



Sermon Title: You Asked For It, Part 2

Sermon Title: What Do Forgiven People Look Like?

Date: 7/2/2023

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

BIG IDEA: Forgiven people must be forgiving people.

Let's examine three faces of mercy.

Face #1: The Despised Virtue.

1. Ancient peoples viewed mercy not as a virtue, but as a weakness. The Romans, for instance, admired courage, discipline, and justice. But mercy? They called it a "disease of the soul."

2. Even great philosophers like Aristotle expressed the view that mercy, at best, was rather distasteful. Ancient cultures reflected, by-and-large, an absence of mercy.

3. In Greek culture, if you had a disabled child or perhaps an unwanted daughter, the common thing to do was to abandon the infant to the elements on some distant hillside. No mercy.

4. And if you had an enemy over whom you gained the advantage, you would be as ruthless as the law allowed. No mercy.

But Christianity introduced a new face of mercy.

Face #2: The God-like Virtue.

1. Mercy is a trait we find linked to the character of God. **Micah 7:18,**
Titus 3:5

2. Mercy is like grace, yet distinct from it. Grace gives us what we do not deserve. Mercy holds back the consequences we deserve.

3. Here's the question: When I find myself in the position to teach a tormentor a lesson... Is it an opportunity for justice or mercy? <<>>

4. Once we experience his touch of mercy and grace, we become different people. And when I express mercy, I reflect part of God's character.

Face #3: The Extravagant Virtue.

1. Peter came to Jesus with a question.

Matthew 18:21–22 (NIV) Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but **seventy-seven times.**

2. The rabbis of Jesus' day taught the obligation to forgive another 3 times. Peter proposed something that, in his eyes, appeared quite generous.

3. Jesus answers Peter with a story. **Matthew 18:23–25**

4. This parable is the story of us. If we were to live a million yrs, we could never repay our debt of canceled sin.

We must apply mercy with wisdom. The command of mercy does not override our obligation to protect our family in the face of abuse. 1 Timothy 5:8 commands us to provide for our families. Part of that provision is protection from harm. To extend mercy does not require me to tolerate abuse. In the parable, after the king had shown mercy and the recipient abused that mercy, the king enforced full justice against the abuser.

Forgiven people are forgiving people.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Ancient cultures viewed mercy as a weakness. How does our culture view mercy?
- Who in your life could use some mercy?
- Do you find it easy, or do you struggle to show mercy?
- What area of life do you struggle to the most to show mercy? (Driving, slander, etc.)
- Describe a time when someone showed you mercy.