

# THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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## **Elders:**

**Mike Chancellor  
(322 – 6374)**

**Tom Witherspoon  
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## **Deacons:**

**Joe Cronin**

**Jim Hall**

**David Witherspoon**

## **Preacher:**

**John C. Robertson**

## **Child like Humility**

**Matthew 18:1-6**

*“In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* (Matt. 18:1). Mark tells us that the disciples had reasoned among themselves while on their way to Capernaum regarding who was the greatest among them (cf. Mk. 9:33ff). When they come to Capernaum, Jesus asked them about their discussion and they seemed to be ashamed and would not answer him. Apparently the disciples continued to think that the Lord’s coming kingdom would be a physical one where there would be a king in the land with subjects. The disciples seemed to be arguing over who would be the Lord’s chief subject.

*“And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 18:2-3). Note that Jesus tells the 12 disciples that *“except ye turn...”* they would not have a place at all in the kingdom of heaven much less be the greatest. Their arguing over who was greatest in the kingdom was vanity due to the fact that the kingdom had not yet been established. No one had even entered the kingdom as of yet. Jesus thereby gives a condition upon which an individual must meet before being recognized as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven; i.e., *“turn”* or repent. The apostles of Jesus Christ needed to repent of their pride and arrogance regarding their arguing over who was to be greatest.

To help the twelve understand their need for repentance the Lord places a child before them and explains that the only way for them to even be in the kingdom in the first place is to be like a little child. Jesus said, *“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”* (18:4). Let us note some associations here. Jesus explains to the disciples that they must repent of wrongdoings (namely their arguing over who was greatest in the kingdom of God) before even being considered a part of the kingdom. Secondly Jesus tells them that they must be childlike in the area of *“humility.”* There is thereby a direct association between one’s repentance and being *“humble.”* The word *“humble”* (*tapeinoo*) = *“to lower... to lessen... to humble, abase... in moral sense, to make lowly, to humble oneself”* (LS 792).

When the heart is filled with pride and arrogance it is difficult to see one’s faults. Conversely, when one is of a lowly abased state one easily recognizes their undone condition. The apostle Paul warned the Roman brethren, *“For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that*

## Local News:

**Welcome to all our visitors.** We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

**Tolene Witherspoon** requests that we keep her and her family in our prayers as they have experienced many health issues of late.

### Gospel Meeting:

Our Gospel meeting will begin Next Friday Night at 7:30 PM. We will have men from our own congregation doing the preaching on a “Why I Left” Series:

**Friday (Jim Hall)** – Why I Left the Baptist Church.

**Saturday (Joe Cronin)** – Why I Left the Catholic Church.

**Sunday AM (Mike Chancellor)** – Why I left the Liberal Church of Christ.

**Sunday AM Class (John Robertson)** – Preconceived Religion.

**Ron Cribbs** – Why I left the World.

Dates for the meeting are September 7, 8, and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Continue to pray for our shut-ins:**

**Stella Davidson**  
696-1030 (Home)

**Calvin York**  
692-0489 (Home).

**Bessie Murphy**  
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

*is among you, not to think of himself more **highly** than he ought to think; but so to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3). The lowly abased heart is filled with sorrow due to the sin they have committed against the holy God. Paul wrote the Corinthians saying, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance that brings no regret.” (II Cor. 7:10). Those who have the mind of a child in respect to humility will be citizens of the kingdom of God.*

Children understand their lowly state and dependence on parents. Parents set the parameters of rules (laws) for the child to follow while in their house. Children are in subjection to their parent’s rules and they realize that if they violate the rules of the home they are due punishment. Furthermore, children go to the parents for food, shelter, and clothing in this life... there is no shame in a child asking their parents for help and neither should there be in the child of God as he or she turns to God for help. It is no wonder that Isaiah proclaimed, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isa. 57:15). Again, David writes, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalms 51:17) (see study # 26).

Jesus furthermore said, “And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea” (18:5-6). The “little child,” in this context, is one who exhibits a heart of humility. When an individual exhibits a heart of humble repentance for what has been wrong in his or her life then all else in the kingdom ought to “receive” them. To “receive” (*dechomai*) one is to “accept, approve... to accept as an ally” (LS 181). If I cannot accept or approve of the one who repents with a spirit of sorrow over their sins then how could I ever expect God to “receive” me? Notice that Jesus now makes another association. We have examined the **association** between **repentance** and **humility** and now we find that these two are connected to “**belief**.” Those who truly believe in Jesus are those who hear the word of God and repent due to a lowly spirit of humility. Their faith is made evident by their obedience and repentance (cf. Jn. 3:36; Rom. 6:16ff). One’s acceptance into the body of Christ is not sincerity of heart, so called honesty, or attitude (though all these play their respective part). One’s acceptance into the church of Christ is conditioned upon a lowly heart in relation to the sin that has been revealed in their life. When one accepts, by faith, the teachings of Jesus and changes their life to be patterned after His then they are worthy of acceptance. We cannot, thereby, accept or receive one into our fellowship who will not recognize their wrong with a spirit of humility. The fellowship of Christians in any given local setting is thereby bound together by Christ law and one’s humility! Let us thereby be as children in humble obedience to the Lord.

*John C. Robertson*

# Mercy

## Introduction:

Yom ha-Shoah (Hebrew for “Holocaust Remembrance Day”) is celebrated on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Nissan (our April). The day brings to remembrance the unmerciful and cruel acts of Nazi Germany. Approximately 6 million Jews were intentionally annihilated during WWII. Jews were shot, asphyxiated with poisonous gas, given lethal injections, contracted diseases, starved, died of exposure, torture, physical exhaustion from slave labor, and even medical experimentation. It is estimated that the Nazi’s additionally killed 250,000 mentally or physically disabled people as well.

Stalin of the Soviet Union goes down in history as having put to death approximately 62 million people between 1917 and 1953 because they disagreed with the communist state. Between the years 1945 and 1976 Mao Zedong and his communist regime was responsible for the death of approximately 72 million people (ethnic Chinese and other minorities in China). More recently we read of the daily car bombs that are killing 1000’s of Iraqis and peace keeping American and British troops.

One may look to history and ask, “where is mercy?” Today it would be a horrendous event to be captured by Islamic extremists in Iraq. To expect mercy from a drug lord in South America would be like expecting ice cream not to melt in the sun. Those; however, who have experienced the bitter anger of said groups can do nothing but hope for mercy. In a world of anger, jealousy, religious tension, and violence there is a God over all flesh that is merciful (Ps. 116:5). This lesson shall examine the mercy of God that we may have our fears and anxieties silenced. Mercy brings hope and hope gives way to pushing forward in this life.

## I. Defining Mercy:

- A. Mercy = “kind and compassionate treatment of a person under one’s power... a disposition to be kind and forgiving. Mercy emphasizes compassion in a general way; it suggests reprieve (to postpone the punishment of) from a fate of considerable severity, without further implication” (AHD 787).
- B. The Bible defines God’s mercy (Ps. 117:2; Heb. 8:12)
- C. Consider Jesus:
  - 1. Merciful (Heb. 2:17-18).
  - 2. Compassionate and kind (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32).

## II. The scriptures reveal God’s nature to be that of mercy (cf. Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13):

- A. God showed mercy (kindness and compassion) to Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:15-16).
- B. God cared for Israel as a nation (Ex. 19:3-6).
- C. Jonah knew that God is merciful and for this cause had no desire to preach to Nineveh (Jonah 4:2).
- D. Paul depended upon God’s mercy for hope (Rom. 7:18-25)

## III. To receive Mercy one must be Merciful:

- A. Cruelty and mercy (Prov. 11:17; Matt. 5:7; Lk. 6:36).
- B. Jonah sought God’s mercy yet did not want mercy for those of Nineveh (Jonah 1:17-2:2, 8-10; 4:2).
- C. The sinner of Luke 18:9-14 sought out God’s mercy.

## Conclusion:

We live in a wicked and cruel world. God; however, is merciful, kind, gracious, and slow to anger. Though the world is unmerciful God remains a constant hope to those who put their faith in Him. Christians wrong God through sin yet His he mercifully forgives us when we exercise a penitent heart. The merciful God we serve desires no man to be lost in sin (II Pet. 3:9).