vine, and you are the branches." "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." But, "if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." You can see the connection with everything that we are studying this morning in verse 8 of Hosea 14. "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do anymore with idols?" "I have heard and observed him." "I am like a green cypress tree; your fruit is found in Me." That is all of our fruitfulness in God's service is found in Christ, who is represented by the green cypress tree. Upon the cruel wood of the cross Christ was nailed for our sakes. But in His resurrection His cross, and His work upon it, became a green cypress tree; a great fruit-bearing tree of life to everyone who would believe in Him. All of our fruit is found in Him. And all of our relationship with the Father and with the Son and with the Holy Spirit is cultivated in prayer; asking God for everything pertaining to life and godliness, that these would become a reality in our lives.

Now 2ndly - We will look at the truth that it was a very great mercy when you came to realize that God leads you in His righteousness.
(Verses 4-8)

"For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You." "The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity." "You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." "But as for me, I will come into Your house in the

multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple." "Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before my face." It is this last verse, verse 8, that I would like to focus your attention upon for a few moments. When we pray to God, we pray to God, not only to save us and deliver us from all of our sins, but we pray that He would also lead us, every day, in His righteousness, because of our enemies. The point here is that, having been saved, we want to so live our lives, now, that we will not dishonor God and bring reproach upon His holy name by our misconduct, or our continuing in any known sin. Our enemies; that is Satan, and all unbelieving and scoffing men will make the most of our faults, and will attempt to discredit anybody's need to repent, and to believe the gospel, and to live to God themselves. Many unbelieving people are at war with God's being holy. They are at war with God's being a righteous and a mighty Judge; One who will most certainly judge the world in a coming day through the Man whom He has appointed; that is our Lord Jesus Christ. You and I must pray to be led in God's righteousness so that many others will come to believe, not only in the reality of the coming judgment, but also in the reality of the goodness of God's house. We must pray to be faithful representatives of both so that all people around us will know both the multitude of mercy which awaits them if they will believe in, and follow Christ; and the awful consequences which will come to the person who holds to their sin, and who rejects the gospel of Christ and His grace.

David, here in his prayer in verse 4, reminds himself even as we ought to remind ourselves this morning; that "God is not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness." "No evil dwells with You." If this is so, then you and I must learn to hate what God hates and to love what God loves. Although God has ordained all things after the counsel of His own will; whatsoever comes to pass, He has ordained it for His glory; this does not mean that God at all, or in any sense approves of it. "No evil dwells with Him." Literally, it reads; "No evil shall sojourn with You." Evil does not co-exist with God in any shape or form. There is no shifting of shadow and no turning of God to in any way look favorably upon it, it says in James Chapter 1 and verse 17. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look of wickedness," it says in Habakkuk 1: 13. You and I, by the grace of Christ, must strive to be more like God. As a Christian, we strive to be like God in all of His holy attitudes, and defend His righteousness and His holiness to other people around us. And we will do this, Lord helping us, without falling in self-righteousness; thinking that we are better than others, or conveying the attitude that we could never fall into sin. God cannot sin, but that does not mean that we could not fall into sin. "There, but by the grace of God, go I", ought to be our attitude. And yet it is said of the Lord Jesus that He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. You as a Christian who is being conformed to the image of Christ, are called to both as well. Ask, yourself this morning; do I really hate lawlessness, or do I condone it and never do anything to stem its awful tide. We must pray, if we would become more like Christ, that our repentance would be deep and thorough

and that we would be able to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. If we would repent of every known sin in our lives we must by the Spirit pray that we might learn to guard our own hearts better. We should pray and ask Christ to give us the help and the grace to put to death the motions of sin in our own hearts, so that we forsake our sins and gain the victory over them. I am talking about pride, and foolishness, and sensuality, and selfish ambition. I am talking about backbiting, and speaking against the brethren. I am talking about envy and covetousness which is a form of idolatry.

When we see our own need for grace to be able to thoroughly repent, then we will be able to speak to people around us in a humble way about the perfect righteousness of our God as seen in Jesus Christ, which must be received if we are to be saved. They will see that a Christian needs Christ's grace continually to keep from stumbling and falling. That is one of the best way that we can convince them by the Spirit's power that, "God hates all workers of iniquity." "He shall destroy those who speak falsehood; He abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." They will be helped to see the light, when they see what He has done for us, that He is perfect in holiness and we are not. Because He is perfect in holiness He has every right to judge the wicked, to set aside the boastful, and cast down to hell the wicked person who will not repent. We, as Christians, want this truth to be known. But the way that you can know that you are being led in God's righteousness is when you are humble and trusting in the Lord to help you to do what He has commanded you to do, and to not boast in your own strength and accomplishments. "The boastful shall not stand in Your sight," it says in verse 5. Rather, the Christian is called, being led in God's righteousness, to boast in the Lord. You and I here today, about to come to the Lord's Table. Let us come, being convinced, that we have been led in God's righteousness. When we confess that all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags, and that Jesus Christ's righteousness is the only righteousness that will save us; we are being led in the right way. It is in the fear of God that we now worship His holy temple. The Church of Jesus Christ is the temple of His holiness, in New Testament times. It is the people who gather together to worship God in spirit and in truth, who are the temple of God. Christ is here to meet with us. We cannot see him with physical eyes, but He is here. When you fear God, with a holy fear, you draw near to Him. You have regard for Him. You confess that you love Him. So let us draw near to Him now to take His Supper and confess our need for Christ to continually help us. Let us pray and ask Him to "make His way straight before our face." Let's now come down front together.

Then 3rdly, before we partake of this Supper, I want you to see that it is a very great mercy to you when you realize that God would have you to be joyful in Christ forevermore. (Verses 11 and 12)

"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You." "for You, O Lord will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with

a shield." This is a very great mercy indeed; to realize that in Christ all of our sins are forgiven, and that we now possess a better righteousness than we could ever possibly work out on our own. In your spirit, right now O Christian, you should be rejoicing; you should be shouting. It would not hurt us at all, and it would not dishonor God in the least, if we were all to break out and shout Hallelujah, because of the victory that Jesus has won on our behalf. But the intent of these verses is not so much that we might vent our emotions and feelings of thankfulness in the public place of worship, as much as it is a good thing that God sees that this is how we feel, continually, in our spirit. Because the text says, "Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them. The word "defend", here, means to cover. It is a word which we may appropriately use to speak about the atonement of Christ. This is how God defends us from all of our enemies which would overthrow our soul. This is how God covers our transgressions and sins from His own righteous wrath; it is through the sacrifice and offering of His Son on the cross. When you give your thanks in the taking of this Supper, remember to thank the Father who gave you His Son, and remember to thank the Spirit who applies the redemption purchased by Christ. And remember that as you walk through this life; that if you love the name of the Lord Jesus; that name which is above every name and most precious; you will consciously remember to be joyful. Remembering all that Jesus did in His righteousness, and all He bore for you on the cross, ought to bring you joy. And you should be careful, as a part of your solemn worship of Him, to be joyful. It brings joy to the heart of God to know that what He has done for you through Christ, how He has, and He ever will, make you eternally joyful. Jesus said in John 15: 9 – "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." The joy that the Lord Jesus is speaking of, is the joy which came to His holy heart as He thought about all that His sufferings would accomplish, in our being united to Him as His Bride. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And He is now sitting down, joyful, at the thought of all the people who have been redeemed to God. His joy ought to make us joyful, and that joy ought to remain in us and with us every day. It ought to make our hearts full of gladness even at this hour. How can you be sad when you have such a Savior, such a Lord, and such a friend, who laid down His life for you?

The reason for your being joyful is given, here, if what I have already said was not enough. "For you, O Lord will bless the righteous." God will be faithful to His covenant. The one who believes in Jesus, He will most certainly and definitely bless with the gift of eternal life. But just as great as that thought is, is this thought; that all the way to heaven, and all the way to the New Heavens and New Earth, He will surround His people with His favor "as with a shield." His favor is a shield. It protects us most certainly and definitely from His wrath, which is most certainly and definitely coming upon the ungodly. But God's favor in Christ also

protects us continually from our being ruined eternally by our own sins and the schemes of the evil, and the pull of this world. God knows how to lead us righteously. He knows how to "deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." May we ever be joyful as we think about this. May we rejoice together now at every remembrance of Him.