

Joy in the Lord Part 6: Joy for the Merciful

March 26, 2023

Matthew 5:7

Mercy towards others is a crucial definer of what it means to be a Christian, Matt. 9:13, 23:23. Outward religion and sacrifices are meaningless unless it impacts the way you treat people. How does mercy contribute to joy? **4 Underpinnings of Mercy:**

- 1) **Mercy in salvation** is not earned by merciful works. a) it is an impossible standard to always be merciful. b) would dismantle Gospel salvation which comes through grace and faith alone. I have received mercy therefore I should be able and willing to give it.
- 2) **It is mercy we receive in speaking of the coming kingdom:** The blessings of the coming kingdom, Matt. 5:3, 4, 5, & 6.
- 3) **Immediate implications in this life based upon other NT teachings:** It demonstrates my salvation that I can give and extend mercy to others.
- 4) **Mercy is theologically tied to grace:** 1 Tim. 1:2, Heb. 4:16. Grace is dealing with the sin of mankind. Mercy is associated to dealing with the miserable consequences of sin. Mercy is relieving the pain of our sin.

4 Ways to Have a Joyful Life:

- 1) **Joy through mercy which converts sinners:** Three needs we had in regard to salvation:
 - a) **God saved us in our weakness:** Rom. 5:6, we had no strength to come to God. God saved the morally weak – all people are ungodly. God saved us at the right spiritual time when we were in our lost state before we died. In the right historical time, Gal. 4:4, when Christ came. It was the right time in God's omniscient time. Rom. 5:7, Christ died for totally undeserving sinners, He knew us, but we didn't know Him.
 - b) **We were in a condition of wickedness:** 5:8, The Father was not moved to save us because Jesus went to the cross. Jesus came to the cross with the intention of saving us. Jesus took our penalty as our substitute on the cross called penal substitution.
 - c) **We were at war with God:** 5:9-10, Christ made peace between man and God. We were hostile to God, Rom. 8:7, Col. 1:21. God justified us and reconciled us. **Justification** is a legal term that Christ gave us His perfect life in exchange for our sinful one, Rom. 5:9. **Reconciliation**, 5:10, is the making of peace of those who were formerly at war and enemies. God declared us innocent *and* formed a relationship with us.
- 2) **Joy through mercy which confirms salvation:** Matt. 18:21-35, the servant should have forgiven the smaller debt just as he was forgiven the larger one. Giving mercy to others shows a changed heart. Was the servant a believer? The language of the passage describes the servant as "wicked," V32, the king was angry, V34, and He was going to make the servant pay back an impossible sum, V34. V21, Peter's question is if a brother should forgive another brother seven times. It is not a question about salvation. The servant was handed over to the "torturers" of verse 34, not an executioner. This was a delivery to a torturer to inflict pain on the slave that would change their behavior. The King (God) is expecting a result for the debt to be repaid. God doesn't work on the character of unbelievers. Another observation, the debt is repayable. The King has forgiven the 10,000 talents. The debt that exists that can be repaid and can be identified is the debt the King had forgiven the servant with an unpayable debt but the servant had not extended to the servant with the smaller debt.

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- 3) **Joy through mercy which continues support:** God gives mercy and discipline. There are two categories of forgiveness from God: a) Unconditional: eternal, forgiveness that gives salvation, participation in the kingdom, justification by faith for my sins, Rom. 5:9, the unpayable debt. b) Conditional: daily forgiveness from the Lord which continues our fellowship with the Lord. It is not forgiveness to keep our salvation. See Jesus' example of washing the disciple's feet in John 13. We have received endless mercy and should give mercy to others. God will discipline us, Heb. 12:5-11 to create holiness in us.
 - a. To forgive as God forgives is based in repentance: Luke 17:1-4, Matt. 18:15-20. For those who don't show mercy, judgement (not eternal) comes to those who don't show mercy, James 2:12-13. Those in 1 Corinthians 11:18-22 who were being merciless to others by eating all the food before sharing with others. 1 Peter 3:7, Peter admonishes husbands to live with understanding with their wives because they receive endless mercy within their marriages and must give mercy to their wives. Ps. 66:18, the psalmist speaks of one who justifies and regards iniquity in their heart that the Lord will not hear their prayers until mercy in their lives is turned back on.
 - b. The joy we have in support of our life is that God continues to answer our prayers and our calls for mercy.
- 4) **Joy through mercy which characterizes saints:** caring for others, helping others in need, Matt. 6:2-4. Having been brought low, being poor in spirit, in mourning for our sin, and in humility, we provide mercy to those in our lives.
 - a. How do we view sinners? As those needing salvation.
 - b. How do we view believers? All my sin was forgiven just as theirs was. We must accept that at the core we have forgotten the meaning of the Gospel and the work done in our lives.

Further Discussion and Application

Lessons in Mercy: Lesson 1: Practice the basic forms of mercy. Do you show mercy and compassion to others? Do we contribute to the benevolence fund to help others in need and in other ways? What ways can we show mercy to others in our lives and other believers?

Lesson 2: Use mercy to combat vengeance: Rom. 12:17, not repaying anyone back evil for evil. Do we murder someone's reputation with gossip and slander? Do we hurt others' ability to have relationships through our words about them? Do we dehumanize others by avoiding them? Do we internally rehearse past sins? Do we quit a commitment to make others life difficult or to hurt them?

Lesson 3: Mercy is not the same as ignoring sin: God is gloriously holy, just, merciful, and wrathful. We don't ignore sin. How do we uphold God's standards so that we deal righteously and mercifully with others?