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God’s Mercy Extends to All People

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KEY VERSE

“Then Jesus answered her, ‘Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed instantly.” (Matthew 15:28)

READINGS

Isaiah 56:1-8; Psalm 67; Romans 11:1–7; Matthew 15:21–28

Introduction

In a world fractured by boundaries, prejudices, and exclusions, the message of the Gospel calls us into the radical mercy of God that transcends all barriers. Today, as we gather on this 12th Sunday after Pentecost, the Holy Scriptures lead us to explore a vital and transformative truth: God’s mercy extends to all people. The inclusive love of God is not limited by ethnicity, geography, religion, or social standing.In every generation, humanity tends to draw lines between “us” and “them.” But God’s love persistently moves beyond our constructed walls, reaching out to those who have been labelled unworthy or cast out. In today’s lectionary readings, we witness this powerful message of inclusive grace through the Prophet Isaiah, the Psalmist, the Apostle Paul, and most strikingly, through the actions of Jesus toward a Canaanite woman.Let us reflect deeply on this theme through four movements that flow from the four passages for today: from the Psalmist’s proclamation, Isaiah’s prophecy, Paul’s reassurance, and Jesus’ encounter.

God Blesses the Nations – Psalm 67

“Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.” (Psalm 67:3). Psalm 67 is a joyous celebration of God’s universal mercy and blessings. It reflects a deep yearning that all nations may come to know and worship the God of Israel. The psalm opens with a plea: “May God be gracious to us and bless us… so that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.”This is not a prayer for selfish gain but a petition that God’s goodness to Israel may become a channel for blessing the world. The psalmist sees the prosperity and mercy of God as something to be shared. The Church, likewise, must recognize that we are not the final recipients of God’s mercy but conduits of it to all people.Just as the light from a lighthouse does not belong to the lighthouse but to the ships lost at sea, so the blessings of the Church are not meant to be hoarded but shared. The Church must reflect God’s inclusive mercy, especially in a divided world.

A House of Prayer for All Peoples – Isaiah 56:1-8

“These I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer… for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” (Isaiah 56:7). The prophet Isaiah gives a radical vision of inclusion. The chapter addresses eunuchs and foreigners – people who were traditionally excluded from the temple worship. God declares that their faithfulness will not go unnoticed. Instead of rejection, they are welcomed into God’s house.This prophetic word reminds the Church to look beyond religious, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. In a country like India, where caste, tribe, religion, and region often divide us, the Church must embody God’s inclusive love.

Every person, regardless of background, has a place in God’s temple.

A church once placed a sign outside its sanctuary: “All are welcome.” But a tribal Christian who came in traditional attire was asked to sit at the back. God’s welcome is not mere sentiment – it must be practiced in our pews, leadership, language, and liturgy.

Mercy Beyond Rejection – Romans 11:1-7

“I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!” (Romans 11:1). Paul, in his pastoral anguish, addresses the apparent rejection of Israel. But he insists that God’s mercy is not finished with Israel. God’s election and call are irrevocable. Even in rejection, mercy triumphs. Paul reminds us that grace is not based on merit but on God’s sovereign love.This speaks to any community or individual who feels cast away. Sometimes, people are led to believe that God has forgotten them. But Scripture assures us: No one is beyond God’s reach.

A prisoner once wrote to a pastor: “I know I’m beyond redemption.” The pastor replied, “You may have fallen, but you fell into the arms of grace.” That is the gospel – no one is outside the circle of God’s mercy.Let us therefore look at others not as abandoned, but as awaiting the touch of grace.

Faith that Crosses Barriers – Matthew 15:21–28

“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” (Matthew 15:28). This Gospel passage is one of the most provocative moments in Jesus’ ministry. A Gentile woman approaches Jesus, pleading for her daughter’s healing. At first, Jesus is silent. Then, He states that His mission is to Israel. When she persists, He says, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”This exchange is jarring. But the woman does not back down. Her response is both humble and bold: “Even the dogs eat the crumbs.” Jesus marvels at her faith and grants her request.Here, Jesus publicly acknowledges a foreign woman’s faith as exemplary. It is a turning point, revealing that God’s mercy is not confined to boundaries. This woman, despite social, religious, and gender barriers, becomes a model of persistent faith.In many parts of our country, the voice of the marginalized – tribals, Dalits, women, religious minorities – is often silenced. But in today’s Gospel, their voice is lifted up. Jesus honours her faith, not her status.Let the Church learn from this Canaanite woman to be persistent in prayer, humble in spirit, and bold in faith.

Conclusion

The message today is crystal clear: God’s mercy is not the possession of the privileged; it is the inheritance of all who believe. Whether you are a foreigner, a forgotten one, or feel like an outsider, God’s mercy reaches you.Let this Sunday be a turning point for the Church. Let us become a people who reflect God’s generous mercy in our homes, churches, and communities. Let us break down the walls that divide and build bridges of grace. Let us declare with boldness and joy: God’s mercy extends to all people.

Prayer

Merciful God, We thank You that Your grace is wider than we imagine and Your love deeper than we deserve. Today, we rejoice that Your mercy extends to all – to the foreigner, the outcast, the rejected, and the forgotten.Help us, O Lord, to be instruments of Your mercy. Teach us to welcome all as You have welcomed us. Forgive us for the times we have excluded others. Give us the faith of the Canaanite woman, the vision of Isaiah, the passion of Paul, and the praise of the Psalmist.Make

our churches truly houses of prayer for all peoples. May we go forth bearing Your mercy to a world in need.In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior,

Amen.