

“Be Merciful, as He Is Merciful”  
(Matthew 18:21-35)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning,

We saw the mercy God showed you

By sending His Son,

And the mercy Jesus showed you,

By being willing to come

And take your place,

So that you might enter heaven.

B. Preview.

This evening,

Let's consider why you should show mercy to others.

First, because of the mercy God has shown you.

Second, because He commands you to show mercy to others.

And third, because of what He threatens if you don't show mercy to others.

II. Sermon.

A. First, you should show mercy to others

Because of the mercy God has shown you.

Consider the context.

What Jesus says stems

From a question Peter asked

About forgiveness.

Hearing what Jesus said to do

When someone sins –

Presumably against you,

Although there are times

When it will be against others –

That you should go to them,

If they don't listen,

That you should take one or two more,

That if they don't listen to them

You should tell it to the church –

Peter asks

What you should do

If the offending party

Asks for forgiveness.

Jesus says,

Show mercy to them

And forgive them.

How often?

What if they keep sinning against you,

And keep coming

Asking for forgiveness?

How many times

Should you forgive them?

Peter suggests

What to his mind

Appeared to be

A generous helping of mercy:

Up to seven times (v. 21)?

(Which was twice the limit

Set by the Jewish teachers)

Jesus says not up to seven times,

But up to seventy times seven (v. 22).

In essence, He's saying,

Peter, you need to be much more generous.

Did Jesus mean

That 490 was the limit?

That after 490 times,

You no longer have to forgive?

No, but that you are to forgive

An unlimited number of times –

As many times

As your brother or sister

Might sin against you  
And then ask your forgiveness.

To help them understand  
Why they should do this,  
Jesus told them a story  
Of a slave who owed  
An unpayable debt,  
Who asked his lord for mercy  
And received it,  
But who refused to show mercy  
To his fellow slave,  
When he did the same.

Jesus originally told this parable to His disciples.  
But He preserved it  
And commanded  
That it be preached to you,  
So that you would understand  
Why you should forgive others  
And show them mercy.

You should forgive them, first,  
Because the Lord has forgiven you.

You owed a debt so large  
You could never have repaid it –  
The sin you committed in Adam,  
The sins you've committed  
Throughout your life,  
And the hatred you had toward God,  
All put you into infinite debt.

But the Lord forgave you  
When you turned from your sins  
And trusted His Son –  
He cancelled your debt  
Entirely and permanently.

You no longer have to fear  
Spending eternity in hell  
To pay off your debt,  
Because the Lord has wiped the slate clean,  
As we saw this morning.

That's why you should be willing  
To show mercy to others.

B. Second, you should show mercy to others  
Because that's what God commands.

That's the whole point  
Of this parable –  
To illustrate that you should forgive  
Those who sin against you.

The second slave represents  
Any brother or sister  
That has offended/sinned against you  
And that asks you for mercy/forgiveness.

Jesus acknowledges  
That their sins are far less severe –  
A hundred denarii,  
A hundred days wages,  
As compared to ten thousand talents –  
Because these are sins  
That are considered  
As being committed against you,  
Rather than against God.

What sins?  
Maybe they said something about you  
That wasn't true,  
Or something

They didn't like about you.

Maybe they betrayed your trust

And told someone else

Something they promised

They wouldn't tell anyone.

Maybe they took something from you,

Or injured you physically,

Or accused you falsely.

There are many things

Others can do to sin against you.

When, by God's grace,

They come to their senses

And come asking you to forgive them –

To show them mercy –

What should you do?

Jesus says,

You should remember

That you were indebted to God's justice,

And that He forgave you.

And you should remember

That on the basis of that forgiveness  
He has commanded you to forgive them,  
Not seven times,  
But seventy times seven –  
As often as they repent  
And ask for your forgiveness.

What should you do  
If a brother or sister  
Sins against you,  
But they don't ask forgiveness?

You should still be willing to forgive.  
You should resist holding anything  
In your heart against them,  
And show them kindness,  
And pray for them that they might repent  
And seek God's forgiveness and yours.

What if the person who sins against you  
Isn't a believer?  
You should still do the same.

While we're on the subject of mercy,  
What should you do



If you see a brother and sister in need

Who ask for your help?

You should help them

As far as you're able.

What if they don't ask?

You should help them anyway.

John writes, "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

What if they're not a believer?

The example of the Good Samaritan

Shows you that you should help

Even those outside the faith.

Paul writes, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10).

The fact that the Samaritan and Jew were enemies

Points to the fact that you should

Help even your enemies.

You were God's enemy,

When He sent His Son to save you (Rom. 5:10).

As the Lord has shown you mercy,

You are to show others mercy as well.

Jesus says, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35).

C. Finally, you should show mercy,  
Not only because of God’s mercy,  
And not only because of His command,  
But also because of what He threatens if you don’t.

The first slave who had his debt “forgiven,”  
Refused to forgive the debt of his fellow slave  
And had him thrown into prison  
Until he should pay back every cent.

What did his master do to him?  
He handed him over to the torturers  
Until he should pay back the last cent.

If you aren’t willing to show mercy –  
To forgive those who sin against you  
When they ask for your forgiveness –  
The Lord won’t forgive you,  
But require you to pay your own debt.

Jesus says, “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not  
forgive his brother from your heart” (v. 35).

If you’re wondering  
Whether this really says

What it appears to say –

Don't forget that

Jesus said the same thing

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer:

“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Matt. 6:14-15).

He also said in the Beatitudes,

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (5:7).

Is Jesus saying

That if you don't forgive

Those who sin against you,

You won't be forgiven?

Yes.

Does He mean that your forgiving others

Is the grounds of your forgiveness –

That it actually earns it?

No.

What He means is

Your willingness to forgive others

Is the evidence that He has forgiven you.

If you're able to show mercy to others,

You can know you have received mercy.

This ability to forgive  
Is a part of that holy image  
He is forming in you.

When Jesus was on the cross,  
After being condemned, beaten,  
Mocked, scourged and crucified,  
He didn't call curses down on the heads of those  
Who had done these things to Him.  
He prayed, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing" (Luke 23:34).

That was merciful.

Stephen showed the same mercy  
When he prayed for those  
Who were stoning him,  
"Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (Acts 7:60).

This is part of the new nature –  
The work the Spirit is doing in your heart –  
The willingness to show mercy.

If you can't find it in your heart  
To forgive as Jesus forgave,  
Or to show mercy and kindness

As God shows even the wicked,  
Then you need to wonder  
Whether Christ is being formed in you.

Having said that,  
This doesn't mean  
That showing mercy or forgiveness  
Is ever easy.

There's still a part of you  
That doesn't want to show mercy,  
That doesn't want to forgive,  
That wants to get even.  
We call it the old man,  
The old nature,  
Or remaining/indwelling corruption.

It's that part of you  
That always gets in the way  
When you want to do what's right.  
It's not easy.

But don't forget,  
God gave you His Spirit  
To produce His character in you,  
And that grace is powerful enough

To overcome all your sins.  
And so the Lord commands you  
To put your sin to death,  
And to walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:13).  
He commands you to show mercy  
And to forgive,  
Even as He showed mercy to you  
And forgave you.

The more you grow in this area –  
The more you show mercy,  
The more you'll be like Christ –  
And the more you'll show up  
On the Lord's radar  
When He searches the earth  
Looking for someone to use.

How can you become more merciful?  
Use the means of grace –  
Pray and ask Him to help you grow;  
Read His promises in Scripture  
And believe them;  
Spend more time in worship.  
But don't forget

To meditate on what He has done for you –  
How He forgave your ten thousand talents.

When you see  
How merciful He's been to you,  
It won't be as hard  
To forgive the one  
Who has sinned against you  
100 denarii's worth. Amen.

<http://www.graceopcmoesto.org>