

Mercy, Week #2 – Our Mercy

We kicked off our thinking about mercy by looking at the great theme of God's mercy in the Bible. At the Exodus and in Jesus we see God's merciful character on display, and at work in redeeming his people from slavery to sin. Now we start thinking about our own mercy, looking at passages which either demonstrate or command human acts of mercy. This second week of devotions should be more practically challenging, particularly the 'Going Deeper' and 'Prayer' sections. Note that these devotions and other resources for the series can be found online at <http://stjamescroydon.org/sermons>.

Day	Passage	Starter Questions	Going Deeper	Prayer
1	Psa 112	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the various attributes and actions of the righteous man. Which of these seem particularly merciful? How is the wicked man different? Why do you think he is angry at the success of the righteous man? Is this passage a straight-forward promise that the person like this is promised health, wealth, and a long life? 	The phrase 'gracious and compassionate or merciful' is the same description God used for himself at Mt Sinai. Why do you think God wants his people to be similar to himself?	Ask God to give you a merciful character, and ask forgiveness for times when you have envied the success of others instead of wanting good things for them.
2	Matt 18:23-35	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the similarities and differences between the situation of the first servant and his fellow servant? Why is the servant's treatment of his fellow servant so clearly wrong? When applied to real life, who do you think is the 'king', the 'servant' and the 'fellow servant'? 	In the final verse, Jesus says to 'forgive your brother'. Why is forgiveness an example of showing mercy?	Ask God to give you a deep sense of the debt you owe him, and a desire to recognise and forgive the debts of others.
3	Luke 10:25-37	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What question does Jesus answer by telling this parable? What is the difference between the Samaritan and the others on the road (the priest and the Levite)? How has the parable answered the original question? 	Based on the Samaritan's actions, what does practical mercy look like?	Ask God to show you the people already around you to whom you can be showing neighbourly mercy.
4	Matt 9:9-13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who is Jesus spending his time with in this passage? Why do you think the Pharisees have a problem with this? Jesus seems to suggest that the Pharisees are more concerned about rules than about people in trouble (v13). How is Jesus himself showing mercy in this passage? 	Do you think Jesus is really saying that the Pharisees 'have no need' of him (v12)? If not, what is holding them back from receiving Jesus' mercy?	Pray for someone you know is in need of the mercy of friendship, fellowship or hospitality.
5	Acts 3:1-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of mercy is the disabled man hoping for from Peter and John? What kind of mercy does he actually get? What are the similarities between these two kinds of mercy? 	Why does Peter use the name of Jesus Christ in his command for the man to walk? Read to hear Peter's speech explaining the power behind the healing.	Pray for the people and organisations you support financially, and for people you know with illnesses.
6	James 2:5-13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How does the passage say people have 'dishonoured the poor man'? Why is this treatment strange, even in worldly terms? What kind of mercy does James seem to want for the poor? 	How is v13 similar to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant in the earlier reading from Matthew 18? Does it mean we earn God's mercy by showing mercy to others?	Confess any times you recall showing preferential treatment towards the wealthy or popular instead of towards the poor and marginalised.
7	Jude 21-25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What does the passage say we are waiting for while we remain in God's love? How can you show similar mercy to those around you who are doubting, disbelieving, or sinning? What kinds of trouble or need are such people in? What category of mercy is this? 	Where does the power come from in our attempts to show mercy? How is v24-25 a helpful reminder of God's mercy which goes before ours?	Use this passage, especially v24-25, as the basis for praising God for his mercy and his empowering of our own mercy.

Prayer for the Series: *Merciful father, let the good news of your mercy in Christ be clear to me in your word today. Help me to be a merciful as you are merciful, and protect me from being an unmerciful servant. Let your mercy be clear not just in your word, but in my life. In Jesus name, Amen.*