

Saturday, March 27, 2010

Mealtime Mercy

I John 4:10, 19 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins... We love because He first loved us.*

For generations this prayer has been spoken in my family as part of the mealtime – “Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.” It comes from Psalm 136. Perhaps we said this prayer more often than not from rote memory, thinking instead of the food or a conversation that was interrupted for the prayer. Nevertheless, it expresses a constant truth, often hidden in this world and even in our own minds: His mercy (“not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins”) endures forever, and I need that mercy, and I HAVE that mercy. It is the foundation for all Christians, and, in fact, for all people.

So when I look at others, I should see that they, too, need that mercy because we are all the same. I can give them mercy just as I was given mercy. I don't turn away in judgment borne of self-righteousness. Rather, I can offer forgiveness, compassion, patience, and whatever help they may need. The heart that loves is capable of serving others, but the source of that love is not ourselves –it all comes from God.

Prayer: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.
In His Name I pray, Amen. ---Lindsey Milbrath