

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

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Association Minister Message

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*MERCY. "But I received MERCY because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 1:13-14).* The political tensions in the USA have become violent and cruel. Snippets are extracted from comments, letters, and interviews that are taken out of context. The viciousness of some commentators has promoted acts of violence and even threatening death on those of differing opinions. Even figments of imaginations are becoming weapons of intolerance and injustice. It seems so unfair for misunderstandings and disagreements to become the reasons for threats and violence. There is a fear to offer any kind of disagreement for it might lead to vendettas or confrontations.

*"Mercy is so powerful; it's defined as: compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm!" (unknown).* There have been many trials covered by the news that report family members forgiving the person who killed members of their families, often citing it was their Christian faith that helped them to offer forgiveness. Often cited by the families is that they did not want anger and hatred to control them. They may not forget what happened but they wanted goodness, *MERCY*, and love to lead them into the future. This is *MERCY* coming alive. This is living lives of grace.

Paul was an apostle who was a corroborator to persecute the early Christians for their beliefs. The cruelty of his actions was known by Jesus-followers even to the point of mistrust of Paul after his conversion as a follower of Jesus Christ. No wonder Paul proclaimed a message of *MERCY* after his encounter with Jesus changed his life. In Paul's First Letter to Timothy Paul admits to being a *"blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence."* (vs. 13). And yet he received *MERCY* even in spite of all the evil things he did to Christians. In legal terms he was granted clemency and leniency. In spiritual terms he was forgiven and received blessing and kindness. In spite of all his actions of cruelty, he found compassion and kindness from Jesus Christ. Eventually the community of faith accepted him into their fellowship as the Body of Christ. Paul received *MERCY*; we also receive *MERCY*, so that through us Jesus Christ will be seen so others will embrace faith that would change them, too. Be grateful and *MERCIFUL*. This makes all the difference in relationships with one another. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.