

Grace: Who needs it?

*LK 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call **fire** down from heaven to destroy them?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶ and they went to another village.*

I.) Mercy requires a choice of judgment and punishment, or Grace and Mercy!

A.) We must make a choice and let it be known! *1KI 18:18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," **Elijah** replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 1KI 18:20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹ **Elijah** went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.*

B.) Pray that God's power will be displayed, and his glory will be revealed>

*1KI 18:22 Then **Elijah** said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³ Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire--he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good." 1KI 18:25 **Elijah** said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." ²⁶ So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. 1KI 18:27 At noon **Elijah** began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." ²⁸ So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹ Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.*

1KI 18:30 Then **Elijah** said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. ³¹ **Elijah** took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. ³³ He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood." 1KI 18:34 "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench. 1KI 18:36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet **Elijah** stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 1KI 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

1KI 18:39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD--he is God! The LORD--he is God!"

C.) There must be a payment for sin!

1KI 18:40 Then **Elijah** commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and **Elijah** had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

II.) Choose to receive and give grace and mercy!

A.) God's mercy displayed even in old testament days!

JNH 3:3 **Jonah** obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city--a visit required three days. ⁴ On the first day, **Jonah** started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. JNH 3:6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." JNH 3:10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

B.) We must deliver the message with boldness and mercy and let them choose!

LK 10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

LK 10:5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. LK 10:8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.