

Mercy – Received & Offered

Series on Prayer & Holiness

- Communication With God
- Holiness – Important and Misunderstood
- Practical Living – How is it Lived Out
 - Matthew 5-9
 - Learning from Jesus about Life in His Kingdom

Matthew 5:7 *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”*

Mercy – Received & Offered

- mercy – websters “compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one's power ; *also* : lenient or compassionate treatment, a blessing that is an act of divine favor or compassion, compassionate treatment of those in distress”

- if grace – receiving what I do not deserve, then mercy – not receiving what I do deserve!

1. Picture of merciful in scripture
2. Where mercy springs from
3. Promise of being shown mercy

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1. Picture of the Merciful

a) Matthew 9:9-12 *“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: **‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.** For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

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- quote from Hosea 6:6 “*For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings*”
- God accuses people that their love is like dew on the grass – fleeting, gone quickly, all that’s left is the empty form of burnt offerings
- The desire of God is heart relationship – not religious function but living responding relationship.
- Jesus directs them to explore the meaning of the words *mercy not sacrifice*

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Three Views from the Passage:

- Culture – saw tax collectors as opportunistic jerks, rich sell outs, taking advantage of others
 - Religion – unclean, they were not trying, unrepentant and deserving of judgment, to be avoided and shunned
 - Jesus – sick and miserable, without options or help, they were dying and He could save them
- * Mercy not sacrifice – hearts that have Jesus perspective on others – and that respond from that heart not from religious obligation or tradition.

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b) Matthew 23:23-24 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."*

- picture is those not consumed with the trivial issues
- mercy is pictured as a pivotal issue in relationship with God, one of the important matters
- cannot be merciful when the symptoms and details are our focus

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c) Luke 10:29-37 *"But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "**The one who had mercy on him.**" Jesus told him, "**Go and do likewise.**"*

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- four dimensions of mercy in the account:
 - i) it observes distress
 - ii) it responds with compassion or pity on those in distress
 - iii) it compels action or participation in relieving distress
 - iv) it does not differentiate between enemy, friend, loved one etc. (not based on how deserving...)
- opposite of mercy found in Priest & Levite

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- too caught up in the mechanics of religious activity with no eye to see distress, no heart to respond with compassion, and no effort to bring the relief of the gospel.
- so far: mercy has a unique perspective on others – see what they need not deserve for ignoring God and living in sinful behavior. Mercy avoids being trapped in the trivial – debating the details not developing heart & vision. Mercy compels action flowing from the compassion of what is seen.

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2. Where Mercy Springs From

a) right perspective of God & myself

- not receiving what I do deserve.....punishment, death, broken relationship, giving up on me
- forgiven, restored, called to model, empowered
- God will be my protector, guide, defender, pattern for life, set my values and priorities
- knowing all I was created to be and know will spring from living this way

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b) right perspective of others

- see them not from culture or religious perspective
- lost, broken, bleeding, sick, dying, struggling to make sense of any of it
- matter deeply to God – loves them, searches for them, gave his son for them
- don't desire consequence but transformation for them, redeemed and restored, not living for the wrong things anymore

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c) right response to what we see

- easy to see, be distressed, and walk away
- respond with participation – action
- mercy grows when practiced.....
 - in our world and it's issues
 - in our neighborhood – day to day
 - in our church family

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3. Promise of Mercy Being Shown

- not preaching a works justification
 - bible full of examples – we will reap what we sow
 - ‘if you acknowledge me before men, I will acknowledge you...’
 - Lords prayer – forgive us our debts, as we forgive those who sin against us....
 - parable of unforgiving debtor –
- *No right to participate in God’s mercy and live as unmerciful!

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So What

1. Need a Clear Picture of Mercy

- important to God, key character of his followers
- bible full of examples that help us understand

2. Developing Mercy is a Choice

- put on right lenses, perspective is everything
- allow compassion to grow – motivate action
- when we see what God sees – can respond how He would

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3. Promise of Results for Living this Way

- wondered what the result of not being shown mercy looks like?
- receiving exactly what you deserve – horrifying
- heart issue that compels life response
- promise – the more you practice this, the more you see it extended to you!