**Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace**

*Psalm 85:10*

**Introduction**

1. We know of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace. Each of these concepts are vital, and are worthy of our deepest consideration.
2. **However, Psalm 85:10 notes that which is observed in the whole of the inspired word: that mercy and truth, as well as righteousness and peace are intimately related – so much so that the presence of one necessitates the presence of the other.**
3. A consideration of the relationship between Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace is of great benefit.
4. Psalm 85 – A Prayer for Restoration and Salvation
5. The Occasion of Composition
   1. **Psalm 85:1-3** – These verses bring our minds to the return of God’s people from Babylonian captivity. They are at least referencing times in general of the captivity of God’s people – be it spiritual, physical, or both – wherein God is petitioned for deliverance.
      1. “There were in the Jewish history, as there have been in the Christian church, numerous occasions to which the sentiments of the psalm would be appropriate…There is nothing to make it absolutely certain that it pertains to the Babylonian captivity, as DeWette supposes, but the language is so general that it might refer to any captivity.” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible – Introduction to Psalm 85)
      2. “The reference of Psa\_85:1-13 to the period after the Exile and to the restoration of the state, says Dursch, is clearly expressed in the Psalm. On the other hand, Hengstenberg maintains that “the Psalm does not admit of any historical interpretation,” and is sure only of this one fact, that Psa\_85:2-4 do not relate to the deliverance out of the Exile. Even this Psalm, however, is not a formulary belonging to no express period, but has a special historical basis; and Psa\_85:2-4 certainly sound as though they came from the lips of a people restored to their fatherland.” (Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament – Introduction to Psalm 85)
   2. **Concerning the captivity, and return:**
      1. Moses to the second generation who would inhabit Canaan – **Deuteronomy 4:25-31** – If you serve other gods, you will be scattered, and if you turn back to the Lord, He will be merciful.
      2. Jerusalem falls to Babylon and is carried into captivity – **2 Chronicles 36:15-17** – King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, is given Judah by God.
      3. A remnant of the captivity returns – **2 Chronicles 36:22-23** – according to the prophecy through Jeremiah, the Lord caused Cyrus, king of Persia, to allow and fund a return back to Jerusalem. (Where Ezra picks up.)
      4. Not, yet a full spiritual return to the Lord – **Psalm 85:4-7** – the Psalm indicates, in spite of the physical return, the lack of a full spiritual return.
         1. **Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23-24** – Both Ezra and Nehemiah witnessed the incomplete spiritual return to the Lord after the physical return – the people married Pagan wives, and partook in idolatry.
         2. **Psalm 85:9** – His salvation is only to those who fear Him – a full experience of God’s mercy, in the most important spiritual way, can only be experienced by those who show fidelity to Him.
            1. **Repentance is necessary**.
            2. **Ezra 10:10-11** – Ezra calls for repentance – put away your foreign wives. (Nehemiah does the same – **cf. Nehemiah 13:25-28**)
   3. The time of the return from Babylonian captivity seems to fit the contents of this Psalm.
   4. **Regardless, Psalm 85 gives us great insight into restoration of one to God, and the reception of His mercy as it is related to truth, righteousness, and the peace it brings. 🡪**
6. **Psalm 85** – A Prayer for Restoration and Salvation
   1. A remembrance of, and appeal to, past favor **(vv. 1-4).**
      1. The remembrance of God’s mercy and favor to people in the past **(vv. 1-3).** (*Perhaps the first return, especially of the state, to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity*.)
      2. The appeal to God for His favor and mercy in the present based upon the past **(v. 4).**
   2. The current state between God and the people **(vv. 5-7).**
      1. A state of sin wherein God’s wrath is felt by the people **(v. 5).**
      2. A plea for mercy from the Lord **(vv. 6-7).**
   3. Expressed confidence in God’s mercy if His conditions are met **(vv. 8-13).**
      1. God’s words to His people are always peace **(v. 8a).**
      2. Yet, the peace is conditional. God requires repentance, and fidelity **(vv. 8b-9).**
      3. Mercy will be present where there is truth, and vice versa. The same with righteousness and peace **(v. 10).**
      4. The land and people will be blessed by God’s presence among them, where they follow Him in righteousness **(vv. 11-13).**
   4. **NOTE ESPECIALLY VERSE 10:**
      1. **Mercy and truth** – God’s mercy is not present without His truth. And in the presence of God’s truth, especially in the hearts of the people, His mercy is there. Also, mercy cannot be given separate from truth.
         1. **(v. 8**) – Peace comes from God, but the people must turn from folly.
         2. **(v. 9)** – His salvation – His mercy – comes to those who fear Him. (*And keep His commandments – included in fearing God*)
      2. **Righteousness and peace** – Conduct according to God’s righteousness affords peace. However, there is no peace without righteousness. The peace God speaks **(v. 8)** cannot come except through His righteousness.
7. **Consider the ideas of verse 10 in relation to our being captive to sin, and the mercy God bestows upon us in reconciling ourselves to Him.**
8. Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace
9. Mercy and Truth
   1. Sin incurs the wrath of God – **Romans 6:23** – wages are death:
      1. **Hebrews 9:22** – in order for sin to be remitted, blood must be shed.
      2. **Hebrews 10:1-4** – The blood of animals simply reminds of sin, and God’s wrath toward the sinner, and emphasizes the need for sufficient blood.
      3. **Question: How is God to have mercy on the sinner, i.e. spare him from the wages of his sin when that very wage MUST be paid according to God’s truth?**
         1. ***“In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity” (Proverbs 16:6a).***
   2. **The mercy of God accords with His truth, and vice versa:**
      1. There has been provision – **Hebrews 10:5-10** – a body was prepared for the Son of God to satisfy His wrath, and allow mercy on the sinner.
      2. God is just (according to truth) and the justifier (of the sinner – merciful) – **Romans 3:21-26:**
         1. **(v. 25)** – Christ’s blood serves to be the propitiation – appeases God’s judicial wrath.
         2. **(v. 26)** – God can have mercy on the sinner, and justify him according to the truth (maintains righteousness), if he puts his faith in Jesus.
         3. Obey the gospel – **Romans 1:16**
         4. This one must continue to live by faith, i.e. in the truth – **Romans 6:1-4** – or else God’s mercy ceases to extend to him, and they are made captives of sin again **(v. 16).**
10. Righteousness and Peace
    1. There is peace in the pursuit of God’s righteousness – **cf. Romans 9:30-33**
       1. The Jews who rejected Christ and sought righteousness by works of the law were at enmity with God – Christ became an offense to them.
       2. Those who pursued the righteousness of God which is by faith have peace with God – they are not put to shame.
    2. **To continue to be at peace with God, thus have peace of mind, you must be faithful to Him in righteousness:**
       1. ***“In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.” (Proverbs 16:6)***
       2. **Cf. Proverbs 8:12-21** – The voice of wisdom concerning righteousness:
          1. Walking according to wisdom in righteousness brings great blessings, and peace.
          2. This is true in the physical sense.
          3. **This is especially true in the spiritual sense 🡪**
       3. **Isaiah 9:6-7** – The Messianic government is one of peace. He is the Prince of Peace.
          1. To submit to His rule is to be at peace with God.
          2. This also affords a peace of mind.
       4. **Philippians 4:8-9** – Doing those things which accord with God’s righteousness brings fellowship with the God of peace.
          1. When the we are in fellowship with the God of peace, we will have a peace of mind.
          2. **Philippians 4:7** – This peace surpasses all understanding.

**Conclusion**

1. We need God’s mercy, but it is only given according to His truth.
2. In the wake of God’s righteousness is His peace.
3. **We should understand and appreciate the intimate relationship these terms have with each other, and make sure we ourselves are in submission to these truths.**