

## The Cost of Mercy – Mercy’s Not Cheap

📖 Alternate reading Luke 10:30-37.

In this passage we read a parable that Jesus told regarding an injured man, and the man who helped him. Let’s look at some ways in which the Samaritan in this passage had to *sacrifice* in order to exercise mercy.

### Mercy Ruined his Schedule (v33)

The Samaritan was on a J\_\_\_\_\_. This man had plans of his own, and was not expecting to stop and help anyone that day. But the Bible says that when he saw the injured man he had \_\_\_\_\_ on him. And according to v34 he “took \_\_\_\_\_ of him”.

The man who will show mercy is willing to sacrifice his own plans in order to bear the burden of others.

### Mercy Spoiled his Goods

Q. According to v34, the Samaritan poured in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

In order to care for the injured man, this Samaritan sacrificed his own goods. He used his own oil and wine to treat him. The man with the gift of mercy is willing to sacrifice his own goods in order to show compassion.

### Mercy Disturbed his Comfort

Q. According to v34, the Samaritan placed the injured man on H\_\_\_\_\_ beast and brought him to an Inn.

Q. If the injured man was on the beast, what did this mean for the Samaritan?

The man who will exercise mercy is willing for his own comfort to be disturbed for the sake of others. This Samaritan had every right to ride in comfort but gave it up for the sake of another. The person with the gift of mercy is willing to be inconvenienced and even discomforted for others.

### Mercy Cost him Money

Q. According to v35, how much did the Samaritan spend on the injured man? How much was he *willing* to spend?

The Christian with the gift of mercy is willing to spend his own money for the sake of others.

### Mercy Jeopardized his Reputation

Q. How did the Samaritan convince the Inn keeper to take care of the injured man?

## The Gift of Mercy

8

God’s School for the Gifted

“Teach me to feel another’s woe, To hide the fault I see, That mercy I to others show, That mercy show to me.” ~ Alexander Pope

In this study we come to a Spiritual Gift called *mercy*. Although all Christians are told to show mercy (1 Pet 3:8), there remains certain individuals to whom God has given a special ability to exercise mercy and to exercise it with *cheerfulness*.

📖 Romans 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; \_\_\_\_\_.

### Mercy Defined

There are three words in the New Testament that are very closely related and almost interchangeable; mercy, compassion, and pity. In fact, these words are sometimes translated from the very same greek word *eleeo*. Noah Webster states “there is perhaps no word in our language precisely synonymous with mercy.” So although *mercy* closely resembles *pity* and *compassion* it still possesses a very unique meaning.

To be merciful means to have a tenderness toward another which causes you to overlook their faults or trespasses and to treat them better than they deserve. Mercy leads you to forgive others and to withhold full judgment from them.

Closely related to ‘mercy’ is ‘compassion’. One can be *merciful* while being uncaring, but this is not true of *compassion*. Compassion literally means “to suffer together”. To have compassion on someone is to voluntarily bear the burden of their troubles in order to ease their suffering.

In this study we will use both words to help us better understand the gift of mercy.

### What Mercy is *Not*

**Mercy is not the excusing of sin.** True mercy does not excuse or minimize sin, rather it acknowledges the severity of sin and the rightful judgment of sin, then withholds the full judgment in order to satisfy God’s will in the best way possible.


📖 Alternate reading John 8:3-11.

Q. Was this woman guilty of sin? What sin? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Q.** Judging by what Jesus told this woman to do “no more” in v11, did Jesus think this woman was guilty?

**Q.** Jesus said that he did not C\_\_\_\_\_ the woman.

Jesus recognized the sin of this woman and withheld judgment, he chose rather to tell her to repent of her sin and to “go, and sin no more”. In order for mercy to be true, there must first be an acknowledgment of sin, guilt or unworthiness, than the loving withholding of punishment for the purpose of furthering the work of God in that person’s life.

 How do you think the exercise of mercy in this circumstance fulfilled the will of God better than the exercise of judgment would have?

The man or woman who has the gift of mercy has a predisposition to share in the hurts or burdens of others. He finds himself desiring to ease the pain that others are facing, even to the point of suffering himself.

### **Jesus – The Man of Mercy**


Ultimately, Jesus’ death on the cross was the greatest act of mercy that anyone could ever show. Rom 5:8 tells us that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”. Instead of executing judgment on us, God had mercy and bore the penalty of sin on our behalf (1 Pet 2:24). But even before his death, the life and ministry of Jesus were great examples of mercy. Let’s look at three instances where Jesus exercised mercy and use them to learn about the spiritual gift of mercy

### **The Grieving Widow – An Emotional Plight**

 Alternate reading Luke 7:12-15.


**Q.** What is the problem in this passage?\_\_\_\_\_.

**Q.** On whom did Jesus have *compassion* in v13?\_\_\_\_\_.

 Why do you think the object of Jesus’ compassion was the woman and not necessarily the son?

Jesus saw this widow grieving. She was emotionally distraught over the death of her only son. Jesus, as a man of mercy immediately felt her emotional distress and sought to relieve it through mercy. The Christian with the gift of mercy can’t help but bear the burden of the emotional pain of others. He will seek to relieve that distress however he can.


### **The Wandering Crowd – A Spiritual Plight**

 Mark 6:34. **Q.** When Jesus saw this crowd, he saw them as \_\_\_\_\_ without a \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus was looking at the spiritual condition of this crowd. Like sheep without a shepherd, they were wandering spiritually, with no direction or sense of the right way.

**Q.** What did Jesus “begin to do” after he observed their spiritual state?

Jesus not only observed the spiritual immaturity of this crowd but he personally bore the burden of teaching them. The man or woman with the gift of mercy is keen to notice the spiritual needs of others and to seek to help them. This gifted man or woman will find ways to encourage others to grow and will do it at personal expense.


 What are some ways that a Christian can help bear the burden of helping others grow spiritually?

### **The Leprous Man – A Physical Plight**

 Mark 1:40-42.

**Q.** What emotion did Jesus experience after seeing this man’s problem?

**Q.** What did Jesus’ compassion cause him to do?

 How might the fact that Jesus “put forth his hand and touched him” have been a special act of compassion on this leprous man?

In 1873 a Belgian missionary by the name of Father Damien began a ministry to Lepers in Hawaii. Before each service Father Damien would address the crowd by saying “My fellow believers...”, after 12 years of ministry in the colony, before one service, Father Damien changed this address and said “My fellow lepers..”. Father Damien’s mercy and compassion lead him to care for the physical and spiritual plight of these men and women, even to the point of exposing himself to (and ultimately contracting) leprosy.

The man or woman with the gift of Mercy is sympathetic toward others who are suffering physically. His compassion will lead him to do things that others will not. He is willing to bear the physical burden of others, even to the point of expending himself physically.

In essence the Samaritan said “put it on MY tab”. He was willing to attach his name to this injured man and to bear whatever reproach might come with him. The Christian with the gift of mercy does not determine who he will have mercy on by social status, he is willing to bear the reproach of others for the purpose of helping them.

**Q.** In verse 36 Jesus asked the lawyer which of the men in the story was “neighbour” to the injured man, how did the lawyer answer?

Jesus then responded “go and do thou likewise”. It is the duty of all Christians to have compassion and to show mercy. But there are special men and women in the church who have a natural tendency to share the burdens of others. These Christians can “feel the pain” of others and seek to do whatever they can to help alleviate that pain.

Consider the following characteristics of one with the gift of mercy. Rate yourself on a scale from 1-5 on each.

1. He can put himself in "others shoes" and see things from their perspective.
2. He is able to perceive the needs of others, whether they be physical, emotional or spiritual.
3. He shares in the pain that others are experiencing, even to the point of it affecting his own emotions.
4. He is willing to sacrifice his own plans in order to help others.
5. He is willing to use his own resources in the process of showing compassion toward others.
6. He is willing to help others, regardless of their social status, even if it means bearing their reproach.
7. He will sacrifice his own comfort if it enables him to show mercy toward others.
8. He can discern whether judgment or mercy are necessary to further the will of God.
9. He can exercise compassion in a way that is personally meaningful to others.