

The Ultimate Benefit

[The LORD] redeems your life from the pit (Psalm 103:4).

Scripture: Psalm 103:1-14

Song: “Redeemed”

The organ began its rhythmic beat. Strobe lights flashed. Young people with kneepads and colorful wheels on their skates began their rounds on smooth floors. I joined the fun when a young man wheeled up beside me and asked me to skate with him. He asked me how old I was. I said, “Eighteen.” He said, “I’m three months old.” Then he began to explain how he had accepted Jesus into his heart and was born again.

As we traveled the maple oval, I had many questions. As we talked, I began to realize that I was headed for destruction in my life. He explained to me how Jesus had died on the cross and paid the penalty for my sins and that if I believed and received Him as my Savior, I too would be born again. Later, alone in my bedroom, I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart too. And that night Jesus redeemed my life from destruction, and my life began a different course.

Redemption is not just one of the Lord’s benefits; it is the first and necessary step to a life of forgiveness and renewal. We can then experience His loving kindness, tender mercies, healing, and the many good things that He bestows.

Gracious Father, thank You for all the benefits that You daily impart to Your children. In Jesus’ name, amen.

October 5–11. **Ruth Myer** lives in central Florida with her husband of 63 years. She enjoys playing the piano at church and in a country jam.

Grace Is Greater

“Do not resist an evil person” (Matthew 5:39).

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-42

Song: “Wonderful Grace of Jesus”

He was a furious man yelling hurtful and obscene words. I couldn't help but wonder at the quiet composure of the woman who sat silently listening to his tirade. I felt like jumping in and telling him off! How could he talk that way to anyone, even if he were in the right? But there was no inkling of her emotions in her demeanor as she faced him. Then, to my further amazement, when he'd finished his outburst, she quietly said, “You have a point, sir.” I watched as his outrage seemed to dissolve like soap bubbles going down the drain.

What I saw was grace and mercy in action. I saw how a gentle answer can turn away wrath (Proverbs 15:1). I saw what God meant in His Word when He said, “Do not resist an evil person.” I saw how God will fight our battles through obedience to His Word. I saw the fruit of the Spirit in action (Galatians 5:22-23).

Turning the other cheek will not only dissolve disagreements; it can mend differences, bring about a calmer understanding, and trigger a solution to problems. It can keep families together, prevent friendships from breaking up, and help situations to be resolved. It is the key to everyday living and God's answer to successful human interaction.

Heavenly Father, help us to remember Your Word at crucial times. Provide us with the grace and awareness needed in our daily living. Thank You for Your provision for all our needs. In Jesus' name, amen.

Don't Forget!

“If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them” (Leviticus 25:35).

Scripture: Leviticus 25:35-39

Song: “Freely, Freely”

There once was a man who was an employee of a large firm. He was a man of integrity with the skills and mentality to advance—but for one hindrance: he was unable to make a presentation to an audience. Knowing he had the ability and knowledge to progress, he spent hours with a counselor to overcome his fear of public speaking. In a short time he moved ahead in the company to the top echelon. In accordance, his salary doubled three times. From a trying-to-make-ends-meet status, he became a wealthy man.

Many men would forget their first state, but he didn't. Though he enjoyed the privileges of wealth, he was generous and charitable to those less fortunate. When asked about his success, he would acknowledge the counseling; but the biggest contributing factor in his life would be his faith in God. This story is not a fable but a true one. My husband was the counselor.

God brought the children of Israel out of bondage and into a land of plenty. He knew that in a land of plenty, some would become wealthy and forget their fellow citizens who were not as fortunate nor endowed with abilities as they were. So He is reminding them not to forget the poor among them. Jesus was always considerate of the poor, and we are encouraged to do the same.

Heavenly Father, thank You for always being aware of our needs. Help us to be aware of the needs of others. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Right Fear

Blessed are all who fear the LORD (Psalm 128:1).

Scripture: Psalm 128

Song: “Hidden Peace”

Fear has its benefits; that is, if the fear is properly placed. Carla is a wife, mother, and grandmother. She is known to be a loving and caring person who enjoys life. Recently she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and underwent invasive surgery. For the ordinary person, this would be a scary thing; but when I asked Carla if she was afraid, she said, “No, God is my heavenly Father. He’s the one I fear, and He will take care of me.”

To fear God means to trust and obey Him. It is not a worldly kind of fear. It is based in our security in Christ. When we have a secure relationship with the Lord, we know that He is in control of our lives and everything concerning us. Because Carla fears the Lord, she doesn’t fear the cancer. She has replaced her worldly fear with a godly fear, and she has peace in her world.

Most of us will not experience what Carla has, but we all have our moments of serious problems. Our experience with them depends more on our outlook than on our “inlook.” Psalm 23:4 tells us “fear no evil.” Instead, we need to keep our eyes on God rather than on our problems—knowing that He already knows all about our concerns. He is the one who blesses and prospers and gives us peace.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for being our peace and our security in an insecure world. Thank You for always being there when we need You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Power of Forgiveness

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

Scripture: Luke 23:32-36

Song: “The Healer”

Renee was a half hour late coming home from the social. But she broke her mom’s rule only because her group of teens took another girl home first and it was farther than they thought. Her mom’s worry turned to fury, and she beat Renee with a fat ruler, even pulled out some of her hair. The next day Renee’s hurting back interfered with her walking. Her mom must have regretted her actions, for that was the last beating Renee ever received. Years later after her mom had died, that experience surfaced—and so did unforgiveness. It didn’t matter what good things Renee’s mom had done for her; she couldn’t get past the resentment from that beating.

If anyone had a reason to resent the treatment He received, it would be Jesus. The very men He had created mocked and sneered at Him, criticized Him, sarcastically challenged Him, and stole His clothes. They took the life of the one who had given them life. Yet in the midst of this, Jesus forgave them. He knew they didn’t understand. The repentant thief on the cross was also forgiven (vv. 42-43). Everyone can be forgiven in the same way.

Our slights seem so minuscule in light of our Lord’s sacrifice. He told us to forgive others and has set the greatest example possible. Knowing our frailties, He gave His Holy Spirit to enable us to follow His example.

Father, thank You for forgiveness through Jesus so that someday we will hear Your voice saying, “Well done.” In Jesus’ name, amen.

Let the Wall Fall!

“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9).

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12

Song: “Wonderful Peace”

After World War II the world was at peace for a while; that is, it was a type of peace. We called it the Cold War. There was no fighting, but there was political hostility between the US and the Soviets. There was mutual distrust and enmity, with both countries building bombs just in case. It began a race for the most and the best, which included the eventual striving for space mastery. The Cold War was a constant presence in Americans’ everyday lives and lasted for almost half a century, until the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives” (John 14:27). Peace is important to Him, and He admonishes us to be peacemakers. Unfortunately, many families are waging a sort of Cold War—no outright fighting but no peaceful relationship either. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Peacemaking starts in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and our relationship with Jesus Christ. Then we extend it to our family, neighbors, friends, and so on. Walls need to come down so that peace will prevail.

Father, thank You for the Prince of Peace. Help His peace reign in our hearts so we, in turn, express Your peace to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Mercy in Action

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

Scripture: Luke 6:27-36

Song: “Jesus Loves Me”

Jack’s wife was a sweet lady who loved God and attended church with her six sons. Jack, on the other hand, was a difficult man. He was mean to his wife and was a demanding father. In everyday affairs he was a tough wheeler-dealer. He hated church people and cursed the God who made him. Jack was known to come into church, grab his wife, and force her to leave. Humanly speaking, we would write him off, but God didn’t; God loved him. Most people would be afraid to deal with Jack. But one deacon wasn’t afraid. He went to Jack’s home to be a friend. It seems Jack didn’t have too many friends. Jack had needs, and this deacon had the answers. One night Jack bowed his head and asked Jesus into his life. The change in Jack’s life was dramatic. His family life changed. He became a big supporter of the church and eventually a deacon himself. All because God moved one deacon to love an enemy, bless one who cursed, and pray for one who mistreated.

There is no greater example of this kind of love than Jesus. He loved us when we didn’t love Him. He searched us out when we were walking in our worldly ways. How privileged we are to have such a Savior God!

Father, thank You so much for not giving up on us, for seeking us and saving us. Help us to be merciful to those who need You. In Jesus’ name, amen.