

## Hope Church March 1<sup>st</sup> 2026

### What really matters? MERCY

#### Luke 8:40-49

We're in week two of our series called ***What Really Matters***. Jesus said something in Matthew 23 that should make every church person a little uncomfortable:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you HYPOCRITES! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have *neglected* the more important matters of the law — **justice, mercy** and **faithfulness**. You should have practiced the latter, without blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

**Matthew 23:23 NIV**

Jesus told the religious leaders in **MATTHEW 23** that you can look very spiritual on the outside and **still completely miss what actually matters**. What really matters to God.

Last week we talked about JUSTICE. Not the kind that trends on social media, but the kind where God tells the truth about what's broken in the world. Where God tells the truth

about what's broken in us. And through Jesus, He's not just pointing out what's wrong me.

**He's working to make it right.**

Today's topic is MERCY.

Matthew uses the word **ἔλεος** (eleos) for MERCY. Mercy isn't just feeling sorry for

someone. It's **not just empathy**. MERCY *moves toward* people. MERCY gets involved.

MERCY doesn't **stay at a safe distance**. It STEPS CLOSER AND DOES SOMETHING

about what it sees. MERCY is taking a risk on someone.

- About five years ago I got a call from a local school about a single mom and her 10-year-old daughter. She had lost her job, and they'd been kicked out of their place.
- My church stepped in and helped them find somewhere to stay. She was able to land a new job.
- I told her to use my car as long as she needed to. This turned into months. I ended up driving what felt like the world's worst loaner.
- Eventually, my church pitched in and bought her a reliable car of her own.
- Today she has a good job. She's engaged. Life is stable. All because one church family decided to bet big on this mom and her daughter. And to show them mercy.

If you have a Bible or the Bible app, go to **LUKE 8**.

- Luke 8 is a chapter on Jesus' authority.

- He calms a storm. He casts out demons. He teaches with power.

Luke doesn't hand us a *neat definition of mercy*. He tells a story. And in that story,

MERCY must decide whether it's **going to stop or keep moving**.

Verses 40–42a:

Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

- And now He **returns to Galilee** from an area called Gerasa. Where he was chased out of town.
- Here in Galilee a crowd is waiting.
- But suddenly, one man pushes forward. A man named **Jairus**.
- A synagogue leader. He is **respected**. He is known. He is *influential*.
- And he falls at Jesus' feet. **His twelve-year-old daughter is dying**. If you're a parent — you feel this instantly.
- This is not *theoretical* problem. This is not *philosophical* question. This is **urgent**. This an **emergency**.

Verses 42b–44:

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

- Jesus starts moving. But the **crowd slows everything down**.
- And then Luke introduces *someone the crowd does not see*. A woman.
  - ⇒ Twelve years of **bleeding**.
  - ⇒ Twelve years of weakness.
  - ⇒ Twelve years of **doctors and disappointment**.
  - ⇒ Twelve years of isolation and shame.
- According to **LEVITICUS 15**, her condition made her unclean.
- That meant she was unwelcome.
  - ⇒ Unwelcome at **worship**.
  - ⇒ Unwelcome with people.
  - ⇒ Unwelcome in *everyday life*.
- She learned how to live on the margins. To be present but invisible.
- And in the middle of this crushing crowd, **she reaches out**. She touches the edge of Jesus' cloak.

- She's BREAKING social and religious boundaries. She is an unclean non-family female touching a Jewish rabbi. She is risking **more embarrassment**. She is **risking getting into trouble**.
- But instead of her uncleanness contaminating Jesus, the opposite happens. IMMEDIATELY, her **bleeding stops**. IMMEDIATELY she is **healed**.

Verses 45–48:

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

- Jesus stops and asks: Who touched me? BUSTED!
- Jesus knew it wasn't someone accidentally brushing against him. **Someone touched Him on purpose**. Hoping **something might finally change**.
- She's been invisible for *twelve years*, but Jesus **refuses to let her disappear again**.
- He stops everything. He **searches for her** in the crowd. He gently pulls her out of hiding.

- She is shaking with fear. And Jesus uses one word for her: **Daughter**. Not *patient* or *problem* or *case study*. Jesus calls no other woman in the Gospels **daughter**.
- He doesn't rebuke her. She tells her whole story with everyone watching. Transforming a secret healing into a **public moment of honor**.
- When Jesus says she is saved He is using perfect tense – **Σέσωκέν** (*dzesooken*).  
Something is completed but it is continuing. Jesus didn't give her a quick fix. Her future has changed.
- Jesus **doesn't just remove her pain**. Jesus **restores her**.

Verse 49:

While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader.

“Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don't bother the teacher anymore.”

- While Jesus is having this moment with her, *Jairus is still standing there*. You can almost **feel his desperation**. His daughter is dying. Every second counts.
- Then someone shows up with the worst news a parent can hear: Your daughter is dead.
- From a DAD'S PERSPECTIVE, mercy looked like terrible timing in this story. **Stopping for one person cost the life of this dad's only daughter**.
- But if you keep reading, Jesus raises her from the dead.

Luke 8 shows us what MERCY looks like.

## **Mercy makes the invisible visible.**

- In a world where the *religious leaders* were OBSESSED with being **noticed** for how right they were. How holy they were. This *woman* did everything **she could not be noticed**. Not to be seen.
- When MERCY disappears, **people become labels**.
  - ⇒ Addict.
  - ⇒ Difficult.
  - ⇒ Awkward.
  - ⇒ Too much.
- The crowd saw a label.
- Jesus saw a person.

We all want to be seen, heard, and valued.

**Brené Brown**

Mercy begins when Jesus helps us see again.

The broken and the lost and the vulnerable and the different and my enemies.

- Who in your world has **become a label instead of a story?**

## **Mercy asks of us to be interrupted.**

- Jesus is in the middle of an emergency. A little girl is dying. And still He stops. He allows Himself to **be interrupted**.
- We live in a world obsessed with efficiency — *outcomes* and *schedules* and *productivity*. We measure our days by how much we got done. How many boxes we checked.
- MERCY **pushes back** at our world. MERCY **measures life differently**.
- MERCY lets someone else's pain interrupt my plan. Someone else's story **slows us down**.
- Where the world ask me what I accomplished. MERCY asks me who have I noticed.
- MERCY looks like:
  - ⇒ Listening a little longer than you meant to.
  - ⇒ **Walking toward** the person sitting alone.
  - ⇒ *Putting your phone down*.
  - ⇒ Letting someone's tears rearrange your evening.

**Henri Nouwen** said it this way:

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain.

Mercy begins the moment we decide not to push past the interruption.

### **Mercy is about people and not projects.**

- Jesus could have just kept on walking. The woman was healed. Problem solved.
- But MERCY wants more than a quick fix. It **restores dignity**.
  - ⇒ DIGNITY in her own body.
  - ⇒ DIGNITY in her community.
  - ⇒ DIGNITY in her relationship with God — He calls her “daughter.”
- Jesus never treats people like ministry projects.
  - ⇒ **PROJECTS** are neat and measurable. They have *timelines* and *checklists* and *clear outcomes*.
  - ⇒ **PEOPLE** are complicated. People move slowly. People *carry stories* and *contradictions*. People relapse. People **repeat patterns**. People sometimes *push help away*.

Projects get solved. People get loved.

Projects have end dates. Relationships don't.

- Jesus stops. He lets her talk. He invites her to tell the whole story. He treats her like family.

Eugene Peterson said it this way:

Pastoral work is not managing religious goods and services; it is dealing with persons.

Mercy doesn't just solve problems. Mercy restores dignity.

It reminds people they matter. It helps them feel human again.

### **Why mercy feels hard.**

- Mercy is beautiful in theory. But it's costly in practice.
  - ⇒ Mercy costs time.
  - ⇒ Mercy **disrupts comfort**.
  - ⇒ Mercy crosses boundaries.
  - ⇒ Mercy **requires presence**.
- But the deepest reason mercy is hard is **because of our pride**.

- When I quietly see myself as morally ahead of others, MERCY shrinks.
- Mercy grows best in people who remember **they needed mercy first**. When I remember I was rescued too — MERCY expands.
- Mercy will often feel very ordinary:
  - ⇒ Refusing to define someone by their worst moment.
  - ⇒ Looking for the story behind someone's behavior.
  - ⇒ Caring even when there isn't a quick fix.
  - ⇒ Staying present when someone's life feels messy.
  - ⇒ Speaking words that restore dignity to someone carrying shame.
  - ⇒ And maybe most importantly: slowing down enough to see people.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**Luke 6:36 NIV**

Mercy is a way of following Jesus through crowds.

It's easy to hear this and think of people around us. But before we do that, we must see ourselves. I need to REALIZE that **I am this woman**.

- Different symptoms but same condition.
- Hurting in places nobody sees.

- Carrying shame.
- Trying fixes.
- Hoping I can manage quietly.

And Jesus does not recoil. Jesus stops. Jesus sees. Jesus calls us: sons and daughters.

At the cross, God did not treat us like a problem to manage.

He treated us like a child to rescue.

Jesus *absorbed everything unclean* about me.

Justice was satisfied so **His mercy could flow.**

This week, walk through crowds like Jesus.

⇒ Slow down enough to see.

⇒ Allow interruption.

⇒ Treat others like people, not projects.

Because the MERCY that reached you is meant **to reach through you.** And when MERCY starts moving through ordinary people crowds change. *Lives* change.

**And the invisible becomes visible again.**