

Grace & Mercy (Part 12)

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Mercy – steadfast love

Mercy (active) – not giving someone what they deserve

Prodigal Son is a story of a father's goodness (grace) that gives to his son and how he misuses it. It is also a story of the older son resenting the father's love (mercy) for the prodigal.

Luke 15:25-32

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

This parable reveals a gracious and merciful father, whose character remains constant throughout the story. This is an illustration of God and his children.

- Abusing Mercy – wanting God's mercy for ourselves, but resent it when others, particularly those we don't like, are recipients of the same mercy.

Ephesians 2:4-5

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

- I never disobeyed your command – The arrogance of the older brother wanting justice for his brother but does not recognize his own need for mercy. Cf. Romans 3:10-18, 21-26
- was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found – The father's motivation is not payback but for his son to come back. Cf. 1 Timothy 2:4; Luke 15:7

Jonah 4:1-3, 11

1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 3 Therefore

*now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4
And the Lord said, “Do you do well to be angry?”*

*11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000
persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”*

Mission Homework:

Do we want God’s mercy for ourselves, but resent it when others, particularly those we don’t like, are recipients of the same mercy?

There is enough grace and mercy to go around. Trust that God is enough for you and everyone else!

Pray and Reflect on these verses:

Matthew 5:44 *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Romans 12:17-21

*17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never
avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine,
I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he
is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his
head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Look for opportunities to share in the same mercy with others that you have been given.