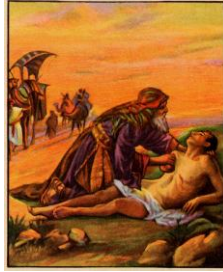


August 30
"Mercy", Daily Disciple, page 251



[Psalm 15:1-5](#)

[James 2:12-13](#)

Digging Deeper: Finding out, discussion and sharing

1. Read Psalm 15 and discuss the ways you believe it connects with the topic of mercy for today's lesson.
2. According to James 2:13 mercy triumphs over judgment. In what way is this true? Both Jesus and the prophets affirm this. Read [Hosea 6:6](#); [Matthew 12:7](#). What is the context in which Hosea mentions this? What is going on with Jesus for him to mention this?
3. Why do you think the Bible has many examples of cries for mercy? Can you think of others that we did not mention in the devotional material?
4. Do you believe that God hears cries of mercy from his children before he hears cries for mercy from non-believers?
5. What is the difference between mercy, kindness, pity and compassion?
6. What is so extraordinary about the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a story about compassion?
7. At the end of that parable the expert in the law responded to Jesus' question about who the neighbor was. He answered, "The one who had mercy on him." Do we generally think of "mercy" describing what it means to be a neighbor?
8. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, pinpoint if you can, the specific actions taken by the Samaritan that demonstrate mercy.
9. Make a list of the concrete ways that mercy is often extended. What is the hardest to do?
10. Why do you suppose grace and mercy go together in Paul's salutations in his letters?
11. Why are they found together with peace?
12. How are the merciful blessed?
13. How is grace and mercy described in [Hebrews 4:16](#) and [2 John 1:3](#)?
14. The Hebrew word *chesed* is translated in various ways in the Old Testament. It can mean covenant faithfulness, loving-kindness, or mercy. Actually, discuss how all three ideas are intertwined and what they mean for the Christian.
15. In Psalm 57:10 God is described as having *chesed*. What does it mean for God to be merciful?
16. What does a congregation of God's people look like who are fundamentally merciful?
17. What does a congregation look like where mercy is missing?
18. How can we be a more merciful church?

MERCY

Lord, have mercy on me!

In the gospel of Matthew we find Jesus encountering a woman from Canaan, near the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. This woman was deeply troubled because her daughter was demon-possessed. Out of the depths of her anguish as a mother having to see her daughter suffer this way, she calls out for Jesus to have mercy on her. (Read [Matthew 15:21-28](#)) On another occasion during his ministry, two blind men followed Jesus crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” (Read [Matthew 9:27-31](#)) Calling out for the Lord’s mercy during times of stress, distress and anguish seem to be a normal thing in the gospel narratives. Think of how many times in our own lives we have said either out loud or deep within our hearts, “Lord, I need your help here!”

Definition of mercy

What is mercy? One of the basic words used in the New Testament for “mercy” is *eleeo/eleos* (verb/noun) and basically means a deep feeling of pity and compassion. Mercy is extended by trying to help someone out in their predicament because you feel sorry for them, you have a deep response of compassion and you empathize with them. It is offering the gift of self to another. Probably the most famous story of mercy and compassion is the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Read [Luke 10:25-37](#)). In verse 33 of this chapter Luke actually describes the Samaritan as one who “took pity on him.” The word that Luke uses literally means to have deep feeling in one’s bowels. This was the ancient way of describing compassion, pity and mercy.

Mercy extended

This basic Christian stance of mercy being extended can be done in concrete ways. Sometimes mercy is extended in the form of forgiveness. And this may indeed be the hardest way to express mercy, because forgiveness is never easy. However, we know from Jesus’ pronouncements in the Beatitudes that “Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7). Mercy is not much different from compassion and it describes a condition of heart this is ready to respond to the difficulties of others. In fact, we may even go one step further and claim that mercy extended is being faithful as a steward of opportunities that God puts in our path. Mercy being extended is found in the offering of forgiveness, the offering of help, the offering of understanding, the offering of the compassionate touch, the offering of the listening ear, etc.

Grace and mercy together

Grace and mercy are found together at least four times that I am aware of in the New Testament. Interestingly, two of those four times are in Paul’s address to Timothy: [1 Timothy 1:2](#); and [2 Timothy 1:2](#). They are found in the salutation of the letter. Paul wishing grace and mercy for Timothy. Not inconsequentially, with grace and mercy in these two verses Paul adds peace. This triad of blessings that Paul wishes for Timothy is more than just a formula. It expresses in a thumbnail fashion what is for Paul three of the most important blessings that reside in the human heart fashioned into the likeness of Jesus. Read [Hebrews 4:16](#) and [2 John 1:3](#) for the other two occurrences of grace and mercy being together.

Divine attribute

Mercy is important because it comes from the very essence of God’s being. As such it is a significant divine attribute: God is merciful. Read [Psalm 57:10](#)—“faithfulness” is *chesed*, loving-kindness, or mercy.