

Treasures for the Poor to Give Away to the Poor (Blessed are the Poor in Spirit)

2 Chronicles 30:9, Luke 12:32-34

October 21, 2018

Intro: To give mercy is to model and reflect God's character. We are like God when we are merciful. But we can only be merciful as we experience his mercy. As you experience God seeing you in your need, you will respond in both repentant returning to him, and faith-filled acts of giving.

On Mercy > When it comes to giving mercy, repentance and faith are the keys to unlocking the stingy, self-protective, safety-driven motivations of the flesh.

Read and pray.

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

2 Chron 30:9 For if you return to the Lord, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him."

Luke 12:32-34 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Mercy is modeling, mimicking, reflecting God's character.

We are like God when we are merciful.

We can only be merciful as we experience His mercy.

What is this experience? Experiencing God's face, His look, His seeing of you. Being seen by Him. His attention drawn towards you. Jesus is drawn towards need, not repelled by it.

1The Call to Repentance

2 Chron tells story of 400 years of Israelite history, giving the accounts of the various kings of both Israel and Judah. Over and over, the people prove that they are failures at reverencing God in His holiness as they should. Yet God, in His mercy, provides the way back to right relationship with Himself.

This passage takes place during the reign of Hezekiah of Judah, who restored worship at the temple, revived the celebration of the Passover, and here, he invites the people to believe and act upon the promise of God.

The people had failed to keep the Passover. It would be like the church failing to celebrate Easter. Hezekiah is a restorer, a healer, a king bringing life to his kingdom. Do not be stiff-necked, stubborn, and faithless, he says.

30:9 >

If you return to the Lord, He will turn His wrath away from you. He will restore you to relationship with Him and with the land. The call to repentance is the call to believe a promise... trans to 2...

Repentance is an action, a turning, but there is something under the action, the turn of the heart motive. The if, is a big if. If you return to Him, He will do this. True repentance requires faith. Belief in the good news outside of yourself!

Returning to Him with no strings attached. ILLUS of returning to the Lord younger son style from Luke 15.

As Tim Keller points out, he wanted to work his way back into his father's favor. He thinks up this speech, he plans on asking his father to hire him as one of the farm hands. Returning to the Lord is an all the way returning without holding back some self-trust to fall back upon. Well, if this doesn't work out, I can always find a way back.

The song "Hurt" by Trent Reznor...and remade by Johnny Cash... he ends with "I would find a way."

If I could start again
A million miles away
I will keep myself
I would find a way

But in Luke 15...his father would not have it...quick, get robe, give him my ring, give him sandals, throw a party! And the younger son takes it, he receives it.

Can you receive? Do you receive? Are you poor enough to receive?

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit > the first beatitude, the first requirement for following Jesus. The first requirement for getting into Heaven.

I am Poor. I am nothing. I have nothing.

This is the only way you will truly return to the Lord.

2The Call to Receive

Luke 12 In this section leading up to these verses, Jesus has given some strong teaching on hell, on fear, on anxiety, a parable on the rich guy building bigger barns for his stuff and feeling secure.

Then He says, fear not little flock...

Can you receive a "there, there, now, it will be ok...?"

Does it feel nursery school-ish? That's for little toddlers who stumble and fall and you get them up and they're crying big tears and 'there, there, now, it will be ok...'

There's a bit of this in me: Come on, Jesus, I'm a man. I've got this. I can handle life. I can do it.

I have to constantly go back to the truth that I really am poor, I am nothing.

The call to receive is first, this. That I am like a little toddler who easily falls down and gets hurt. Circumstances are constantly changing...

But then, look at Jesus's 401K plan, talk about an investment strategy:

'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'

The Kingdom > Receive

The Treasure

Whereas the call to repentance is the call to embrace our poverty, the call to receive is the call to embrace our extravagant richness.

The call to repentance says you must see that in your ability to make it on your own, in your efforts to be right with God, in your goal to make your life work > I am poor. I am nothing. I have nothing.

The call to receive from God says that God delights in giving extravagantly to those who will just receive from Him!

ILLUS of that year I built a wooden swingset for my kids for Christmas. It was delivered to the house in pieces. I came up with a story that it was Daddy's garden arbor and I was going to grow some vines on it. Oh ok, Daddy. I asked a friend to help me, started working before sunrise, it was cold and wet, my fingers were freezing. Of course, there was sacrifice of time, money, effort, pain, but that was so fun, it was pleasure bc I knew my kids were going to love it.

No eye can imagine what God has prepared for those who love Him! And it is the Father's delight to give us such extravagance.

And yes, see the cost > Jesus saying these words knowing that He is going to purchase these gifts for us by His own suffering and death in our place. He does it for the sake of giving us life and pleasures forever.

So the call to receive is the call to see this:

I am rich. I have everything. I am a royal. A son, a daughter of the King.

As you know what you have received and will receive, then you can hear the call to give.

3The Call To Give

If you have everything, then giving away is treasure to you.

The counter-intuitive nature of the call of the gospel.

Self-denial now, stupendously huge rewards in the future.

So that you Dis-advantage yourself for the sake of advantaging others.

Those who have received mercy, will give mercy.

What is this giving? Possessions, moneybags, and treasure

Selling first.

Jesus is giving us strong medicine to fight hard against the god of consumeristic accumulation.

Selling involves giving away what is yours. Possessions are those things that you determine what happens to them.

Possessions represent abundance. And if you have abundance, then what do you have? Safety, security, significance, enjoyment, peace. Jesus is saying – Look at what you have – everything in abundance! Therefore, what I give you to be a steward of, you can give away b/c you have all of this that possessions represent – safety, security, significance, enjoyment, peace.

Possessions are not just material things, but time, thoughts, energy and effort.

ILLUS of (Amy) recognizing that she need not watch this show anymore b/c it was starting to dominate her thoughts.

An application of this is the giving away of our time to those in need of it. The gifts that you have received from God are given to you and for you to give away to others.

Application of Mercy Team applications... opportunity to join the Mercy Team.

Mercy ministry is a picture of the kindness and compassion of God.

*Mercy ministry in itself is a call to repentance. God's kindness is what leads to repentance. Or it will be an unavoidable indictment upon the unrepentant. We gladly give mercy, and let God sort out the receiver's heart. And in His timing. Like water dripping on a stone wall.

We gladly give mercy, and we do it in the name of Jesus. This isn't about us and our church or our reputation, it is about what Jesus and His kingdom does in the life and community of people transformed by His love and promises.

What does the Mercy Team do?

What are opportunities? Where are opportunities?

How do we do mercy?

Would you like to join us?

Reflection of our vision "A community of Christ's coming kingdom, bringing hope to a broken world." And our values of being a welcoming and healing community.

What if I want to give \$\$? (This passage is about selling your possessions!)

*The opposite of "what's wrong with you? Why can't you get your act together?"