

## Lesson 6

# Love That Shows Mercy

## Class Objectives

- **Properly define mercy, Psalm 103.2-4; 69.13-15.**

Mercy is one of the forms of God's love where He demonstrates His favor in holding back from us what we deserve.

- **Our love must be characterized by mercy, Matthew 5.7; 25.31-46.**

The extending of mercy toward others is not optional ... we will not see heaven without it.

- **God is mercy, 2 Corinthians 1.3; Exodus 34.6.**

God does not *choose* to be merciful; He *is* merciful.

## Think About It

What type of heart did Jesus have to meeting the needs of people?

What holds most of us back from having this same type of heart as we see the needs of people today?

## What the Savior Said

Matthew 5:7 (CSB)

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

---

Jesus exemplified mercy in every way. He healed the sick, restored the crippled, provided sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, and even brought life to the dead, Matthew 9.35-36. He drew in prostitutes, tax collectors, sinners, drunks providing them with love and forgiveness. Instead of consenting to the death of a woman caught in adultery He forgave her and charged her to go forward and sin no more, John 8.1-11. He wept with those who mourned, John 11.35. He provided companionship with the lonely, Mark 5.25-34. He welcomed little children into his arms, Matthew 18.1-3. There was no one who escaped the mercy of Jesus. It was who He was.

All of this could be summarized by saying that mercy is the *action* of meeting people's needs.<sup>2</sup> It is the action of showing compassion; giving a helping hand; providing resources to the needy, comforting those who grieve, loving the rejected, forgiving the offender, and providing companionship to the lonely.

Mercy *relates* to misery. It is the product of strong affection, compassion, and pity. It *feels* for the terrible condition someone else is in. It *demonstrates* sympathetic concern and deep compassion by acting on the desire to relieve the distress. God is the perfect example in demonstrating mercy. See Psalm 103.2-4; 69.13-15.

Many of us are busy. It is easy to say to someone "I care," or "I'm sorry," or "I feel your pain," and then refocus on the pressing needs of our life.

Take a moment and read James 2.15-17. What does this passage teach us regarding the need for us to actually follow through when our feelings of pity and compassion for someone else come about?

In Matthew 5.7, what is implied if we are not merciful? How does Matthew 25.31-46 further exemplify this?

Refer to the prayer list in your church bulletin. Who can you reach out to and demonstrate mercy by meeting some of their needs? What will you do this week?

## A Passage to Explore

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (CSB)

### THE GOD OF COMFORT

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. <sup>4</sup> He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

---

<sup>2</sup> "a feeling of sympathy with misery, active compassion, the desire of relieving the miserable." See Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1908, p. 485.

You may be familiar with 1 John 4.8 where John summarizes the very nature of God. Our *God is love*. He demonstrates His love through grace and patience. He has graciously given us an eternal inheritance, 1 Peter 1.3-9, and has been incredibly patient toward us. Exodus 34.6 describes God as being *slow to anger*. But, a third aspect of God's goodness or love is His unending demonstration of mercy. When we are seeking to define mercy, we could simply say *God is mercy*. Jack Cottrell summarized it this way: "God does not choose to be merciful, He is merciful."<sup>3</sup>

In 2 Corinthians 1.3-4 Paul identifies God as *the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort*. This is who He is. As disciples of Jesus, it should be our increasing desire to develop the type of heart that not only sees needs but acts.

What can the following passages teach us as we prepare our hearts to be more merciful?

Psalm 34.15 – God is ready to hear those who call upon Him in distress. What are some things you can do to be ready to help others during their time of distress?

What does Luke 1.77-79 tell us about Jesus' willingness to come to earth and live as one of His created ones (sharing in the misery) in order to point us out of darkness? What should this teach us about how far we should go in demonstrating mercy?

Lamentations 3.22-23 says God's mercies never end. How can we connect this to showing mercy in forgiving others who have wronged us? Is it ever good to carry a grudge, even if the other party hasn't asked for forgiveness?

## Life Application

This week, make some time each day to spend a few moments alone with God. Every day, we will consider how much mercy God has given us and how that should inspire us to look for opportunities to show mercy to others. Take your time with each passage(s) so you can concentrate on what is being said. Use the questions as a springboard for your positive thoughts throughout your day.

### Monday

Read James 2.12-13. In what context are the thoughts in these verses made? (Read 2.1-11 to see.)

---

<sup>3</sup> Cottrell, Jack. *What the Bible Says about God the Creator, Ruler, Redeemer: God Most High*. What the Bible Says. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2012, p. 362.

*There is no favoritism in love.* How can we avoid the type of discrimination James speaks about here?

What do you think James means when he says *mercy triumphs over judgment*?

## ***Tuesday***

Read Matthew 9.10-13. As you think about the lost, do you see with the eyes of Jesus? How did Jesus see those who were generally rejected by the religious establishment?

What are some ways you can apply the teaching of these verses in your personal outreach for Christ?

## ***Wednesday***

Read Matthew 10.40-43. Can you identify the principle Jesus is teaching here? Write it out.

Do the little things matter? Why are we so apt to dismiss the little things? What often happens when we do this?

## ***Thursday***

Read Matthew 18.21-35. How important is it to demonstrate mercy (forgiveness) to others?

Now, read Matthew 6.14-15. What is the bottom line?

***Friday***

Read Luke 16.19-31. What was the sin of the rich man?

What does this passage teach us on the importance of demonstrating mercy?