

We Are Family

Adding Mercy – The Sweetener that Makes All the Difference

Luke 6:27-36

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 19, 2017

Because we're still sinners even after God saves us means that marriage, friendships, and church relationships all by themselves can start to taste bitter. God gives us a sweetener that makes all the difference; it's mercy.

I. Mercy is What Keeps Our Earthly Relationships Alive

"Mercy is the kind, sympathetic and forgiving treatment of others that works to relieve their distress and to cancel their debt." Taken from *"The Devastating Glory of Mercy"* message, Marriage and Mercy Conference, January, 2009, Paul Tripp

Mercy only becomes mercy when it gets dispensed and poured out on others!

Luke 6:27-36 shows us how mercy can change even the worst relationships.

If Jesus tells us to have mercy on our enemies, then He certainly expects us to show it in our homes, with our children, in our marriages, and in our church relationships.

Jesus emphasizes that love, mercy and forgiveness should be the calling-card of those who have been adopted into the family of God as His children.

Luke 6:35 "... and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

Mercy takes the initiative, it's on the move, and it's aggressive not passive. Mercy is compassion in action and it moves towards others to do them good.

God's already done this for us! He put flesh and bones on mercy and sent His Son to the cross for us, not just so that we could experience His mercy, but so that we could also extend it out to other sinners around us.

II. What Would it Look Like to Pass On Mercy to Others Around You?

A. Passing On Mercy Means You're Willing to Forbear and Suffer Because of Someone Else's Sin

Mercy is your commitment to live alongside someone else in this broken world, even though you might suffer with them, for them, and because of them.

Mercy is a beautiful thing, but when it starts to cost us we're tempted to walk away. It has been said that mercy is a commodity that everybody desires but nobody wants to give.

The cost of mercy always exceeds whatever you had initially calculated. That's true of any earthly relationship between two sinners, which is the only kind of relationship you're going to have right now on this earth.

B. Passing On Mercy Means You're Not in a Hurry and You're Willing to Wait

It means you've stopped looking for that 'fully sanctified' switch to throw on your roommate, spouse, or young adult child.

Agape love isn't based on feelings alone, but is characterized by a willingness to lay aside your own rights and privileges to give for the need of another expecting nothing in return.

The underground roots of commitment will get you there and keep you there even when you hit those seasons where all the pretty blossoms of feelings have fallen from your branches. This is true with marriage, friendships and church fellowship.

The root system is the Gospel that keeps mercy alive even while the feelings fluctuate.

III. Your Mercy Will Dry Up without a Fresh Appreciation of God's Mercy to You

Jesus drove this point home in **Matthew 18**. He tells a parable about the servant who was forgiven a million dollar debt, but then went out and shook his fellow-servant and threw him into prison for not paying back he owed, which is nothing compared to how much he'd been forgiven.

God takes this issue of mercy very seriously and it's not optional.

Jesus was teaching that the mercy of God expressed to us makes a claim on us! God commands this mercy to be passed along and that objects of mercy should become channels of mercy starting with those closest to you!

How do you forgive in a way that aligns itself with what the Bible teaches about forgiveness?

1. **Look the hurt in the face** and don't try to pretend it didn't happen. You were hurt. Don't deny it. Let the facts stand. Forgiveness is not pretending like it never happened or acting like it didn't hurt.
2. **Put away your hatred.** **Ephesians 4** says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you." That doesn't mean deny it; it means you choose to send it away and you refuse to indulge in the dark pleasures of nursing and rehearsing those hurt feelings and allowing them to turn into bitterness.
3. **You pay the cost for their sin.** To forgive anyone is to absorb the cost of what they've done to you. There's always a cost. There's no way to biblically forgive without it costing you.

What God did for us in His Son, Jesus Christ, is our example and source of everything we need to forgive each other. **Isaiah 53** shows us God in the act of forgiveness and what happened on the cross is described. God paid a price to forgive and it cost Him His own Son.

Love, forgiveness and mercy are the greatest apologetics to the fact that the Gospel is life-changing and that God did send His Son to this earth to solve our biggest problem, which is the sin problem that separates us from a holy God.