

“A Man of Mercy”

Summary

This profound exploration of Jesus as a man of mercy invites us to reconsider what it truly means to receive and extend grace in a broken world. Through the powerful account of the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears in Luke 7, we discover that mercy is often messy—it disrupts our comfortable, controlled environments and challenges our religious pretenses. The woman's desperate act of worship reveals something essential: Jesus allows people society has rejected to touch Him, and He defends them. This isn't about excusing sin or ignoring truth; rather, it's about understanding that mercy and truth work together to purge iniquity. Simon had worked hard to prepare his home for Jesus, but he missed the heart of what Jesus came to do. Meanwhile, a broken woman risked everything to reach the only One who could save her. We're reminded that God is conforming us into His image, and sometimes that means allowing messiness into our lives—not mess for mess's sake, but the beautiful chaos that comes when something broken is being fixed. The question becomes: are we willing to be merciful like Jesus, or have we forgotten the depths from which we've been rescued?

Small Group Study Guide – A Man of Mercy

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when someone showed you unexpected mercy or kindness. How did it impact you?

Key Scripture References

- **Mark 4:41** - "What manner of man is this?"
 - **Luke 7:36-50** - The sinful woman anoints Jesus
 - **John 8:2-11** - Woman caught in adultery
 - **Proverbs 16:6** - "By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged"
 - **Lamentations 3:22-23** - "His mercies are new every morning"
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Main Points from the Sermon

1. Jesus Is a Man of Mercy

- Mercy means "to bend or stoop in kindness toward someone"
- We can tell what manner of man Jesus is by what manner of people He allows to touch Him
- Jesus defended and welcomed those society rejected

2. Mercy Is Messy (But Purposeful)

- Mercy is messy when something is being fixed
- Jesus was comfortable with messy when transformation was happening
- We shouldn't glory in mess for mess's sake, but embrace mess when God is working

3. Mercy and Truth Work Together

- By mercy AND truth, iniquity is purged (Proverbs 16:6)
- The cross is the meeting place of both justice and mercy
- We need truth to understand our need for mercy
- Mercy without truth is "greasy grace"; truth without mercy is harsh religion

4. We Must Extend What We've Received

- "Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:13)
- We need fresh mercy every morning (like manna in the wilderness)
- God is conforming us to become merciful like Jesus

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. Pastor Rob said, "We can tell what manner of man Jesus is by what manner of people He allows to touch Him." What does this reveal about Jesus' character? How is this different from religious leaders in His day?
2. In the story of the sinful woman (Luke 7), Simon the Pharisee had a clean house but a judgmental heart. How do we sometimes fall into the same trap of outward religion without inward mercy?
3. What does it mean that "mercy is messy"? Can you think of examples from your own life where God was fixing something, and it got messy before it got better?

Going Deeper

4. The sermon emphasized that mercy and truth must work together. Why is mercy without truth dangerous? Why is truth without mercy harmful? How did Jesus perfectly balance both?
5. Read James 2:13: "Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy." How does withholding mercy from others cut us off from receiving mercy ourselves?
6. Pastor Rob mentioned that sometimes God allows us to go through difficult things to make us more merciful. Have you experienced this? How did your struggles increase your compassion for others?

Personal Application

7. The sermon stated, "His mercies are new every morning, mine are not." What does it look like practically to "gather manna" each morning—to receive fresh mercy from God daily?
8. Is there someone in your life right now who needs mercy from you? What is holding you back from extending it? Is it a lack of truth, a lack of mercy, or both?
9. The religious leaders asked, "If He were a prophet, He would have known what manner of woman this was." Do we sometimes judge people based on their past rather than seeing them through the merciful eyes of Jesus? How can we change this?

Key Takeaways

✓ **Jesus is merciful AND just** - The cross demonstrates both God's justice (sin's penalty was paid) and His mercy (forgiveness is freely offered)

✓ **Mercy requires remembering** - We extend mercy when we remember the mercies we've received

✓ **Transformation is messy** - God is comfortable with mess when He's fixing something; we should be too

✓ **Daily dependence** - Like manna, we need fresh mercy every morning through intentional time with God

✓ **We become what we behold** - When we see Jesus as He truly is (merciful), we're transformed into His likeness

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Morning Manna:** Set aside 10-15 minutes each morning this week to intentionally receive God's mercy before checking your phone or email. Journal about what God shows you.
2. **Mercy in Action:** Identify someone who has wronged you or someone you've been judging. Pray for them daily and look for one practical way to extend mercy to them this week.
3. **Remember & Reflect:** Write down 5-10 specific mercies God has shown you in your life. Keep this list visible and read it when you're tempted to withhold mercy from others.
4. **Truth & Mercy Balance:** Think of a relationship where you need to speak truth. How can you do it with mercy? Or identify where you've been too soft and need to add truth to your mercy.

Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

- What struck me most about this message on mercy?
- In what areas of my life am I most like Simon the Pharisee (judgmental, religious)? In what areas am I most like the sinful woman (broken, desperate for Jesus)?
- How has God been conforming me to His image lately? What "mess" might He be allowing to transform me?
- Who in my life needs to experience the mercy of Jesus through me?

Prayer Focus

Pray together as a group:

- Thank God for His mercies that are new every morning
 - Ask God to help you remember the mercies you've received so you can extend them to others
 - Pray for specific people in your lives who need mercy
 - Ask God to reveal any areas of religious pride or judgmental attitudes
 - Pray for the courage to embrace "messy" situations where God is working transformation
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Looking Ahead

Next Week's Preparation: Continue reflecting on the question: "What manner of man is this?" Pay attention this week to how Jesus demonstrates mercy in the Gospels as you read.

Memory Verse for the Week: *"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."* - Lamentations 3:22-23

Closing Thought

"His mercies are new every morning, mine are not. I have to go get some more. Every day I need fresh mercy for me and for others. How can I give you mercy if I haven't received mercy?"

May we be people who drink deeply from God's mercies so we can freely give them away—always in truth, always in love.

Main Points – A Man of Mercy

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the merciful nature of Jesus Christ as part of a series examining "What Manner of Man Is This?" Pastor Rob emphasizes that understanding Jesus' mercy is essential for believers to be transformed into His image. The message balances God's justice with His mercy, demonstrating that the cross is where both meet. Through examining Jesus' interactions with sinful women and outcasts, the sermon reveals that mercy is often messy but necessary for transformation. Pastor Rob challenges the congregation to receive God's daily mercies and extend them to others, emphasizing that mercy coupled with truth has the power to purge iniquity and bring genuine transformation. The sermon concludes with the profound truth that God's mercies are new every morning, like the manna in the wilderness, requiring believers to intentionally gather them daily.

Key Points:

- Jesus is identified as a man of mercy who allows "messy" people to touch Him and defends them
- We are transformed into Jesus' image every time we see Him as He truly is (1 John 3:2)
- All circumstances work together to conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-29)
- Mercy is defined as bending or stooping in kindness toward someone, showing compassion
- Mercy is messy but necessary when something is being fixed or transformed
- By mercy AND truth, iniquity is purged - both elements are essential (Proverbs 16:6)
- The cross of Jesus is the meeting place of both God's justice and His mercy
- Judgment without mercy comes to those who show no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment
- God's primary attribute and default position is mercy, not judgment
- God's mercies are new every morning and must be intentionally gathered like manna
- A double portion of mercy is available in these last days (sixth day provision)
- Religious pride causes people to forget the mercies they've received and prevents them from extending mercy to others

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:41 - "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
- 1 John 3:2 - Transformation through seeing Jesus as He is
- Romans 8:28-29 - All things working together for conformity to Christ's image
- Luke 7:36-50 - The sinful woman anointing Jesus at Simon's house
- John 8:2-11 - The woman caught in adultery
- Proverbs 16:6 - By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged
- James 2:13 - Mercy triumphs over judgment
- Micah 6:8 - Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God
- Exodus 34:6 - God revealing Himself as merciful first
- Lamentations 3:19-23 - His mercies are new every morning

- Exodus 16 - The provision of manna in the wilderness

Discussion Questions – A Man of Mercy

How does understanding Jesus as a man of mercy challenge or reshape your current view of God's character and His response to your own failures?

In what ways might God be using difficult circumstances in your life right now to make you more merciful toward others who are struggling?

The sermon emphasizes that mercy is messy when something is being fixed—can you identify a 'messy' situation in your life or community where God might be doing redemptive work?

How does the balance between mercy and truth in Jesus' interactions prevent us from either being judgmental or enabling destructive behavior in others?

Why do you think the Pharisees struggled to accept the kind of people Jesus allowed to touch Him, and where might you see similar attitudes in yourself or church culture today?

Pastor Rob states that 'judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy'—what areas of your life might be blocking you from receiving God's mercy because you're withholding it from others?

How does the story of the woman caught in adultery demonstrate that Jesus' mercy doesn't excuse sin but rather empowers transformation and freedom from it?

What does it mean practically to 'gather manna' daily by receiving fresh mercies each morning, and how might this practice change your spiritual life?

In what ways have you experienced God's mercies being new every morning, and how has remembering past mercies helped you extend grace to difficult people?

How might the church become more effective in reaching broken people if we better understood that mercy coupled with truth has the power to purge iniquity and bring genuine transformation?

Scriptures – A Man of Mercy

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Mark 4:41** - "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
2. **1 John 3:2** - "When he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is"
3. **Romans 8:28-29** - "All things work together for good... predestined to be conformed to the image of his son"
4. **Luke 7:36-50** - The account of the sinful woman anointing Jesus' feet at Simon the Pharisee's house
5. **John 8:2-11** - The woman caught in adultery
6. **Proverbs 16:6** - "By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged"
7. **John 4** - The woman at the well (referenced but not quoted in detail)
8. **James 2:13** - "Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment"
9. **Micah 6:8** - "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God"
10. **Exodus 34:6** - "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love"
11. **2 Samuel 22:26** - "With the merciful, you will show yourself merciful"
12. **Lamentations 3:19-23** - "His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning"
13. **Exodus 16** - The account of manna in the wilderness
14. **2 Peter 3:8** - "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day"

Alluded to References:

15. **Hebrews 12:2** - "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (alluded to in opening)
16. **Titus 3:5** - "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercies, he has saved us"
17. **Genesis 18:25** - "Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?"
18. **Luke 15** - The Prodigal Son story (referenced in context of God loving both the older and younger brother)
19. **Revelation 2:17** - Hidden manna (referenced in discussion of eating hidden manna)
20. **Isaiah 53:6** - "All we like sheep have gone astray" (quoted in closing prayer)
21. **John 14:6** - "No man can come to the Father except by him" (paraphrased early in sermon)

Devotional – A Man of Mercy

Day 1: What Manner of Man Is This?

Reading: Mark 4:35-41

Devotional: The disciples' question echoes through time: "What manner of man is this?" When we truly encounter Jesus, we're confronted with someone beyond our categories and expectations. The disciples witnessed His authority over nature, yet they were still discovering who He was. Our spiritual journey involves this same ongoing revelation. Each time we see Jesus as He truly is—not as religion has painted Him, but as Scripture reveals Him—we are transformed into His likeness. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to show you Jesus afresh. What aspect of His character have you overlooked? As you behold Him, remember that transformation happens not through striving, but through seeing. Let your heart cry out, "Lord, I would see Jesus."

Day 2: The Meeting Place of Justice and Mercy

Reading: John 8:1-11

Devotional: The cross stands as the ultimate intersection where God's justice and mercy meet. The woman caught in adultery faced the just penalty of death, yet encountered the merciful Savior. Jesus didn't dismiss her sin or compromise truth; He absorbed the judgment she deserved. This is the gospel: the just payment for sin put Him on a cross, and the mercies of God offer forgiveness to all who believe. You don't have to choose between God's holiness and His compassion—they converge at Calvary. When you feel condemned by your failures, remember Jesus' words: "Neither do I condemn you." But don't stop there—hear His call to transformation: "Go and sin no more." His mercy isn't permission to continue in sin; it's power to be free from it.

Day 3: Mercy Is Messy

Reading: Luke 7:36-50

Devotional: Simon the Pharisee had everything in order when Jesus arrived—the perfect setting, the proper protocols. Then a broken woman disrupted everything with her tears, her hair, her alabaster flask. Mercy is messy because fixing things requires tearing out what's broken. Jesus was comfortable with the mess because He saw beyond the surface to the heart being healed. Are you willing to let God work in the messy places of your life? More importantly, are you willing to extend mercy when others bring their mess into your carefully ordered world? The woman saw a Savior; Simon saw a sinner. What do you see when broken people approach? Remember, you were once that broken person, and Jesus didn't turn you away. His mercies toward you should overflow as mercies through you.

Day 4: New Mercies Every Morning

Reading: Lamentations 3:19-26

Devotional: Like manna in the wilderness, God's mercies appear fresh each morning, but they must be gathered intentionally. Yesterday's mercy cannot sustain today's needs. This is why your first priority each morning matters—before emails, before schedules, before the day's demands consume you. Gather the mercy God has prepared for you. Jeremiah wrote these words from a place of deep affliction, yet he chose to call to mind God's faithfulness. You have the same choice today. Whatever troubles you're facing, whatever wanderings you've experienced, pause and remember: His steadfast love never ceases, His mercies never end. But here's the key—you must gather them. They won't automatically appear in your heart. Make time this morning, and every morning, to receive what God has provided. You cannot give mercy to others from an empty reservoir.

Day 5: Walking in Mercy and Truth

Reading: Micah 6:6-8

Devotional: God's requirement is beautifully simple yet profoundly challenging: do justly, love mercy, walk humbly. Notice that mercy isn't passive—it's active love. By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged. You need both. Truth without mercy becomes harsh judgment; mercy without truth becomes enabling compromise. Jesus modeled this perfectly, acknowledging sin while offering forgiveness, calling people to holiness while extending compassion. As you walk through today, you'll encounter people who need what you've received—mercy. But remember, showing mercy doesn't mean ignoring truth. It means bending down in kindness toward someone, as God bent down toward you. The world desperately needs believers who understand both God's justice and His mercy. Let your life be a testimony that God is both righteous and compassionate, that He takes sin seriously yet offers grace abundantly. Walk humbly, knowing you're only extending what you've freely received.