

A gravel path leads from the bottom left towards the center of the image, curving slightly to the right. The path is bordered on the left by a dense, lush green hedge or thicket of bushes and trees. On the right side of the path, there is a green field with a wire fence running along its edge. In the background, more trees and a small white building are visible under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and rural.

THE HEART OF GOD V

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Scripture quotations are from the
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)
unless otherwise noted.



As the man drove home, he came to the left turn he normally took. For some reason, this time he decided to go straight instead. This was a somewhat longer trip and less scenic, but he chose it anyway.

As he neared the end of this detour, he came to a long straight stretch, bordered on one side by fields and on the other by trees sloping sharply down to a small river. He noticed a small figure by the side of the road. As he drove by, he saw it was a cat, sitting at the very edge of the road. The peculiar sight led him to pull over to the side. He thought the cat must be lost or in some sort of trouble.

Approaching

As he walked back to the little creature, he started speaking softly to it. Upon hearing his voice, it turned, went under a fence, and slowly walked away. He watched as it then turned around, came back under the fence, and sat near to the road again. The cat acted peculiarly: it would lift its head and

sniff the air, turning as if to look in his direction with one eye.

The man decided to attempt to feed the little fellow, and so took cat food from his car, and placed some of it on the edge of the road. He then walked to the other side of the road and around the cat. He was hoping to coax it toward the food.

From the cat's other side, the man once again spoke gently to it. Upon hearing his voice, again it went under the fence, into the field, and then back to the roadside a bit further away. It did not seem to notice or care about the food. The man tried leaving food again, but this produced similar results.

Difficulty

The man was able to get close enough to the cat to determine it had some sort of vision problem in its left eye. As he watched, the cat crossed the road and disappeared into the trees.

The man was deeply moved by the cat's obvious plight. He determined to come back that afternoon to see if he could, in some way, catch the little creature and bring it to a veterinarian for medical care.

An Attempt

Later that day he returned to the same spot, and once again the cat was sitting by the side of the road as if it were waiting for help, or for someone familiar to find it.

Yet again, the man attempted to approach the cat quietly. As he did so, another vehicle—a truck—drove down the road. Seeing the man and the cat, the driver came to a quiet stop. The cat crossed the road in front of the truck and went into the trees and brush.

The man explained to the young driver of the truck what was happening. The young gentleman decided to help the man catch the cat.

They had seen where the cat entered the brush, so they walked quietly to that spot. The area was fenced, so they could not easily enter the brush, but they could see the cat in the undergrowth perhaps fifteen feet from the fence.

The man had brought a can of sardines to offer the cat to help catch it. He opened the can and broke off pieces to toss to the creature. As he threw the fish toward the cat, piece after piece caught in the brush and tree branches, and fell to the ground. The cat did not move.

Eventually, one of the pieces of fish landed right beside the animal. It still did not move, but

upon smelling the fish, began to seek for it. The poor creature was obviously blind. It sniffed until it found the morsel, then ate it quickly. The cat was extremely thin from lack of nourishment.

As the man threw the sardine pieces toward the cat, the younger fellow climbed through the fence and slowly approached the cat. When he was about five feet away, the cat turned and slowly walked to the edge of the hill, felt around with its paw, and then descended. It was gone. They had failed.

Searching for the Way

That evening, the man considered the poor cat. Actually, it was not even that. From what he could see, it was a kitten, perhaps no more than six months old. It was blind, starving, and alone. No doubt, it was frightened and perhaps even terrified.

The man wrestled within, trying to find some way to help. If he could somehow catch the kitten, he could at least provide it with any needed medical care; there would be a chance to end its suffering.

As he considered this, his heart was breaking over the kitten's plight. He could not just leave it to starve or fall prey to another animal. He had to find some way to do what he could to help. The man's

heart was overwhelmed by the suffering of the poor little creature.

A Decision

The man awoke in the middle of the night with the suffering one on his heart, as he searched for a way to help. He had contacted the nearby animal rescue, but they only helped within the city, and the kitten was outside the city limits. He had contacted the county in which he had found the cat, but they had no animal rescue. The man had even contacted the local SPCA, but they had no rescue services either. It seemed the little creature was in his hands, yet he did not know what to do.

Finally, he came to a decision. He devised a simple method by which he might catch the kitten and bring it to a vet. This was the only possible means of help he could see. He went back to sleep full of concern. His plan could easily fail, and he might not be afforded a second chance.

Another Attempt

The next morning, he quickly finished his chores, and started out on his mission of rescue. He brought with him some wet cat food, paper cups,

and other paraphernalia. He hoped the little fellow would be there along the roadside again.

When he arrived, the cat was there. It walked across the road and lay down in the grass. As the man was preparing to carry out his fairly straightforward plan, he was both hopeful and careful. He did not want to disturb the kitten, and cause it to move through the fenceline and into the trees.

The man put some of the food into a paper cup, which he had trimmed down to about an inch in depth. He filled a second trimmed cup with water. He then walked very slowly and quietly to the area where the cat was lying. When he dared get no closer, he put the food and water down on the roadside, backed away, and then walked around the cat to make sure he was downwind. Then he waited.

After perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, the kitten began to stir. Evidently it had smelled the food. The man watched as the kitten approached the food, sniffing its way toward it. The cat found the cups and began to eat. The man was pleased to give the little thing something to eat—some kind of nourishment—for which it must be so starved.

He then began to walk slowly towards the kitten—ever so slowly—being extremely careful to make no noise. One measured step at a time, he drew closer. When he was about two feet from the

creature, he stepped on a pebble, making a slight sound. The kitten started, lifting its head from the food and listening intensely.

The man did not move. He waited until the kitten began to eat again. He edged closer and still closer, and then stepped on another pebble. The kitten lifted its head again, concerned that some predator might be nearby. The man held his breath. He was probably no more than a foot away from the kitten. It went back to eating.

The Battle

When the man was as close as he dared go—close enough to reach out and grab the cat—he began to bend down. He was careful and quiet. As he was bending once more, the kitten lifted its head and listened. The man stood still—half bent over—and waited. Once the kitten continued eating, the man quickly reached down and snatched the creature with both hands.

The cat was blind, greatly malnourished and even emaciated, slight of build, and only a kitten, yet it fought ferociously. Although the man was trying his best to help, the little one did not know that. To it, its life was in jeopardy. It was fighting for its life. The poor, blind thing knew no other way.

The man would not let go. This was perhaps his only chance to help. As the cat struggled, the man clung to it. The kitten bit his hand and arm; it scratched his chest. However, the man would still not let go. He managed to limit the cat's movement somewhat, and carried it back to his car, where he had a transfer cage readied for the kitten. He placed it in the cage, held it down, then set the door in place. The little creature was trapped.

The man picked up the cage and put it in his trunk. Strangely, the kitten quieted, and lay at the back of the cage peacefully. The man walked down the street, retrieved the cups of food and water, then brought them back to his car. He filled the food cup, and placed both the food and water in the cage. He hoped the little thing would eat and drink some.

The man examined the kitten carefully. He could not see its eyes; instead, he saw only eye sockets. It had not been attacked and wounded. Some other dreadful thing had done this to it—had eaten away its eyes. The man's heart sank when he saw this. He ached inside for this helpless, blind creature.

Wounded

Only now did the man begin to examine himself for damage. His hand and arm ached from the kitten's bites.

The man had worn leather gloves and a jacket with the expectation that the little creature would attack him as he tried to pick it up. He had never expected the fierce kitten would bite through both leather gloves and a jacket.

He removed his outer clothing and examined his wounds. He could see the teeth marks on his hand and arm—however, as best he could tell, the bites had thankfully not punctured his skin. The man knew from experience how much damage a feline bite could do.

He took an alcohol swab from a first aid kit and, just to be careful, cleansed both bite marks. Although he did not see any punctures, there was no harm in swabbing the area with alcohol. He saw a serious black and blue area on his arm where he had been bitten, and his thumb, around the area of the other bite, was quite sore. But, he thanked his God there were no skin punctures.

The man named the little one Mercy—it was God's mercy that he had found and been able to catch it, and even more mercy would be required for it to live.

Seeking Help

The man drove to the veterinarian's office. He opened the trunk and took out the little kitten. It was still calm, and it had eaten quite a bit of the food the man had placed in the cage.

He explained to the receptionist where he had found the cat and its condition. He asked that the vet do everything possible to help the little one. The receptionist asked, *What is your budget?* The man replied there was no budget. The vet should do whatever was necessary. Then he left that poor, pitiful creature there. As he departed, he turned to the receptionist and said, *Its name is Mercy.*

He waited for a call from the veterinarian. He expected the worst: given the condition of the kitten, he did not see any way to help it. After some time, he spoke with the doctor. There was nothing she could do. The orbs of the cat's eyes had shriveled and sunken back into its head, and were unresponsive to light, probably due to some malicious virus. It would be blind for the rest of its life.

The doctor said there were no viable options. Mercy was greatly undernourished and feral. To let it go was to assign it a slow and painful death. There was apparently no way to domesticate it. Were little Mercy to be kept alive, since it was blind *and* feral, it probably would have to be kept in a cage for the

rest of its life. Seemingly, the best and yet saddest option was to put the little one down.

Heartrending

The man did not respond right away. He needed to consider these things, though he knew within what must be done. He knew in his heart there was no real choice. The man had no way to help this little one. He wept within as he called the vet back, and told her to put Mercy down.

He asked the doctor whether Mercy was male or female. Mercy was a she. The man would bury *her* the next day.

Burial

The next morning, the man went to pick up Mercy's body. He placed her into his car and drove home in much distress. He chose a spot for burial near Pumpkin Bread and Hope, two others who had met untimely deaths.

It took some time for the man to dig through the stony ground, to bury Mercy at a good depth. He laid her in the hole, then spoke to her: *I owe you your life. If my Father gives that to me, I will give it back to you. I'm so sorry. I'm sorry for your suffer-*

ing and for taking your life to end that suffering. He gave the lifeless form a gentle pat and filled the hole. As he had done before, he put a capstone on the grave, until a marker could be made to show her burial spot.

Reflection

For many days, the man reflected upon poor Mercy's life. She had lived for only a few months, and those months were full of suffering. Only God knows how long that little creature wandered about blind, seeking some kind of nourishment. When the man saw her, she was greatly malnourished.

And perhaps the most distressing matter of all was that she was alone and helpless. She must have lived not only in constant fear, but in terror. This shook the man. It was not simply that Mercy had died, but how she had lived. She had lived a life replete with suffering. This poor kitten's life affected the man to his depths.

The man did not blame God for what had happened. He knew his Father and the Lord Jesus were not that way. He knew the source of such suffering. It was the evil one—Satan. He takes pleasure in damaging, hurting, torturing, and murdering. In some malicious and sadistic way, the suffering

caused to this little creature pleased that evil being. There is no mercy, goodness, or righteousness in that vile creature, Satan.

God's Working

However, by virtue of who and how He is, God somehow causes things to work together for good toward His children and eventually toward the whole creation. The man wondered how this poor cat's life could come to good.

He spoke to his divine Father, seeking some sort of comfort. His Father revealed that He had sent the man to find that little kitten and end its suffering. That creature's suffering was so intense that it reached and touched God's heart, and moved Him to act.

The Father could not act directly—He was limited, for He had given *man* dominion over the Earth. For Him to act directly would require Him to break His word—something impossible for Him. But He could send one of His sons to act on His behalf. So it was with this man—God had sent him to end Mercy's suffering.

A Divine Debt

Seeing this, the man realized God was not only suffering with that kitten, but that He was full of compassion and mercy. He had sent the man to end Mercy's life. Upon this realization, the man spoke to his Father: *Father, You owe me. You owe me Mercy's life.* Indeed, if the Father had sent him to take the cat's life, then he owed the kitten, and his Father owed him.

Struggling

The man continued to struggle within. Seeing his difficulty, a friend asked what was wrong. The man could only reply that he couldn't speak about it. Seeing the bruise on the man's arm, another friend asked what had happened. The man again replied that he was unable to speak about it.

His inward wound was raw and simply too painful. There may never have been such an excruciating experience in the man's life. He was not suffering for himself. He was not even suffering for little Mercy's death. He was suffering for what she had passed through in her life.

Day after day, the man grappled with Mercy's extraordinarily sad and painfilled life. He remained distressed and sorrowful, as he sought meaning and

understanding. He would have healed Mercy instantly, but he had neither the authority nor the power to do so.

Limitations

His divine Father was limited: he had given man dominion over the earth. Being a man, his Lord had both the authority and power to heal. However, evidently, He also was limited, though the man did not know how or why.

He had no doubt that his God and his Lord loved the creation, and sought in every way possible the best for it. But, for some reason, they could not act. They did the best they could, by sending the man to take care of Mercy.

Deliverance

God felt poor Mercy's suffering, as He does with all His creatures. It was so intense, it moved Him to intervene in the only way He could. It seemed Satan was daring God to act by causing this pain, that he might accuse Him of breaking His word.

As a feral cat, Mercy must have spent most of her time hidden in the underbrush. That was until her sight was gone. Then she had sought and found

an area devoid of obstacles—the roadside—not knowing how extremely dangerous that was. It was then—when she was out in the open—that God could deliver her from her suffering by sending one of His sons.

The Man's Need

The evil one's intense sadistic pleasure at inflicting suffering upon the helpless creature had come to an end. But for some reason, the man needed more. He needed to know that Mercy's suffering was not in vain; he needed to find his Father's righteousness, goodness, and wisdom in the life and existence even of little Mercy.

He pondered God's heart. If the man felt the way he did, how must God feel, not only for little Mercy, but for all the suffering of the whole creation. The man asked, *Father, are you weeping as well?*

There was no response, but the man knew his Father's heart. The Father, in His mercy, held back what He was bearing. To open the floodgates of that enormous burden would simply overwhelm and crush the little man's heart. No one could bear what his Father and the Lord Jesus were bearing. This was for Them alone, and They mourned together.

The man could see no word in the Bible to help him in this situation, to console him concerning the suffering, agony, and deaths of the innumerable helpless creatures. So, he asked, *Father, give me your word. I need your word.* There was still no response.

Caring for Mercy

For some reason, the man told his Father, *I will take care of her.* Immediately, upon the utterance of these words, the man sensed—felt—something descending to him, within him. God had deposited something into him.

He knew what it was. God had entrusted him with the life of that kitten. In some mysterious and incomprehensible way, the life of Mercy was in God, and now God had handed that to the man. God had answered the man's prayer: *You owe me her life.* God had repaid His “debt.”

An Ark

The man recalled Noah.¹ Noah had spent 120 years building an ark, to save himself and his family

¹ Gen. 6

from the flood of judgment coming upon the Earth. But it was not only *his* family Noah saved, but the creatures on the Earth as well. He delivered the helpless creatures into a new world—from the violence, death, and judgment that was about to come.

He was reminded of the Lord Jesus. When He was on the cross, we all were put¹ into Him. Not only so, He had tasted death on behalf of everything.² He became an “ark,” to save us from death and God’s judgment.

It seems the man had become an “ark” for little Mercy, delivering her from the realm of suffering, disease, danger, and certain demise, into something new, which would appear in its own time. The man had never dreamed or in any way imagined what had just occurred. God had given little Mercy into his care to keep secure and safe until the that day.



The man cherished his Father’s gift, as Mercy “slept.”

¹ 1 Cor. 1:30

² Heb. 2:9