

Blessed - 5 - The Merciful

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Mt 5:7

No close relationship can survive without mercy. The closer the relationship and the more we interact, the more mercy we will be giving and receiving. Everyone has faults, makes mistakes and sins. Everyone finds themselves in situations beyond their control. When such things come between us and our friends, family, brethren or co-workers we can only hope for mercy. Mercy is a pleasure to receive. When we have hurt someone and they are merciful and forgiving it is like a breath of fresh air. When we have a serious problem and a stranger offers us mercy and removes the problem we feel happy and pleased. But giving mercy is a much more difficult thing. Giving mercy is often inconvenient, painful, or difficult to give, which is exactly why Jesus placed it here. We all know how blessed it is to receive mercy. Jesus wants us to see that great blessings are also for those who are merciful.

What exactly is mercy? How would we define it? Mercy is complex because it consists of two distinct elements, and two very important realms where it works.

The Elements/Ingredients of Mercy:

(1st) Feelings of pity, sympathy, empathy and compassion within the heart.

(2nd) Allowing these emotions to lead us to action in order to remove or solve the problem.

The Realms of Mercy:

(1st) Things that come through no fault of our own like a car accident, illness, or financial troubles.

(2nd) things we bring upon ourselves through sin, bad judgment or the breaking of law.

Although they ultimately blend together, it is important that we break out the components, see them clearly and then work to gain them.

The Elements/Ingredients of Mercy:

1. Feelings of pity, sympathy, empathy and compassion in the heart

"In Greek, *eleos*(mercy) is a *pathos*(strong emotion), ...the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else. ... in the face of the unfortunate this emotion is an *eleein* which includes the elements of both awe and mercy... in this sense of mercy, sympathy is very common. (Kittel Vol 2 p. 477-487)

Mercy begins with "the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else." The Greeks called these emotions *pathos*(Latin *passio*-) because all afflictions create a powerful sense of loss and anguish. When we are afflicted, these emotions come without any conscious thought or effort. When we suffer a death in the family, a terrible accident, illness, or financial setback, our heart fills with strong emotions of sorrow and grief. Because we have all felt such emotions, we know exactly how others feel when similar things happen to them. When we hear of their anguish and sorrow(their *pathos*/*passio*), one of three things will occur. We will feel it with them(sympathy), we will feel as though we are inside them(empathy), or we will refuse to feel anything(apathy). These terms were copied directly from Greek into English(the prefix modifying the stem *pathos*):

Empathy	– (em-pathos)	– “em” – “in”	pathos – strong emotion	– “to feel strongly within”
Sympathy	– (sum-pathos)	– “sum” – “with,”	pathos – (Latin: com- passio)	– “to feel strongly with”
Apathy	– (a-pathos)	– “a” – negates (alpha-privative)	pathos	– “to feel nothing”

When the Priest / Levite passed the robbed, stripped, half dead man, they either felt nothing(*apathy*) or the emotions were not strong enough to move them. So they left him there. When the Samaritan saw him, he was moved with compassion and this compassion(*latin: com - passio*) moved him to be merciful.

Thus the first component/ingredient of *mercy* is "feeling with" or "feeling as inside" another. When we feel unmoved or unmotivated by their plight, we are "apathetic," and "apathy" is the greatest enemy of the *merciful*. If we see their suffering as their own problem to be resolved with their own resources we will have no mercy.

Even if we did help them it would not be mercy. We could do it because of the expectations of others and the shame it might create within us if they saw we did not help. We might do it "to be seen by men" hoping for their praise(Mt 6:1-4). But though they may move us to do something, neither shame nor pride can move us to *mercy*. Mercy begins when we feel within our own hearts the strong emotions surging within theirs(*empathy*) and continue to suffer with them(*sympathy*). When *empathy* and *sympathy* become "natural affections" we will always be ready to show mercy.

If we want to grow in mercy we must cultivate "the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else." Whenever we hear of troubles in the lives of others and we must learn to go beyond just hearing about it. We must seek to understand what they are feeling. Then with understanding we can feel it with them, then seek to work with them to find a solution. Mercy is doing for others in their troubles what we would want others to do for us in our own.

All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets. Mt. 7:12

The Holy Spirit summed up the different emotions / attitudes that will help us with tender mercy:

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. Col 3:12-15

2. Allowing these emotions to lead us to action in order to alleviate the problem.

We must never confuse feelings alone with mercy. Feelings are foundation upon which mercy is built. Empathy, sympathy, pity, compassion and kindness are all “*natural affections*” for those striving to live in the image and likeness of God. But these feelings must always lead us to action.

“*eleos... mercy; kindness or good will towards the miserable and afflicted, **joined with a desire to relieve them**...*” (Thayer, P. 203; 1653)

“*eleos is the **outward manifestation** of pity; it **assumes need on the part of him who receives it**, and **resources adequate to meet the need** on the part of him who shows it.*” (Vines Expository Dictionary 1656)

If “*kindness or good will towards the miserable and afflicted* is not “*joined with a desire to relieve them*,” it is not mercy. Mercy must have a “*need on the part of him who receives it*” and “*resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.*” The Holy Spirit revealed to James that there is no profit or value to feelings and words when there is no “*outward manifestation of pity.*”

If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Jas 2:15-16

Emotions alone change nothing and should bring no sense of fulfillment or achievement. All feelings of sympathy or compassion, no matter how deep and powerful never rise to the level of mercy unless they move us to act. Mercy is the bridge between the emotions created by a friend’s problem, the solution we create in our own heart to remove that problem, and the actions done that solve it. We are merciful when pity, compassion and empathy build the bridge to “*give them the things that are needful.*”

This is exactly what Jesus revealed in the parable of the good Samaritan. They all saw the need. We don’t know if the priest and Levite felt any compassion, but the Samaritan did and the compassion he felt led him to do all that was necessary. He paid the full price to put the man on the road to recovery. Even the lawyer who heard the parable knew Jesus spoke of mercy.

Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on (them) oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spend more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, think thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, **He that showed mercy** on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Lk. 10:30-37

When the blind, demon possessed, epileptic, and lepers asked for mercy from the Lord that is exactly what they wanted. They wanted to move Jesus to compassion and then have him build the bridge that would solve their problem.

And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, **have mercy on us**, thou son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace: but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, **have mercy on us**, thou son of David. 32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, **that our eyes may be opened**. 34 And **Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and straightway they received their sight**, and followed him. Mt. 20:30-34

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “**Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.**” Mt. 15:21-22

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15 “**Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely;** for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. Mt. 17:14-15

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him **ten men who were lepers**, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, “**Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!**” Lk. 17:12-13

If we want to be merciful, we must carefully assess our ability to feel the tender emotions of pity, compassion, sympathy and concern. We must also see if our “good intentions” reach the point of action.

Realms of Mercy:

1. Things that come upon us through no fault of our own.

Up to this point, we have only discussed the “no-fault” realm of mercy. Those things that come upon all men through no fault of their own. No matter how careful and prudent, people are going to suffer from their own mistakes or the mistakes of others. When people are involved in accidents, contract illnesses, lose a job or suffer financial troubles, most of the time there is no blame or minimal fault. When we can help a man born blind or even someone struggling to fix a flat tire it is simple. We put ourselves into their lives, feel as they would feel if we were in their situation and then do what we can to help.

Things get much more complicated when it is their own fault.

2. Things we bring upon ourselves through sin, bad judgment or breaking the law.

A. Mercy toward those who “reap what they sow” in the material realm

When we move the need for mercy from “no-fault” to “their fault” other factors are created that compete with empathy and sympathy. When it is “their fault,” we may feel anger, frustration, or become apathetic. How many of us have been tempted to say: “it’s their own fault so let them find the solution.” We even have human proverbs created by men for these situations: “they made their own bed, let them lie in it” or “let them reap what they have sown.” We have created “tough love” and told ourselves “we cannot be an enabler,” so we decide “we will have to teach them a lesson” because “they won’t learn if it doesn’t cost them something.” Though under certain circumstances this is true, we can’t deny these emotions and proverbs can also lead us back to apathy or even worse to actual malice, cruelty, or vengeance.

When Paul said: “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2Th. 3:10), he created a very narrow window where the wisdom of such proverbs is true. Sometimes it is more merciful to allow them to suffer for their mistakes. God does this all the time. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal 6:7-8). But God always does this in mercy hoping for repentance. Never with apathy, malice or cruelty.

If we did decide to withhold our help, we must be certain it is always truly mercy and not just an excuse for apathy. It is mercy only if we feel empathy and sympathy and sincerely believe the only way to help them in this circumstance is to let them learn from their mistake without our help. We see multitudes of people today who are in poverty and facing troubles because they will not work. They want the government and others to care for them and have become dependant. We see some of them on the corners of the streets with signs asking for help. What does mercy do? Where does our sympathy and empathy lead us? Is it merciful to give them something when as an alcoholic or drug addict our help would hurt them? Is it mercy to give them money to continue their misery? So what do we do? If we can’t stop and talk to them and find out what they need, then it is very dangerous to just give money. Each situation must be carefully weighed and decisions must be made. Sometimes true mercy is not an easy path when people have brought their troubles on their own head and helping may be hurting.

B. Mercy for Sin

We have saved the most important and for many the most difficult aspect of mercy until now. When we have sinned, lost our temper, said hateful things, or violated someone’s trust, we have only one option. To throw ourselves upon their mercy and seek forgiveness. Seeking this aspect of mercy is something we all understand and have all done. But what about giving it? It is important to lay this out in as simple a manner as possible.

The more we love, the easier it is to show mercy. Since mercy begins with sympathy and empathy we feel with and inside another, those we love have a head start. Mercy is easier for friends and family since we already have emotional ties of love and mutual concern. When a spouse, child, parent or intimate friend needs mercy we already feel sorry for them and want to help. Only the most sin scarred and conscience seared person could listen to pleas of remorse and repentance from loved ones without being moved. Since we all know this is true, we can build on it. With those we love, regardless of blame or fault and no matter how hurt or bitter we initially feel, in time, as the initial emotions fade, we begin to understand, and the softer and gentler emotions of pity and compassion begin to build.

As the hurt fades, it is replaced with mercy and forgiveness and soon it is all forgotten. Take a moment and feel this process. From anger and bitterness to sorrow and loss and gradually to understanding, pity, sympathy and finally to mercy and forgiveness. We have gone through this process with our spouse, children, parents and good friends. Sometimes the process is a minor mistake or sin that can quickly and easily be passed through. Other times it is a major insult or hurt that is much more difficult. Yet if we love enough, trust God enough, appreciate God’s mercy for us enough, and submit to His commands, we slowly and painfully with humility and forbearance pass through this fire and become refined.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. Col 3:12-15

Even as Christ forgave you

The foundation of mercy and forgiveness when it is “our fault” is based on what God in Christ has done for us. God’s feelings toward us when we have “no one to blame but ourselves” is a model for us all.

*The LORD is **merciful** and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in **mercy**. 9 He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His **mercy** toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father **pities** his children, so the LORD **pities** those who fear Him. Ps. 103:8-13*

Think about it! When our children sin, even when it is against us, what do we long to do? We want to pick them up, hold them and make it all go away. God feels the pity of a father toward His children much more perfectly than we do. When He sees those who fear Him in need, he will remove their transgressions as far as the east is from the west. That is real mercy! Many passages extol this great mercy of God.

Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments Deut 7:9

With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; 26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. 27 For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks. Ps 18:25-27

Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord. Ps 25:6-7

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. 11 For Your name's sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Ps 25:10-11

Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. 6 Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast. Ps 36:5-7

Arise for our help, And redeem us for Your mercies' sake. God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Ps 67:1

“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you. 8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” Says the Lord, your Redeemer. 9 “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. 10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you. Isa 54:7-10

Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. 20 You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old. Mic 7:18-20

Jesus is asking us to be what God has been and always will be. It is another facet of *agape-love*, and God is *agape-love*. In asking us to be merciful to those who do not deserve mercy, Jesus is asking us to enter into the elect group over which he is the High Priest.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 4:14-16

So “blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.” Blessed are those who are filled with sympathy compassion and pity over the sins of others. Blessed are those who filled with such compassion and pity show mercy and forgive,” “for they shall obtain mercy,” “and find grace to help in time of need.” If the perfect Jesus can sympathize (*sum-patheo*) with our weaknesses that lead to temptations, then we can sympathize with the troubles and weaknesses of others that have led them to temptation.

When we consider all the terrible things we have done in the presence of God, we sometimes despair that God could pity us enough to still build the bridge to forgiveness. But it is those very feelings of pity, compassion and sympathy, that led Him to do all that was necessary to forgive and remove the sin. Even before Israel did their terrible acts of unfaithfulness and wickedness, God had promised He would neither forsake, destroy, or forget the covenant had made with them. His mercy was too great to do this.

“When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice 31 (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor desert you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. Deut. 4:30-31

The apostle Paul was the very worst of all these things when he was converted. He had persecuted the church, sought to destroy all faith in Jesus Christ and tried to lead those who believed in Jesus to blasphemy. After he was shown mercy, forgiven, and allowed to be an apostle, God revealed that all future generations of Christians should be comforted by the depth of this mercy. He wanted to prove to

us that we could never do anything that would lead God to no longer pity or show mercy.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And 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 And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order 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. 1Tim. 1:12-16

No one today can feel they have used up all the pity and compassion of the Lord! Nor can anyone feel they have placed themselves so far into sin that the Lord no longer has a means to forgive or show mercy. God will always show mercy and compassion to His people. He will never forget His covenant with Abraham. The “pity, empathy, and sympathy” of God are limitless and thus no matter how evil and how far away we have wandered, He will always want to build the bridge for us to come back. The resources of God to forgive are adequate to meet the need. Remember, not for ours only but also for all the sins that have ever been committed by all who are in the world. They are infinite!

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ... My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. 1Jn. 1:9; 2:1-2

God’s mercy is limitless because His compassion and mercy are infinite and His resources to forgive sin are immeasurable. Since we were created in the image and likeness of God, we too can cultivate our own pity, compassion and sympathy and thus our own desire to use all our resources to forgive and help those who are in need.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. James 3:17

For they shall receive Mercy

This is one the most wonderful aspects of mercy. When we show mercy to others, we are paving the way for God to show mercy to us. In this sense, our own mercy reflects the mercy we can expect from God. The more mercy we give to others the more will be shown to us. This is the most important aspect of the blessedness of being merciful. If we are merciful we will receive mercy.

Jesus dealt with this concept over and over again in his earthly ministry. He spoke of it a second time in his sermon on the mount.

Do not judge lest you be judged. 2 “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Mt. 7:1-2

Think of it, the way we will have judged is how we will be judged. If we are harsh, judgmental, prejudiced, apathetic, with no pity or mercy, then this is exactly how God will be when He judges us. If we are full of pity and compassion, showing great mercy and forgiveness to others then God will judge us the same *standard*. The passage gives us a wonderful opportunity to set the tone for our own judgment. When we face a judge on earth, we hope he is in a good mood, or that we can arouse sympathy and pity for our plight. When we face the Judge who will determine our fate for all eternity, we can come into his presence knowing we will receive exactly the same judgment we have used to judge others. What an amazing and wonderful opportunity! Whenever we can show mercy we are creating the mercy we will receive in when we stand before the Lord in judgment.

Jesus revealed that this is not only true for the final judgment, but even in our requests for mercy every day. As the Pharisee and tax collector prayed, the Pharisee received no mercy.

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Lk. 18:9-14

In asking for mercy with such emotion and with such humility, the tax collector was shown mercy and went home justified. But the Pharisee who felt no pity and thus had no mercy received no mercy. This is brought into our minds every time we pray in the way Jesus commanded us to pray for forgiveness.

*And forgive us our debts, **as** we also have forgiven our debtors... 14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mt. 6:12; 14-15*

Note how we are to ask for forgiveness! Forgive us our debts “**as**” we also have forgiven our debtors. Carefully consider the definition of the relative pronoun “as:”

“hos... an adverbial form of the relative pronoun *hos*, *he*, *ho*, which is used in comparison, *as*, *like as*, *even as*, *according as*, *in the same manner as*, etc....” (Thayer, p. 680-682; 5613)

When we use this “as” we are asking God to forgive us “in the same manner as” or “according as” we have forgiven others. Thinking back to our forgiveness of others, if we did ask God to forgive us the same way would we be forgiven? If we prayed: “Father forgive me exactly the same way I forgive others” how would we fare? Yet the truth is clear: “if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” It is equally clear, “if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” In another place, Jesus took concepts of mercy, judging and forgiving and joined them.

“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. 37 “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:36-37

Peter’s question about forgiveness strikes the very heart of mercy. Since we want our own forgiveness to be limitless from God, we must forgive others in the same way. Peter used the number seven to show completeness. Jesus took Peter’s complete number, multiplied it by the same complete number(seven). Even after completeness is multiplied by completeness(Limitless & immeasurable) Jesus still multiplied immeasurable completeness by ten. The answer is not 490 times. The answer is unlimited infinity!.

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” Mt. 18:21-22

Jesus then gave the parable that made that very application.

23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ... 33 ‘Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?’ 34 “And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 “So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” Mt. 18:23; 33; 34-35

When Jesus saw the unmerciful hearts of the Pharisees he reminded them that God would rather see mercy in the hearts of his servants than he would to receive sacrifice from them. For not even sacrifices will bring forgiveness if there is no mercy in the hearts of those bringing those sacrifices.

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. Mt. 9:10-13

The blessedness of mercy is twofold. First, it brings us back to the divine nature and creates *agape-love*, bringing us to God’s attention as faithful and true servants. Second, mercy brings mercy. When we are merciful, we will receive mercy. James revealed this clearly. Judgment is without mercy for those who shown no mercy. For this reason, mercy will triumph over judgement! Those who only judge but show no mercy will only be judged and shown no mercy. But those who judge with mercy will triumph for their own mercy will lead them to receive mercy and not condemnation from the Lord.

So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:12-13

- 1 What is the emotional component to mercy?
- 2 What does the Greek word pathos mean?
- 3 What are the English words that have the root *-pathy*?
- 4 Does Jesus feel sympathy toward us in our weaknesses?
- 5 Does God feel the pity of a father toward us?
- 6 What are the emotions we must cultivate then if we are to become merciful?
- 7 How does the golden rule help us to become merciful?
- 8 Mercy is the _____ between a problem in another and the _____.
- 9 How did the good Samaritan build the bridge between the problem and the solution?
- 10 When the blind and lame asked Jesus for mercy what did they really want?
- 11 What bridge did God’s mercy build for those of us who are sinners?
- 12 Does God have enough pity and enough resources to show us mercy and forgive us?
- 13 How did Paul’s life illustrate how large a span God will bridge for us?
- 14 Can anyone today feel they have used up all the pity and mercy of God?
- 15 Is there any limit to the power of the blood of Jesus to forgive sin?
- 16 If we do not show mercy on earth will we receive mercy in heaven?
- 17 The way you _____ you will be _____ Mt 7:1-2
- 18 _____ us our debts _____ we forgive our _____. Mt 6:12
- 19 Will we be forgiven if we do not forgive?
- 20 Be _____ as your father is _____. Lk 6:36