

Blessed Are The Merciful – For They Shall Obtain Mercy

Invariably whenever mercy is mentioned in the bible it is often connected with forgiveness. Mercy is usually accompanied by forgiveness. Mercy can be defined as not getting what we deserve, whereas grace is getting what we don't deserve. They are opposite sides of the coin. After Jesus gave us the Lord's prayer he went on to explain the importance of forgiveness – unless we forgive others neither will the Father forgive us. Shakespeare in the Merchant of Venice, says the quality of mercy is not strained, it falls like the gentle rain of heaven. Mercy is elastic it can stretch if the conscience becomes troubled by forgiving great wickedness.

Psalm 32 starts off with "blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. When we are forgiven we feel blessed and when we forgive others are blessed. When we are troubled by something wrong that we have done, it hangs around like a bad smell, then when we get it sorted when we ask for forgiveness we feel a release. Joy in fact Unforgiveness can sour our nature, sunder friendships and cause blockages in our own spiritual lives. It raises barriers in our relationships and left can lead to plotting revenge. Mercy stops tit for tat from continuing. When we forgive, reconciliation can take place. The mercy that the bible talks about enables us to get inside another person's skin. We get to see things from their point of view. It is more than sympathy it is empathy. It is accepting them not rejecting, it means we can truthfully say, I understand just how you are feeling. Paul tells the Ephesians to strive for the unity of the spirit, that suggests hard work. There are some people who we regard as hard work, maintaining a relationship with them is high maintenance – it costs, but it is worth it. Paul was a strong leader but Barnabas was an encourager. Because John Mark had left them on their first missionary journey he didn't want to take him on the second – unreliable. So Paul and Barnabas had a serious dispute which led them to separate. Barnabas went to Cyprus with Mark and Paul went with Silas to Asia. Later Paul in his letter to Timothy speaks highly of Mark as a helper.

Forgiveness is part of the Lord's prayer we did last year. There God forgiving us is conditional on us forgiving others. Ask the Lord today, is there someone who I need to forgive, We can complain and say but God, you do not know what they did to me, yes he does know and yes he wants you to forgive and show mercy.