

The Mercy Center

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

There's a place down the peninsula from San Francisco called The Mercy Center. It's a retreat center run by The Sisters of Mercy. I was introduced to this place in the mid-1990s. The women's department at the church I attended during that time held a one-day retreat there. It was a wonderful time of worship, workshops, Bible knowledge games, and fellowship. A few years later, I became a regular private retreat. I love spending time there because there are no distractions. I go there whenever I feel anxious or need to hear from the Lord without interruption. My mind, heart, and soul tend to quiet down as I surrender all to the Master. I'm completely honest with Him concerning where I am and how I feel, although He already knows (Psalm 139:2). I can dance before Him without judgment and cry at His feet without anyone inquiring why. It's where I feel God's grace and mercy more than anywhere.

There will come a time when we need to communicate with the Lord like we've never done before. So many distractions in our lives get in the way of our worship. Everyone and everything is vying for our time and attention. It's then that we need to choose which is more important.

The story of the sisters of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary comes to mind as an example of prioritizing. One day, Jesus was visiting with them. Martha was busy being the hostess, making sure that the house was clean, the cooking was done, and everything looked good. However, Mary just sat at Jesus' feet, listening to every word he uttered. Some have criticized Martha, but we need the Marthas (the workers). However, Martha had to learn that when it came to either cleaning, cooking, etc., or spending time at the feet of Jesus, there should be no competition. Jesus should always be our priority! That's why Jesus commended Mary for doing what was best. Let this story inspire us to prioritize our time with God, to choose Him above all else, and to find joy and fulfillment in His presence.

Perhaps there's no Mercy Center near you, or you can't get there for whatever reason. You can, however, get on your knees and enter the mercy center of God. He has invited us to come boldly before His throne of Grace, where we can receive mercy and find grace in times of need. Sisters and brothers, God is available and waiting to meet us there. Just go to Him in sincerity, and He will show up! We serve a merciful God who loves and desires to spend time with us. He's waiting at His Mercy Center, always ready to extend His mercy and grace to those who seek Him.

Elder Shirley Freeman