

WEEKLY

NEWSLETTER

STAFF OUTING

■ This Saturday we are going to Mt. Olympus! It's only \$15 for an all day pass to the entire park!

August 6, 2014



Spiritual Gift of the Week: Mercy

While the terms have similar meanings, grace and mercy are not the same. To summarize the difference: mercy is God not punishing us as our sins deserve, and grace is God blessing us despite the fact that we do not deserve it. Mercy is deliverance from judgment. Grace is extending kindness to the unworthy.

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
Hebrews 4:16



A STORY OF MERCY

"Can I have your boots?"

My blood began to boil; I could not believe my own eyes, there he was, in a bunk 20 feet from my own. I saw him every morning when I woke up; it was impossible to avoid him during the day, his voice echoed in my mind as I fell asleep at night. The rage came back with the intensity I felt 6 years before, but there was nothing I could do about it. Worst of all, he didn't even recognize me.

I was obsessed with getting even; everyday my anger grew more intense, as I thought about that day 6 years ago when he hit me over the head with a rock and stole \$60.00 from me. How I had longed to get revenge on this guy and here we were, not only in the same prison in Connecticut, but in the same dorm room. I was getting out soon. But if I touch him, my parole would be cancelled and I would be transferred to another prison.

About a week before I was due to get out he asked: "Can I have your boots when you leave?" I couldn't believe my ears. I thought: "Yeah right, I'd love to give you my boots, but for your face not your feet."

Then something happened that I still don't completely understand. I'm not a religious guy, but a few days before my release I was invited to go to something called Alpha. The volunteers who led this program were really nice, friendly and made me feel welcome.

We were going to watch part 1 of a DVD, on the topic; "How to find the secret of happiness."

They put in the DVD, it skipped the first track and jumped to the next. They tried again and again and again to play track # 1, but each time they tried to get it to the right place, it kept jumping to track # 2. They gave up trying, and let the DVD player have its own way.

So, we watched cut # 2, called "How to change the world around you." Part of it is about Jesus saying: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." A Brit, by the name of Nicky Gumbel was speaking, he said that mercy is giving people what they don't deserve. God does the same for us, we don't deserve mercy but because He loves us He gives us mercy.

I knew what I had to do.

When he said: Don't give people what they deserve, give them what they don't deserve. I started thinking about that guy back in the dorm who had mugged and robbed me. Somehow I knew that I had to let go of the rage and quit thinking of ways to get even.

At the end of the DVD, we were asked: "Well, what do you think, how did what you heard make you feel?" I spoke up; I told the group all about my anger, my scheming about getting even with the guy. I then said: "I now know what I have to do before I leave, I have to give him my boots."

The weird thing in all of this, is that I will be out before I get to see cut # 1. I'm sure that the fact that the DVD player acted up, is because God wanted me to see session # 2 before I got out.

