

God's Mercy

I would like to share with you a sermon from Douglas Hamilton, preacher at the Junction City Church of Christ, Junction City, KS.

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[Douglas Hamilton Video link](#)

Mercy

Our lesson is: "Mercy Through The Eyes Of God."

In fact, this part: "*Through The Eyes Of God*"; [regardless of what] you put in front of it. The phrase, "*through the eyes of God*", should always be in your [vocabulary].

This evening we're going to cover *mercy*, **not** through the **eyes of man**, but through the eyes of God. Because if we can leave here today understanding mercy at a deeper level then it will probably affect our lives a little bit more.

So, Mercy Through the Eyes of God

The Oxford Dictionary Defines Mercy as:

Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.

The Greek word for *mercy* is Ελεος [eleeos], and it basically has the same meaning (as the Oxford definition). Applicably though, a good way to [think of it would be this:] having the ability to stand in somebody else's shoes, feel what they feel, feel their pain, and then move with compassion to relieve their suffering.

It's one of the more diverse words in the entire Bible. What I mean by that is, the word *mercy*, captures so many other words which are associated with it.

For example, Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible says,

[mercy] captures words such as "kindness, loving-kindness, goodness, grace, favor, pity, compassion, and steadfast love."

When you think of *mercy*, all those words come into play. [Mercy] is one of the essential [qualities] of our God, being captured countless times in the Scriptures.

Mercy in the Old Covenant

The Jews understood *mercy* under the law, even before Christianity was established on the cross. Many times, Christians [tend to think and] silently embrace the position that God's *mercy* [wasn't] unveiled [until] the Christian covenant, that God wasn't merciful in the OT, but [as the scriptures

attest,] it was always there in the Old Covenant.

For example, in Exodus 34:6, it says:

“The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth”

Remember those words that Baker’s Encyclopedia associated with mercy? Like those mentioned in Exodus 34:6, *compassionate, grace, and lovingkindness*, that’s mercy.

Another example, 2 Samuel 24:14

David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.”

And Micah 7:18,

“Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?”

In fact, under the Law, the highest [holy day] for all of Israel was: *the Day of Atonement* from Leviticus 16. This is the day when they would take two goats and they would cast lots to choose one goat for a sin offering and to choose Azazel, **the scapegoat**, which would be set free after making the atonement sacrifices. This was also the ONLY day in which the High Priest could go beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place. He would kill the bull of sin offering for himself. Then later he would kill the goat of sin offering for the people and take the blood inside the veil of the Tabernacle and sprinkle the blood of the bull first, then later the blood of the goat on the Ark of the Covenant.

You know what they called the Ark of the Covenant? The **“mercy seat”** of God (**Leviticus 16:13,14,15**). The **mercy seat** of God! And that was for forgiveness of sins of ignorance. Sins you didn’t even know you committed!

The [sins] you already knew about, you had **the** regular levitical sacrificial system to [deal with] it. There’s the trespass offering, the sin offering, then you had the burnt offering, the grain offering then the fellowship offering that’s your normal protocol.

But for the ones you don’t even know, which that alone right there, is a good example of God’s mercy because, if you think about it, and Leviticus 16, the highest holy day, that that day was for the forgiveness of sins of ignorance.

Now, if the biggest day in all of Judaism was just for the sins you don’t know. Then it would probably be wise to understand, that [it] is very likely, you and I have things that are **imperfect** before God... and praise God, that He is a merciful God.

You know the Bible says. *If anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.* (1 Cor 8:2). And *Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall* (1 Cor 10:12).

You know [there’s such a thing as] deceit, [even] self-deceit and we deceive each other every single day. Now you hold that thought, hold that thought close to you, because John says in

1 John 1:8,

*If we say that we have no sin, we **deceive** ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

And then in verse 10,

*If we say that we have **not sinned**, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

[Then that means] that we **DO** sin but it's not imputed (or counted) to us as [sin] (Romans 4:6,8,22). John would later say in

1 John 5:14-17 (ESV)

*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. ¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. **There is sin that leads to death**; I do not say that one should pray for that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, but **there is sin that does not lead to death.***

How sins are imputed (or counted) to you are determined, John tells us in 1 John 1:5-7, by whether you are walking in the light (i.e. according to God's word) or walking in darkness (i.e. walking by your own understanding or man's understanding in opposition to God's word).

But the sins of ignorance [was covered under the law of Moses] and that's the biggest example of **mercy** from the Old Testament.

What about Mercy in the New Covenant

Without a doubt, the fullness of God's mercy carried over and centered in the life of Jesus in the New Covenant. He is the son of God and this quality (of mercy) encompassed the life of Christ. Jesus, being the Son, we know from Hebrews 1:3 (NASB), is the exact representation of His [Father's] nature. What's one characteristic of God's nature that we might see in Jesus?

2 Corinthians 1:3,

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of **mercies**.*

Here are just a few examples of this [characteristic] for us to examine.

1. **Matthew [20]:30-34**, *And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have **mercy** on us, Son of David!" ³¹ The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³² And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³³ They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened." ³⁴ Moved with compassion,*

→ **Notice**, it's not mercy if it's **just** an emotion, the emotion has to be followed by **action**, what does it say? Picking up with verse 34:

Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

There were two blind men, living a life without the ability to even see the face of the One to whom [they] speak. They made a request for Jesus to symbolically stand in their sandals, understand their pitiful condition, and being moved with compassion to heal them. This is why they said "*Have **mercy** on us, Son of David!*"

That's one example of mercy.

2. **Matthew 14:13,14**, *Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities.*¹⁴ *When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.*

Jesus went off by Himself for a moment of respite, but a crowd of wounded souls found Him. He did not withdraw from them out of selfishness, but “felt compassion” and was moved to alleviate their suffering.

3. **Luke 10:30-35**, *Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.”*³¹ *“And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”*³² *“Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”*³³ *“But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,”*³⁴ *and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.”*³⁵ *“On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’”*

Jesus told this parable in an attempt to educate the crowd about godly living. He used an example of a man who was mugged on the Road to Jericho and in desperate need of compassion. It was not the Levite nor the priest which had compassion, but a lowly Samaritan. When asked who was this victim's neighbor, the answer was *the Samaritan*, the one who “*showed mercy toward him*” (10:37)

Jesus is the full embodiment of the mercy of God throughout the New Testament in the lives of Christians. Whether it was His compassion to heal (Mk 1:41), raise the dead (**Lk 7:13**), or feed the hungry (**Mt 15:32**), Jesus fully embraced the characteristic of mercy, valuing it even more than sacrifices of the Law (**Matthew 9:13**). We symbolically draw near to the mercy seat of God when going through Jesus (**Hebrews 4:16**).

When we convert to Christ we're placed right in front of the Mercy Seat of God. We pass through the veil, the same way Jesus passed through the veil, and directly into the presence of God. The way into the Most Holy Place is no longer hidden. Jesus has shown us the way.

And because of that, when we convert, we are:

Fully Accepting the Greatest Mercy of Christ

There are many mercies which Christ has extended to us, including blessings, family, food, clothing, health and even life itself. But the greatest merciful act of compassion for which Jesus has to offer is **eternal life with Him**.

- **Romans 5:8**, *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
- **Ephesians 2:4,5**, *But God, being rich in **mercy**, because of His great love with which He loved us,*⁵

*even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by **grace** you have been saved)*

→ It's all done brought to you by mercy.

→ Take away the mercy nothing else follows.

- **1 Peter 1:3**, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great **mercy** has caused us to be **born again** to a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead”*

That was the greatest act of mercy. Jesus said, *“greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* And what a friend we have in Jesus!

You know, if you think about that merciful act, it is so, so important. This is why we read the Bible. This is why we keep the focus on Jesus Christ and what He did. We have to believe that what Jesus did for us on that cross was the greatest act of mercy ever exhibited in humankind.

- **Titus 3:5**, *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His **mercy**, by the **washing** of regeneration and **renewing** by the Holy Spirit”*
- **John 3:5**, *Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*
- **Colossians 2:12,13**, *having been **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you were also **raised up with Him through faith** in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,***

His Mercy Has Great Impact in Our Lives.

Incredible impact, life-changing impact.

His **mercy** extended to His people should serve as a constant backdrop to our entire perspective. We are not worthy in God's eyes. **He showed** mercy to us, and sent His Son to extend needed forgiveness of our sins. That must always be in our minds to empower us in the right way.

- **Luke 18:9-13**, Remember the Pharisee and tax collector praying?

vs9, [Jesus]... told this parable to some... who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt

vs11,12, The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

vs 13, But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

→ And what is Jesus' assessment in verse 14?

vs14, I tell you, this man went to his house **justified** rather than the other; for everyone who

exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- **Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:13-16**, *even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was **shown mercy** because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.¹⁶ Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.*

→ It was mercy that was a game changer for Paul.

- **Romans 12:1**, *“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the **mercies** of God, to present your bodies **a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God**, which is your spiritual service of worship.”*

→ You can’t present yourself a living holy sacrifice unless, you do it through the mercies of God. You got to have your mind on the mercies.

- **James 3:17**, *“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”*

It’s done through mercy.

And because He extends mercy to us...

He Expects Us to Extend Mercy to Others.

- **Luke 6:36**, *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

That’s really what the lesson’s about. We can’t change what Jesus did. But we can dwell on it and extend it to others. He wants us to have a deep understanding of his mercy through Christ.

And you know one of the best ways to do that? If you really want to understand deeper what God’s mercy is like, then be merciful to others,

He directly ties **our** confidence in **receiving** His **mercy** to **us extending mercy** toward others.

- **Matthew 5:7**, *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive...”* What?... **“mercy”**

→ He ties it right to us extending mercy to others.

When Peter asks Jesus, in Matthew 18:21, *“Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”* And Peter suggests, what it appears he thinks is a generous answer: *“As many as **seven times?**”*

What was Jesus’ answer? In verse 22: *“I do not say to you seven times, but **seventy-seven times.**”* (older translations say, *“seventy times seven.”*)

Then Jesus *immediately* follows with the parable of the talents in Matthew 18:23-35. It’s a parable about a king. A king with a particular servant who owed a lifetime of debt, 10,000

talents.

NOTE

(According to Strong's [Bible] Dictionary, "a talent of silver in Israel weighed about 100 pounds, a talent of gold weighed about 200 pounds." So, according to my (Scott's) calculations, that's, 16oz to a pound, 100 pounds is 1600oz in **one talent**, 10,000 talents is 16M oz of silver. 200 lbs of gold then, would be, 32M oz. As of 12/15/2022, an oz of silver was worth: \$23. An oz of gold: \$1,776. So, the value of 10,000 talents today is: \$368M in silver or \$56.8B in gold.)

→ **The point is**, he could never pay it off and [the king] called for the bill to be paid. If it **can't** be paid, the king said, "**sell him, his wife and children, and all that he has, that payment can be made.**" The man fell down and said, "Have mercy on me" and [Jesus] said, [the king] showed compassion and forgave his debt. [So] the man is relieved, "Hallelujah," thanking God.

But then that servant goes out and sees [a fellow servant] who owes him 100 denarii.

NOTE

(Now, Strong's Dictionary points out that according to the parable of the vineyard in Matt. 20, a denarius is worth a day's wage of an ordinary laborer. Therefore, the amount is 100 day's wages. Today, a 100, 8 hour workdays at \$15/hr would be: \$12,000 That's \$12,000 compared to \$368M to \$56.8B.)

and [the forgiven servant] says to him, (paraphrasing), he says to him, "Hey, Where's my money?" And the man says, "Oh, will you please have compassion on me?" But the first servant placed his hands around his neck and said, "No, I want the green, I want my cash. Give it, I want it now!" And **he had him thrown in jail.**

His fellow servants saw what had happened and told the king. The King called that guy back in. He said, I forgave you all your debt and I heard what you just did. Shouldn't you have had compassion on your fellow servant also, just as I had pity on you? The king was angry and delivered him **to the torturers** until he should pay all that was due to him. (which, if you remember, we determine was an impossible feat).

And what did Jesus say at the end, in Matt. 18:35? He says, "*So My heavenly Father also **will do to you** if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*"

He ties **mercy** right to us!

Mercy **from God** is the [consequence] of what **we extend to others.**

- **Colossians 3:12,13**, *So, as those who have been **chosen of God**, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; **just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.***
- **James 2:15-16**, *"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"*

→ So James pretty much says your faith is worthless if there are no actions associated with it,

continuing in:

- **James 2:17**, *"Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."*

→ So you can have all the merciful feelings that you want, but it has to be backed up with actions.

Would you have comfort in reading the Bible, that God felt all warm and fuzzy about you, but never sent Jesus?

I don't think we'd be meeting here today?

People could say whatever they want to say. *Talk is cheap, isn't it?*

- **James says (2:18,19)**... *show me your faith without your works and I'll show you my faith by my works.* ¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe, and tremble!*

→ Faith alone is insufficient, we still have to follow up with actions.

So God expects us to be merciful to not only our fellow servants, but to really everyone, everyone.

Conclusion

When we forgive somebody, think about this, God [will] forgive you and me for all the pitiful garbage that we're in? If you think that you're not, you're wrong. You're absolutely wrong. Our righteousness is as filthy rags, there's non righteous, no not one. Nobody's good enough.

- **1 John 1:5b-7**, *God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.* ⁶ *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* ⁷ *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Bottom line is this, You want to really, really understand the mercies of God? Take the person that you don't want to forgive and just let it go. Just do that. Because that's exactly what God has done for us a thousand times. Probably even before we got to church today.

Just let go. Because inside, we really want to get our vengeance, that's man's side. Somebody hurts you real good, what do we do? We want to get vengeance. But God says vengeance is mine.

So, just let go and let God.

If there's anybody that you feel rough about, if you got that nagging boss, show them a little bit of that Jesus mercy.

Do that. Might be the only Bible they read.

Invitation

We are extending the invitation, now, to anyone who is subject to it. Come,... while we stand and sing.