

Psalm 86:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Analysis

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. This verse grounds David's petitions in God's character, using three divine attributes that justify bold prayer. **Good** (tov, טוב) encompasses moral perfection, benevolence, and beneficial nature—God's essential character inclines toward His creatures' welfare.

Ready to forgive translates salach (שָׁלַח), a verb used exclusively of divine forgiveness in the Old Testament. The phrase literally means "forgiving" or "pardoning," emphasizing God's eagerness to pardon rather than reluctance requiring persuasion. This anticipates the New Testament revelation of God's initiative in forgiveness through Christ's atoning work.

Plenteous in mercy (rav-chesed, רָבֶּחֶסֶד, abundant in steadfast love) describes overflowing covenant loyalty extending to **all them that call upon thee**. The universality of this offer—anyone who calls receives mercy—finds fulfillment in the gospel's proclamation that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21, quoting Joel 2:32).

Historical Context

This verse echoes the foundational self-revelation of God to Moses: "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). This creedal statement of divine character recurs

throughout the Old Testament (Numbers 14:18, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalms 103:8, 145:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2), functioning as Israel's core theology. David appeals to this revealed character as basis for confident prayer.

Related Passages

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does meditating on God's goodness, forgiveness, and abundant mercy change your prayer approach?
2. When have you treated God as reluctant to forgive rather than 'ready to forgive'?
3. How can you extend the 'plenteous mercy' you've received to others who call upon you?

Interlinear Text

וְרָב יְסוּלָחָם אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנִי טוֹב וְרָב הַמְּלָאכָה
H3588 H859 For thou Lord art good and ready to forgive and plenteous
H136 H2896 H5546 H7227

לְכָל־אֶרְאָיָבָן
unto all them that call
H3605 H7121
in mercy H2617

Additional Cross-References

Joel 2:13 (Grace): And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Exodus 34:6 (Grace): And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Nehemiah 9:17 (Grace): And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Psalms 103:8 (Grace): The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Psalms 25:8 (Good): Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Psalms 145:18 (References Lord): The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Acts 2:21 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Psalms 86:15 (Grace): But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Psalms 119:68 (Good): Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

Psalms 130:7 (Grace): Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.