



Week 5: Blessed are the Merciful

1. What is your favorite food combination (PB&J, Chocolate and Peanut Butter, Chips and Salsa, etc.)?
2. Pastor Dan shared that our human inclination is to separate our vertical relationship with God from the horizontal relationships with others. Some of us prioritize the vertical relationship, others prioritize the horizontal. Where have you experienced this in your life, with which do you struggle?
3. Read **Matt. 9:9-13, Hosea 6:6** together. In Matthew Jesus is exposing the hypocrisy of his opponents. In Hosea's context the shrines and rituals of Israel had become impediments to true spirituality, and Hosea called upon the people to denounce them. This does not mean that Hosea regarded sacrifice or ritual worship as intrinsically bad, he desires that his reader acquire the loving and compassionate heart toward others that comes from a transformational life with God. Considering Pastor Dan's sermon, what sticks out to you as you re-read these passages?
4. Pastor Dan shared that mercy (hesed) could be defined here as God's heart toward us through kindness, affection, lovingkindness, mercy in our redemption from enemies and troubles, mercy from a God who keeps his promises no matter what, the kindness of God is abundant, great in extent, everlasting, good. Consider that God desires our mercy toward others in this way, more than he desires religious practice. If your Group has access to YouTube, watch "Loyal Love" by the Bible Project at https://youtu.be/UfbyFLgs_NM. Discuss what you learned about this powerful picture of Love and Mercy shown by God.
5. Read and Discuss following verses about God's mercy towards us (hesed). **Exodus 36:4, Psalm 35:5-10, Psalm 89:1-18, Isa. 54:10, Isa. 63:7, Lam. 3:22-24, Joel 2:14, Micah 6:8.** What stands out to you the most in each verse.? What do they teach about God? What do they teach about people? How does this affect the way you worship God? How would you share these truths with others?
6. We cannot separate our relationship with God from our relationship with others. Anyone who uses their devotion to God to justify mistreatment of others is a liar (1 John 4:20). **Mercy is meant to be experienced from two sides.** How does this challenge you this week. What is one step God is asking you to become a conduit not a container of God's mercy as a result of this sermon?

Prayer:

- Invite your group to reflect in prayer for a few minutes over what you discussed.
- Have someone close your time by praying for your group.