

Series: Special Study
Text: Luke 6:39-45
August 2, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sid=8315643262>

Getting Started:

Have someone read Matthew 12:1-8 and answer the following questions:

Who is complaining in this passage? What are they complaining about?

We are not going to look at all of Jesus' answers to them, but instead just focus for a moment on what Jesus says in verse 7. What statement does Jesus say they didn't know the meaning of?

Now does Jesus mean that God didn't like sacrifice in the Old Testament? If He doesn't mean that, what does He mean?

Into the Bible:

It is impossible for us to please God with our lives and worship if we are not merciful.

But what exactly does it mean for us to be merciful? Open your Bible to Luke 6 and read verses 36-38 out loud.

How does Jesus define mercy in verses 37 and 38? What does he say we should not do and what does he say we should do?

What are some ways that people disobey the first command? The second command? What does it look like to be a person who doesn't obey the third command? The fourth command?

Now, taking those four commands Jesus gives in verse 37 and 38, finish the following two statements :

A merciful person is someone who ...

An unmerciful person is someone who ...

As you look at the contrast between an unmerciful person and a merciful person, I think you will see that there really are not that many merciful people out there. Sometimes we think we are merciful people because we are not judging and not condemning and forgiving and giving to people who don't do anything wrong to us.

But that's missing the point, isn't it? Mercy really is only mercy when it is shown to someone who is mistreating us and doing us wrong, and that's when mercy is very difficult.

Can you think of any typical excuses people give for not being merciful? (Maybe that you even might give for not being merciful?)

Obviously, we need lots of motivation to listen to Jesus' instructions. We will be very tempted to write it off.

Look again quickly at verses 36-38. What motivations does Jesus give us for being merciful in these verses?

Jesus isn't quite finished motivating us to show mercy yet. In verses 39-45, he gives us a couple of more reasons we need to take his commands seriously.

Read verse 39 and 40 out loud. He begins with a parable. What is the question Jesus asks in verse 39? What is the answer?

Jesus is comparing those who are listening to blind people. They need guidance. They need more than guidance however, because there are some people who are willing to give them guidance who can't see where they are going either. Therefore, they need to be very careful who they allow to lead them, otherwise it is going to have negative consequences on their lives. And they should listen to Jesus' instructions because He is not blind, He sees.

In verse 40, Jesus continues. What do you think Jesus means when he says a disciple is not above his teacher? What happens to a disciple once he is fully trained?

After having warned them about the danger of bad teachers and telling them they should listen to him because he sees, Jesus now reminds them, that if they are coming to Him to be one of His disciples, that means they are recognizing His authority over their lives. They don't have the right to reject His instruction just because they don't like it. If they really are following Jesus, they need to know, they are going to have to become more and more merciful, because part of the goal of discipleship is to become like your teacher, and there is no one who is more merciful than Jesus.

One of the ways this tendency to be unmerciful shows up in our lives is revealed in verse 41. Read this verse out loud. What does Jesus ask here? What are some ways that people (meaning you and me) do this?

Why is this so foolish according to verse 42?

This provides us with a second motivation for dealing this judgmental, self-righteous spirit that shows up in our lives. We won't really be able to help others effectively so long as we are unmerciful. We will be like a person who has a log in his eye trying to help someone with a speck in their eye.

Now, some people thinking being merciful means not ever confronting someone for their sin? Read the end of verse 42. How does this verse refute that position?

Finally, have someone read verses 43-45. This verse begins with the word for. That means he is explaining why it is so important to take the log out of our eyes and to fight against having a self-righteous, judgmental heart. What illustration does Jesus give here? What will happen if we have a self-righteous judgmental heart? What kind of fruit will we produce? If we are going to have good words to say to someone else, what does verse 45 say has to happen?

Pause to Consider:

It is easy for us to overlook sins like gossip, slander, bitterness, and a critical spirit. These are sins that we find even sometimes treated as something small by those who claim to be followers of Christ. But this does not make sense because Jesus clearly takes these sins seriously. One of the primary reasons we have such a difficult time being merciful with others is because we have failed to see our deep need of mercy ourselves.

What are some of the ways in which God has shown mercy to you? How might that motivate you to show mercy to others?

Digging Deeper:

Obviously showing mercy doesn't mean not hating sin. Do you have any suggestions for how we can take sin seriously while at the same time showing mercy toward the sinner?

To Think About:

What are some of the main encouragements or challenges you have taken from what we have studied together today? Is there any specific word of praise you would like to give to God for what you have learned about Jesus today? How about questions? Do you have any thing you are still wondering from what we have talked about? What are some of the practical differences what you studied makes on your life? What would you like to share with someone else? Is there any specific issue that this study has brought up that you want the members of your gospel community to be praying for you about?