

“’Tis the Season”

**“Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!”
Ephesians 5:16 The Message**

“To Be Merciful!”

**“Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy...”
Colossians 3:12a**

A. Mercy is an essential quality of God to us in salvation...

“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5 NLT



1. God is rich in mercy.

“But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)” Ephesians 2:4-5 NLT

2. God’s mercies are infinite.

**“The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.”
Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT**

3. God is a merciful Father.

**“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort.”
2 Corinthians 1:3 NLT**

B. Mercy comes from mercy...

“But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.” 1 Timothy 1:16

1. A person with mercy remembers why you needed mercy.
 2. Mercy is having sympathy and then putting it into action.
 3. Mercy is practical help that is undeserved.
 4. Mercy is compassionate love in tangible ways.
- “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. The man replied, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Yes, now go and do the same.’” Luke 10:36-37**

(In the time of Jesus, the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notorious for its danger and difficulty, and was known as the “Way of Blood” because “of the blood which is often shed there by robbers”

** Wilkinson, “The Way from Jerusalem to Jericho” The Biblical Archaeologist.)*

C. We have been given mercy that we might give mercy...

**“Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God’s people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God’s mercy.”
1 Peter 2:10**

1. God requires us to love mercy.

“No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

2. God blesses us when we show mercy.

**“God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”
Matthew 5:7**

**3. God commands us to show mercy to the weak, “and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love. And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.”
Jude 21-22**

4. God reminds us to never neglect the quality of mercy. “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!” Matthew 23:23-24

D. Should a merciful person always show mercy?

“Real life is very complex for Christian people who seriously want to live out their faith in a sinful world. If we ask, ‘How shall we know when to do justice and how to show mercy?’ I would answer, by getting as close to Jesus as you possibly can. I know of no hard and fast rules in Scripture to dictate for every situation. And I don’t think this is an accident. The aim of Scripture is to produce a certain kind of person, not provide an exhaustive list of rules for every situation.” –John Piper

E. So, how will you be merciful?

1. Mercy means being patient with people’s quirks.
2. Mercy means helping anyone around you who is hurting.
3. Mercy means giving people a second chance.
4. Mercy means doing good to those who hurt you.
5. Mercy means being kind to those who offend you.
6. Mercy means building bridges of love to the unpopular.
7. Mercy means valuing relationships over rules.
8. Mercy is kindness in the face of unkindness.
9. Mercy is letting go of being “right” for the sake of a relationship.
10. Mercy is remembering the driver who just cut you off while they were texting is deeply loved by God.
11. Mercy is keeping your eye on the bigger picture of salvation, and not getting caught up in the minutiae of religious duty (losing focus while doing a good thing).
12. Mercy is remembering God’s mercy to you and showing kindness to others.

“Pray this prayer today: ‘Heavenly Father, your Word convicts me. I want your blessing in my life, and I want to be a merciful person. As I look at these seven things, I think of shortcomings and weaknesses in my own life. I pray that rather than just hearing the Word, I would do something about it. Give me the courage to be merciful. Give me the strength this week to step out in faith and do radical, premeditated acts of mercy that point others to you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.’” –Rick Warren

Seasonal Sermon Series: "Tis the Season..."

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A Sermon Series Focusing on the Virtues of the Season

December 3, 2017 – To Be Kind!

December 10, 2017 – To Be Generous!

December 17, 2017 – To Be Compassionate!

December 24, 2017 – To Be Full of Faith!

December 31, 2017 – To Be Hopeful!

From John Piper "Should a merciful person always show mercy?"

- *Can a Christian be consistently merciful and yet be a parent who disciplines a child for disobedience?*
- *Can a Christian be consistently merciful and yet be an employer who pays good wages for excellent work but dismisses irresponsible employees who do shoddy work?*
- *Can a Christian be consistently merciful and yet be a legislator who enacts laws that give stiff penalties for drunk driving and child abuse?*
- *Can a Christian be consistently merciful and yet follow the biblical mandate for church discipline?*

- *A biblical parent will usually follow the wisdom of Scripture in discipline (Proverbs 13:24; Ephesians 6:4). But there will be times when a child's fault will be forgiven without punishment to teach the meaning of mercy and woo the child to Christ.*
- *A biblical judge will usually be scrupulously just by impartially sentencing criminals according to the grievousness of their crimes (Romans 13:4). But there will be times when he will dispense clemency for some greater good.*
- *A biblical employer will usually pay a fair wage and insist on good workmanship (2 Thessalonians 3:10). But there will be times when he will pay more than a person's work deserves, and go an extra mile, with a sick or aging or distressed or inadequately trained employee.*
- *And biblical discipline will be needed (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), but will also remember the parable of the wheat and the tares that teaches patience with the imperfection of the church till the end of the age (Matthew 13:24-30). *John Piper*