



## Questions for the Week of February 3, 2019 Righteousness and Mercy

I. **Equipping Time (20 min):** Discuss a time when you made a mistake or offended someone but instead of being upset, they showed you kindness and mercy. What effect did that have on you to receive mercy when you otherwise might have expected a harsh response?

II. **Getting into the Bible (45 min):**

A. **Read Matthew 5:6: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**

- *Blessed* means *happy*. Discuss how many of the commercials on TV are about food and how it will provide happiness or satisfaction.
- Have you ever had to fast for a medical procedure or go without food for an extended period? What was that experience like? What was the first meal or drink like after that?

• **The first three beatitudes deal with internal realities:**

**In poverty of spirit** people see their own sin;

**In mourning** people grieve and turn from their sin;

**In meekness** people humbly submit to God from following their own sinful ways;

- God has created within people a need for Him - that anything or anyone other than God will not ultimately satisfy.  
Describe a time when you realized that you were missing something. What led to that realization? How much have you longed (passionately desired) to know more about God? What was or is that experience like?
- How do people try to fill the void of knowing God with things of this life? How did you or do you do something similar? Discuss the prodigal son and his attempt to fill his emptiness with worldly stuff.
- What is it about Jesus that makes Him alone the One that can fully satisfy the deepest longings of the heart?
- **Read Psalm 63:1 and Phil 3:7-11:** Discuss what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- **What does this mean for unbelievers?** Discuss what an unbeliever does when they recognize their own sinful state – how it drives them to find forgiveness.
- **What does this mean for believers? Read 2 Cor. 3:18:** Discuss how believers in Jesus are transformed and become more like Jesus.

**Answer:** Unbelievers who want life and freedom seek God's righteousness in Christ to replace their own sinful lack of righteousness. Believers seek God's guidance and strength through the Holy Spirit to help them live a righteous life.

**B. Read Matthew 5:7: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.**

- How is mercy different than grace?

**Answer:** Grace is God's unearned or unmerited favor towards sinful man. Grace is especially associated with people in their sins. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Mercy is associated with people in their misery – the consequences of sin.

- Discuss how mercy is different than pity or compassion?

**Answer:** Mercy is better than just pity. When you pity someone, you feel sorry for them, you acknowledge their need or their pain, but you're not moved to action. In fact, you're likely to look the other way or hurry past. Pity creates distance between you and the person in need. **But mercy draws you closer – with mercy there is a desire to help.**

Mercy is better than compassion. Compassion, like mercy, involves both feeling and action. **But compassion is expected; it's the natural response to a person's need.** Mercy responds to a need that is unexpected, like showing love to an enemy

- **Read Luke 10:30-37:** Discuss how the good Samaritan showed mercy to the Jewish man who was hurt.

**Answer:** Normally Jews and Samaritans were enemies, but the Samaritan treated this Jewish man, as a brother. He dressed his wounds, took the man to an inn and paid the innkeeper to let him stay there; he made provision for him. That is mercy!

- **Read Luke 7:36-50:** Discuss how Simon the Pharisee had no mercy and how Jesus showed mercy to the woman who wiped his feet with her tears.

**Answer:** Look at verse 39 to see Simon's lack of mercy. Simon and the people at the dinner were just watching Jesus and this woman. They were shocked and offended, not just at the woman's behavior, but at Jesus' response. He seemed quite comfortable with her presence and her public display of affection. Jesus saw something very different than Simon when he looked at this woman. He saw whatever woundedness and desperation had led to her lifestyle. He saw the abuse and exploitation she had suffered at the hands of men. He saw the guilt and shame that kept her trapped in her destructive lifestyle. Jesus looked beyond this woman's sin and saw her need. Mercy looks beyond a person's fault and sees their need. But mercy chooses to respond to the need, instead of reacting to the sin.

- Describe your own response to the mercy of God to you. How has it impacted you?

**III. Prayer:** Pray for your group and for your group's missionary.

**IV. Response:** How might the Lord be prompting you to respond to some aspect of Sunday's sermon or tonight's discussion?