

Matters of the Heart

Orthodox reflections on faith and life



34 Lord Have Mercy

Let every soul approach the Maker with an earnest desire to receive mercy. We dare not draw near the throne of God and make requests for worldly needs and material wants; for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul? What we seek ought to be far greater than that. Our petition should be “Lord have mercy”, and the miracle will be God’s mercy bestowed.

Mercy is not merely the acquittal of God’s justice in dealing with the guilty sinner. The depth of this prayer runs far deeper, for the Greek word for ‘mercy’ is ‘eleos’, sharing the same root as the Greek word for oil. And oil in times of old had various uses; a soothing ointment for healing wounds, a cooking agent, a fuel for lighting lamps, and an anointing for consecration. So in asking for mercy, we are, in essence imploring the Lord to heal us, feed us, enlighten our lives, and to bless us. **Kyrie Eleison!**

+ Verse: ‘Let us then with
+ confidence draw near to
+ the throne of grace, that
+ we may receive mercy
+ and find grace to help in
+ time of need.’
+ Hebrews 4:16

+ See Also:
+ Mark 8:36

+ *Lord, like the
+ publican, with my eyes
+ lowered to the ground,
+ I beat my chest saying,
+ ‘God, be merciful to me
+ a sinner!’*