

Beatitudes 3... Sermon on the Mount

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

What does mercy mean to you? What does mercy look like?

Have you ever been on the receiving end of mercy? What happened? What did it feel like? Did it change you?

“Who is my neighbor?” Luke 10:30-37 (p. 1613)

- What did the one who stopped do to show mercy?
- What did this man get out of helping?
- Was the injured man open to mercy? Are we?

Mercy is not an attitude. Mercy is active – it requires action.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees... you give a tenth... but you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” – *Matthew 23:23* (p. 1537)

“As if their own needs and their own distress were not enough, they take upon themselves the distress and humiliation and sin of others. They have an irresistible love for the down-trodden, the sick, the wretched, the wronged, the outcast and all who are tortured with anxiety. They go out and seek all who are enmeshed in the toils of sin and guilt. No distress is too great, no sin too appalling for their pity. If any man falls into disgrace, the merciful will sacrifice their own honour to shield him, and take his shame upon themselves. They will be found consorting with publicans (tax collectors) and sinners, careless of the shame they incur thereby. In order that they may be merciful they cast away the most priceless treasure of human life, their personal dignity and honour.” – *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

How can any mortal human show mercy at that level? Why?

Mercy does not trivialize suffering. Mercy shows respect.

Job’s friends. How did they show mercy?

Mercy, at its simplest, is to love and be compassionate.

Bonhoeffer’s translation: “Blessed are the merciful, for they have the Merciful for their Lord.”

People with mercy enact it because God showed us mercy first, not because they want to receive mercy. They want to imitate Jesus.