Our God Is A Merciful and Forgiving God
Psalm 86:5 (NKJV)

Before I get into today's message I want to say something. **There is someone here this morning** who desperately needs to hear this message. In fact, there may be “several someones' .

I'm talking to those of you who have made some monumental mistakes in life who have never been able to forgive yourself or to accept God's forgiveness. I'm talking to those of you who live with persistent, nagging doubts about your salvation and your relationship with God. I'm talking to those of you who have “lost the joy of your salvation” because you are carrying a heavy burden of guilt and shame over past sins.

If that “someone” happens to be you, I pray that GOD will use today's message to encourage you, and strengthen you, and restore your confidence and joy.

In this fourth message in our series “Knowing The Living God” we are actually going to look at two wonderful attributes of GOD that go together like “a hand and a glove” and that is God's mercy and God's forgiveness. **OUR GOD IS A MERCIFUL AND FORGIVING GOD !**

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Psalm 86:5 (NKJV)**

> For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.
Introduction

ILLUSTRATION: I doubt that any of you are familiar with the name Bette Nesmith Graham, but if you ever used a typewriter I'm sure you probably used her product.

For many years the only thing that typists had to cover over their mistakes was the old typewriter eraser. Those of you who have grown up with computers have probably never even heard of a typewriter eraser. A typewriter eraser looked like pencil with an eraser on one end and a brush on the other to “sweep off” your paper after you erased your mistakes. I was never good with a typewriter eraser. No matter how hard I tried I would either leave an ugly black streak on my paper where I tried to erase my mistakes or I would rub too hard and tear a hole in my paper and have to start all over again.

In 1956 Bette Nesmith Graham invented a new product when she worked as a secretary at the Texas Bank and Trust. Frustrated by the unsightly marks left by a typewriter eraser, Graham got an idea one day to try covering over her “type-O's” with white tempera paint. Graham soon learned that if she allowed the paint to dry she could type right over the dried paint and her previous mistakes were barely visible.

Graham told other secretaries about it and before long she was mixing white tempera paint in her blender in the basement of her home and putting it in little bottles with an application brush, and selling her product “door to door.” Originally it was called “Mistake Out” and later “Correction Fluid.” But in time we came to know it as “Liquid Paper” or “White Out.”

Of course with the invention of personal computers we no longer need “white out” to cover over our typing mistakes. We can simply hit “backspace” or “the delete” key and erase our mistakes as though they never even happened.
Other than JESUS CHRIST, every human being who has ever lived on this earth has needed God's mercy and forgiveness,

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD.”
(Romans 3:23 NKJV)

“There is none righteous, no not one.” (Romans 3:10 NKJV)

Isaiah 64:6a (NKJV) But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

Who among us here this morning has lived a perfectly “sinless” life? Who among us has never made any bad choices and decisions? Who among us has never done anything shameful or regretful? Who among us has never taken some wrong paths and ill-advised detours in life?

The truth is every one of us are sinners! Everyone of us has done things......and said things......and thought things we are ashamed of.

And thank the LORD when it comes to our sins we have something far greater than “White Out!” We have the MERCY and FORGIVENESS OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

OUR GOD IS A MERCIFUL AND FORGIVING GOD!

As we think about GOD'S MERCY AND FORGIVENESS this morning there are three thoughts I would like to share with you.
First of all, let's consider.....

I. The **PROMISE** of God's **MERCY** and **FORGIVENESS**

1. I'm sure everyone of us has struggled with whether or not GOD has forgiven us of past or present sins. And the reason we struggle is because we base God's forgiveness on our “feelings”.

   We might say something like, “I don't feel forgiven.”
   Or, “I believe GOD forgives, but I just don't feel like He has forgiven me.”
   Or, “If God has forgiven me of my sins, why do I still feel so guilty?”

2. Feelings are a very bad and unreliable gauge to measure anything in the Christian life, especially when it comes to God's mercy and forgiveness.

3. Listen carefully! just because you may not “feel forgiven” doesn’t mean GOD has not forgiven you! Feelings change! Feelings fluctuate like the ocean tides. You may feel one thing one minute and feel something entirely different the next.

   Our feelings can be altered by a change in the weather, or losing a night's sleep, or by a bad day at work, or by taking a prescription medicine.

4. When it comes to receiving and accepting God's forgiveness you and I must not rely upon our feelings, we must rely upon our FAITH......OUR FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD.
5. The Bible is literally filled with promises of GOD'S mercy and forgiveness. Let me share just a few passages with you.

Let's begin with that scripture I read at the outset of the message in.....

Psalm 86:5 (NKJV) For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Psalm 32:5 (NKJV) I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Psalm 103:8-14 (NKJV)

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.
11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 130:3,4 (NKJV) If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, 0 Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

I John 1:9 (NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
6. Brothers and sisters, do you want to know just how thoroughly GOD FORGIVES YOU AND ME WHEN WE SIN? Listen to these scriptures:

ISAIAH 43:25 (NKJV) “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

JEREMIAH 31:34b (NKJV) For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

HEBREWS 10:17 (NKJV) “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

7. You see, God not only promises to forgive our sins, He promises to “blot our sins from His memory” so as never to hold those sins against us again.

8. Now this brings up a very important question: If GOD promises to forgive me of all my sins even to the point of remembering my sins no more, why do I struggle with so much doubt that God has forgiven me? Why do I still carry such a heavy burden of guilt and shame?

I’ll tell you why! You are listening to the voice of Satan instead of the voice of God. One of Satan’s most effective weapons against us is to constantly remind us of our sins. He wants us to REMEMBER all our sins that GOD has promised to “remember no more!”
Satan wants us to **replay our sins over and over again like a broken record.** Satan wants us live under a heavy burden of guilt and shame and beat ourselves up over sins God has long ago **forgiven and forgotten!** Satan wants us to believe that our sins are so awful and so numerous that we are beyond the realm of God's forgiveness.

And if Satan can get you and me to believe that lie he can gain the victory over us!

**ILLUSTRATION:** Back in the 1600's there lived a Puritan Minister in England by the name of **Richard Baxter.** Baxter once wrote about the emotional and spiritual dangers of carrying unnecessary guilt over sins that God has forgiven.

Baxter wrote..... **“Sorrow for sin may be overmuch. Over sorrow for one's sins swallows one up.”**

In that beautiful, eloquent old English language what Baxter was saying was simply this: When you and I constantly beat ourselves up and refuse to accept by faith God's promise of forgiveness, we will live in constant defeat and discouragement and never know the sweet taste of victory in our Christian life.
Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV)  “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Well now that we have considered The PROMISES of God’s MERCY and FORGIVENESS, let’s consider................

II. The PRICE of God's MERCY and FORGIVENESS

1. For centuries, man has believed he could “earn” or “pay for” his own forgiveness.

Back in the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church began propagating a false teaching whereby Church members could receive forgiveness of their sins by paying money to the Church. This was called “Indulgences” or “a sin tax.”

According to this false teaching one could pay a “sin tax” or “indulgence” for a past sin and be forgiven. They could not pay indulgences in advance for future sins they might commit, only for past sins.

Believing that they could receive forgiveness by paying a certain amount of money to the Church, sin and immorality spread throughout the Catholic Church like a cancer.

Even to this day the Catholic Church teaches that if one dies after living a particularly sinful life he or she can “earn forgiveness” by spending some time in a place they call “purgatory” to avoid going to hell.
2. It is not unusual in our Churches today to see Church members who have had a very sinful past try to “earn God's forgiveness” by going way overboard in doing good deeds to try to “balance the scales.”

Illustration: Years ago in one of the Churches I ministered in one of our married couples got a divorce after the husband had an adulterous relationship with a woman he met in a bar. In time, the two of them were married and he started bringing “the other woman” with him to Church, which was like “twisting the knife” in the heart of his former wife who still attended Church there.

Well shortly after she started attending Church she and her “trophy” husband came to my office one day and she wanted to be baptized. She informed me that she had grown up in the Church and that she had been baptized when she was a young girl. And she confessed that she had lived a very sinful life and wanted to get right with GOD. So I baptized her that afternoon.

Just a short time later this woman started volunteering for EVERYTHING. And when I say everything, I mean EVERYTHING! She volunteered to work with the young people and volunteered to take them on special trips. She volunteered to teach a Sunday School class, and work in Junior Church, and help out in the Church nursery on occasion. She volunteered to be the head of two or three committees.

In time this woman's motives became very obvious. For one thing, she was trying to “make up for her sinful past” or “earn God's forgiveness” by doing a lot of good things to balance the scales. Her other motive was more sinister, and that was she was hoping her involvement in everything would drive her husband's ex-wife out of the Church.
3. There is absolutely nothing you and I can do to buy God's forgiveness or earn God's forgiveness.

   God freely offers His forgiveness to those who accept His Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior! But we must understand GOD'S FORGIVENESS IS NOT FREE!

   Hebrews 9:22 (NKJV) And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

   Or as several translations say, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (meaning no forgiveness of sins)

   Romans 3:23-25 (NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

4. One of the great dangers we face in the Christian life is taking sin lightly and taking God's forgiveness for granted. How easy it is to fall into the trap of believing, “Its OK for me to sin because I know God will forgive me.”

5. Oh brothers and sisters we must never forget the price GOD PAID for our forgiveness! Our forgiveness cost God the life of His only begotten Son! Our forgiveness wasn't paid for with money......or gold......or silver. Our forgiveness was paid for with BLOOD......the precious, cleansing blood of the perfect Lamb of God.
6. We don't deserve to be forgiven of our sins! We dese

But because of God's great mercy and grace, God PAID OUR SIN DEBT IN FULL by giving the life of His only begotten Son as a ransom for you and me.

Well we have considered The PROMISES of God's MERCY and FORGIVENESS and we have considered The PRICE of God's MERCY and FORGIVENESS. Finally, let's consider……

III. The PEACE of Knowing God's MERCY and FORGIVENESS

ILLUSTRATION: Do you remember when you did something wrong when you were a little kid and you tried to hide it from your dad or mom? Boy, wasn’t that a miserable feeling? All that guilt and shame! Remember how things just didn’t seem right between you and your parents because you knew you were hiding something?

It didn’t change the fact that you were still your parent’s son or daughter did it? But it did affect your fellowship with your parents. It wasn’t until you confessed your wrong-doing that you finally had peace with your mom and dad again.

1. The same thing is true in our relationship with GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER! God is a merciful and forgiving God, but if we try to “hide” or “cover up” our sins, it will hinder our fellowship with GOD.

We can only know the peace of God's mercy and forgiveness when we “come clean” and confess our sins to God.”
Remember that wonderful promise GOD gives us in I John 1:9.....

If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Psalm 32:1 (NKJV) Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Romans 4:7 (NKJV) “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

2. Every student of God’s word knows that the word “blessed” in the scriptures means “happy.”

HAPPY is he whose transgression is forgiven.
HAPPY is he whose sin is covered.

3. There is no greater sense of peace and happiness than confessing your sins to your HEAVENLY FATHER and laying your head on your pillow at night knowing that He has forgiven you of all your sins and cleansed you of all unrighteousness!

CONCLUSION

Back in **1830** a man by the name of George Wilson was convicted of robbing the U.S. Mail and was sentenced to be hanged. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson, but he refused to accept it. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. Justice Marshall said, “A pardon is a slip of paper, the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon.”

GOD offers you and me a full pardon for our sins through the precious cleansing blood of His Son Jesus Christ. Shall we reject God’s pardon? Shall we refuse to accept God’s promise of forgiveness? OUR GOD IS A MERCIFUL AND FORGIVING GOD!