DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONAL:

On Sunday we considered 2 Kings 14:23–15:7 and asked what we will do with God's mercy once the storm has passed. Through Jeroboam II and Uzziah, we saw that prosperity does not prove God's approval and that strength can become an occasion for pride. God's kindness calls us to repentance, His gifts call us to humility, and His holiness teaches us our need for Jesus Christ. As we carry this passage into the week, may we receive correction with teachable hearts and draw near to God through our risen King and great High Priest.

Monday: The Lord Sees Our Affliction

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 14:23–27

There are burdens other people never see. We go about our work, answer when someone asks how we are doing, and carry on with a grief we scarcely know how to explain. Israel's suffering was visible enough, but there was no one able to help. Then Scripture tells us that the Lord saw their bitter affliction. Their helplessness had not escaped His notice.

What makes this mercy so remarkable is that Israel had continued in sin. Jeroboam had not removed the golden calves or led the people back to faithful worship. God's compassion did not arise from their goodness. He saw their misery and mercifully gave them relief, even through a king whose conduct He condemned.

We see the fullness of that mercy in Jesus Christ. He came into a world that had rebelled against its Maker and gave Himself for sinners. We do not need to hide our need from Him or pretend that we have earned His attention. The cross assures us that God's compassion is more than a kindly feeling. In His Son, He has acted to save us.

This does not mean every hardship will disappear today. Some prayers are answered through a long season of waiting. But you may bring your burden honestly before your Father. You are not asking an indifferent God to notice you. In Christ, you belong to the One who already knows and cares.

Reflection Questions

1. What burden have you been carrying that you find difficult to explain to others?
2. How does God's mercy toward undeserving Israel challenge the thought that you must earn His care?
3. What would it look like to entrust that burden to the Lord today, even if your circumstances remain unchanged?
4. Prayer

Father, You see the burdens I struggle to put into words. Forgive me for imagining that Your compassion depends on my deserving it. Thank You for coming near to sinners through Jesus

Christ. Help me trust Your care while I wait for Your help. Amen.

Tuesday: Kindness That Leads Us Home

Scripture Reading: Romans 2:1–4

Relief can make us forgetful. During a difficult season, prayer comes readily and obedience seems urgent. Then the pressure lifts, our days become easier, and the promises we made begin to fade. The danger is familiar: we receive God's kindness and return to the very sins that should have driven us to Him.

Paul tells us that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. His patience gives us room to confess what we have done and turn from it. We misunderstand that patience when we treat the absence of immediate judgment as permission to continue. A comfortable life cannot tell us whether our hearts are right with God. His Word must examine us.

That examination may uncover something we would rather leave untouched. Perhaps we have grown accustomed to a bitter attitude, a private dishonesty, or an apology continually postponed. Yet repentance is not an attempt to purchase God's welcome. Jesus Christ died for sinners and rose again. We come because mercy is offered in Him, bringing our guilt into the light rather than protecting it in the dark.

Think of one kindness you have received recently. Thank God for it, and then consider whether there is an obedience you have been delaying. His generosity gives you reason to trust Him with the truth about yourself. You may stop making excuses and come home.

Reflection Questions

1. What recent kindness from God have you enjoyed without pausing to thank Him?
2. Is there a sin you have excused because its consequences have not yet become painful?
3. What specific act of repentance can you take today in dependence on Christ?
4. Prayer

Merciful Father, I have often enjoyed Your gifts while resisting Your Word. Forgive me for treating Your patience carelessly. Thank You that Jesus receives sinners who come to Him in faith. Lead me to honest confession and willing obedience today. Amen.

Wednesday: Mercy and Those Who Govern

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1–6

It can be easier to discuss our leaders than to pray for them. We notice their faults, repeat their failures, and spend considerable energy explaining what they ought to do. Scripture gives us another responsibility. We are to bring those who govern before God, asking that we might live peaceful and godly lives.

Jeroboam's reign helps us understand why prayer remains fitting even when a ruler does wrong. God condemned Jeroboam's sin, yet He used him to relieve Israel's suffering. A ruler's failures do not place him beyond God's authority. We can acknowledge a good action without excusing wickedness, and we can oppose wickedness without surrendering our speech to contempt.

Paul places prayer for rulers beside the announcement that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men. Our hope rests in the Savior who gave Himself for sinners. Remembering His mercy should humble us. We also needed forgiveness, and the people whose decisions trouble us need the same Savior we confess.

Today, name a leader you find difficult to pray for. Ask God to grant that person wisdom, restrain wrongdoing, and bring repentance and faith. Pray also for those affected by that leader's decisions. Such prayer need not weaken your convictions. It can help you hold them with greater faithfulness, patience, and love for your neighbors.

Reflection Questions

1. Whose leadership most readily draws an angry or contemptuous response from you?
2. How might remembering your own need for Christ change the way you speak about that person?
3. What specific good can you ask God to accomplish through those who govern your community?
4. Prayer

Lord God, all who govern remain accountable to You. Give our leaders wisdom, restrain their wrongdoing, and turn their hearts toward truth. Forgive the cruelty and self-righteousness that sometimes enter my speech. Through Jesus Christ, teach me to pray sincerely for their good and the good of those they serve. Amen.

Thursday: Marvelously Helped

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 26:5–16

Uzziah had much to show for his reign. Cities were strengthened, land was cultivated, and an army was equipped. Yet Scripture gives us a phrase that explains his achievements: he was marvelously helped. Beneath the king's strength stood the generosity of God.

Then strength became an occasion for pride. Uzziah began to act as though the help he had received entitled him to step beyond the limits God had set. We can recognize that temptation in smaller settings. Experience may make us impatient with advice. Years of service may leave us expecting deference. Competence can quietly persuade us that dependence is something we

have outgrown.

Jesus Christ teaches His people to live by a different understanding of strength. Our standing before God rests on His righteousness, and every day of faithful service requires His sustaining grace. We never graduate from needing Him. To acknowledge that need is to tell the truth about ourselves and to remember where our help comes from.

Consider something you now do well. Remember the people who taught you, the opportunities you received, and the Lord who sustained you when you were uncertain. Gratitude makes room for humility. You can use your gifts gladly while remaining ready to learn, ready to share responsibility, and ready to give God the praise.

Reflection Questions

1. Where has experience or success made you less willing to receive advice?
2. Who has God used to help you become capable in an area you now take for granted?
3. How can you practice grateful dependence on Christ in that area this week?
4. Prayer

Father, every ability and opportunity I possess has come under Your care. Forgive me for taking Your help and making it a reason to boast. Keep me dependent on Jesus Christ in the work You have given me. Make me grateful for those who have helped me and generous toward those who are still learning. Amen.

Friday: The Mercy of Correction

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 26:16–20

When the priests confronted Uzziah, they placed a warning between him and further disobedience. Their words were unwelcome, but they were true. God had not appointed the king to burn incense. His crown gave him no authority to disregard the Lord's command.

Uzziah answered with anger. It is an uncomfortable scene because we recognize the impulse. Someone raises a concern, and before we have considered it, we begin explaining ourselves. We remember their faults, question their motives, or insist that they do not understand. The effort to defend ourselves can become stronger than the desire to obey God.

Those who belong to Jesus Christ can afford to hear the truth about their failures. Our acceptance before the Father rests on our Savior's finished work. We do not have to maintain the appearance of being right about everything. Grace frees us to confess that we were wrong and to seek the help we need to change.

Correction should be weighed against Scripture; another person's judgment is not infallible. Still, we can listen patiently, ask honest questions, and consider what is true before answering. If a recent conversation has left you defensive, return to it prayerfully. The Lord may be using an uncomfortable word to preserve you from a far greater sorrow.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you usually respond when someone questions your conduct or judgment?
2. Is there a recent correction you need to reconsider in the light of Scripture?
3. How does your acceptance in Christ help you admit fault and seek forgiveness?
4. Prayer

Father, You know how quickly I defend myself. Give me patience to listen and wisdom to recognize correction that agrees with Your Word. Thank You that my acceptance rests in Jesus Christ rather than in my appearing faultless. Help me confess my wrongs and receive the help You provide through others. Amen.

Saturday: You Will Never Outlive His Care

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 7:23–28

Earthly rulers finish their work and die. Jeroboam's recovered territory could not make him a righteous king, and Uzziah's achievements could not secure his place in the sanctuary. Their stories leave us needing someone who can deal with our guilt and bring us into God's presence.

Jesus Christ is that Savior. Holy and without sin, He offered Himself once for all. His sacrifice needs no repetition or improvement. The guilt that keeps us ashamed cannot exhaust the worth of His offering. Everyone who draws near to God through Him finds a sufficient Savior.

And the Lord who died for us now lives to intercede for us. His care did not end when He rose from the grave or ascended to His Father. He knows the weakness of His people and remains their living High Priest. Your strength may diminish, your circumstances may change, and those you depend upon may pass away. You will never outlive His care.

As the week closes, come to Him with whatever these readings have uncovered. Bring the sin you need to confess, the correction you have struggled to receive, and the burden that remains unresolved. You do not need a record of flawless responses to God's mercy before you can approach Him. You need Jesus, and He welcomes all who come to God through Him.

Reflection Questions

1. What failure or regret makes you hesitant to draw near to God?
2. How does Christ's finished sacrifice answer the fear that you must first make yourself worthy?
3. What concern can you entrust to your living High Priest as you prepare to worship with His people?
4. Prayer

Father, thank You for giving Your Son to bring sinners into Your presence. I confess that I often

measure Your welcome by the strength of my own faithfulness. Teach me to rest in Christ's sufficient sacrifice and continuing intercession. Prepare my heart to worship You with repentance, humility, and glad confidence in Him. Amen.