

Class 5 Notes

God Himself has Come to Help Us: His Mercy in the Gospels

- I. The Next Episode...
 - A. The prophets (truth tellers) told the truth about Israel's state in exile: lost, distanced from God, and lacking understanding of His Mercy.
 - B. Jesus is THE Servant that the prophets pointed to, the source of hope for bringing in the age of God's rule and revealing His Mercy.
 - C. The OT concept of mercy, *hesed*, involved action on behalf of another who is in need; mercy is not merely a feeling or emotion. What new or deeper truths about mercy might Jesus reveal?
- II. Becoming One in Need
 - A. Isaiah 53 looked ahead to describe the servant, Jesus, as one who was despised, rejected, oppressed, and afflicted.
 - B. Jesus gave up perfect communion with God to show mercy and meet the needs of humanity (Heb 2:17-18).
 - C. Jesus didn't become a human king, but became a baby born into a scandalous situation, poor family, oppressed people group, and persecution.
- III. Jesus Embodies Mercy
 - A. Luke 4:16-20 - the good news Jesus brings is full of mercy in action, particularly for the poor and needy. *The gospel is the good news that God offers His reigning presence in our lives through Jesus and his Holy Spirit living inside of us* (Brett Kreider). Where God's presence and Spirit are, there is freedom and healing.
 - B. Jesus *feels* compassion and indignation [*splanchnizomai*], for the one in need, but doesn't stop there. *His feelings are always followed by action* (e.g. Mk 1:40-45). In the gospel of Mark, no one who asks for an act of mercy is left unanswered by Jesus. Do you think that is the case in our world? How do you see feelings expressed, but action avoided?
- IV. His Mercy Stories: Kate Rouh
- V. Activity: *Revisiting Passages* - Luke 19:1-10 and Mark 12:41-44
- VI. Revealing the Breadth and Depth of Mercy
 - A. Jesus reveals that God's mercy is for *all*. He shows mercy to the Canaanite woman by healing her daughter (Mt 15:21-28), stars a Samaritan as the example of a merciful neighbor in a parable (Lk 10), among other examples. How can we be tempted with selectivity when it comes to showing mercy to others?
 - B. Jesus beckons back to Hosea 6:6 to rebuke the Pharisees for neglecting mercy (Mt 9:13; 12:7). Similar to the prophets before him, Jesus identifies that true mercy is not found in legalism or religious habits, but in tangible action on behalf of those in need. Who could forget the parable of the sheep and the goats!
 - C. On several occasions, Jesus exposes the idolatry and barrier to being merciful presented by money and possessions (Lk 18, Lk 16:13, Lk 12:15). How does this contrast with our modern Western culture?

VII. Discussion: *seeing His Mercy in the death and resurrection of Jesus*

- Read Philippians 2:5-11.
- How may have Jesus' crucifixion given him a deeper understanding of mercy?
- What does this teach about the kind of lengths God is willing to go to in order to meet our needs?
- How did God honor Jesus' willingness to go that far?
- What would following in Jesus' footsteps here as the body of Christ look like? (hint: look at Phil. 2:1-4)