

Weekly Devotional Column
By JAMES MACKENZIE

"But I obtained mercy . . ."
—(1 Timothy 1:3)

This is the sum and substance of Paul's autobiography; its alpha and omega. So it is of each born-again, blood-bought Christian: "I obtained mercy." What other account can we give of ourselves? What other evidence for the change wrought in us? God took pity upon us, and we obtained mercy! Sin abounded, but grace did much more abound. We obtained mercy! This the great fact of our life, the foundation upon which we build: We obtained mercy. It is an unlikely fact. No one seemed more removed from the mercy and favor of God in Christ than Saul of Tarsus, chief of sinners. Proud, self-righteous, scornful of the cross and Him who died upon it—what chance was there that this man would turn from sin to the Saviour? Yet he obtained mercy. Certainly he did not deserve mercy; but then, if we could deserve it, it would not be mercy but reward. But the mercy and grace of God reached out to him, as it does to hardened sinners in our own day and time, and claims them for Himself. An unlikely fact? Not when we consider the kind of God we have!

It is a very marvellous fact! The wonder of it, to Paul, is expressed in the personal pronoun: "But I obtained mercy!" Saul of Tarsus—the Pharisee, the hater of Christ, the persecutor, the blasphemer, the ridiculer, the mocker, the murderer! Incredible that such a one should obtain mercy! Wonderful the universality of the grace of God! None deep in sin but God is ready and willing and

able to save. With God there are no hopeless cases. It is an encouraging fact. If God could save Saul of Tarsus and transform him into a radiant Christian, He can do the same for anyone. Which of us can say, "I am a greater sinner than Saul"? Who can testify that he has wandered beyond the reach of the love that extended to Saul of Tarsus? If God saved him, can He not only save you? If there was hope for him, is there not only hope for you?

It is a many-sided fact. The fact that Paul could say, "But I obtained mercy," teaches us many things about ourselves and God. It is a fact, first of all, for the Jew. Here is a Jew, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," set forth as a trophy of grace, loved, saved, and honored. If he was saved, what Jew need despair?

It is a fact for the Gentile. Paul was saved in order to be the special apostle to the Gentiles. Much more separate from God in life and doctrine than the Jews, yet God is concerned about the Gentiles, and sends one to them with the message of grace.

It is a fact for the Christian Church. The Church is made up of sinners who have obtained mercy—of Sauls. No boasting here—all is of grace!

It is a fact for the world. Here is the chief of sinners, saved and sanctified. If Saul obtained mercy, anyone can obtain mercy.

It is a fact that illustrates God's character. In the conversion of Saul we see illustrated God's long-suffering, His sovereignty, His grace, and His power. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways. Here are the heights and depths of mercy; salvation to the uttermost; love to the

chief of sinners. He who plucked Saul from the fire can pluck you. He has no pleasure in your death. His desire is that you should believe on Him and live with Him forever.

Lunch Room Menu

Menus at the Chowan High School lunch room for the week October 3-7 will be as follows:
Monday — Milk, franks, pineapple peanut butter sandwich, vegetable soup, crackers, butter, cherry cobbler.
Tuesday — Milk, boiled ham,

potato salad, green peas, pickled beets, rolls, butter, chocolate cake.
Wednesday—Milk, ravioli, tossed salad, string beans, rolls and butter, fruit cup.
Thursday—Milk, chicken pan pie, Spanish peas, pineapple salad, cranberry sauce, jello with fruit.
Friday—Milk, roast beef and gravy, candied yams, green butter beans, sweet pickle rings, rolls, butter, chocolate pudding.

Nothing short of our own errors should offend us.
—Mary Baker Eddy.

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