

FINDING HAPPINESS

HAPPY ARE THE MERCIFUL

January 31, 2016

1. Open in prayer:

"Father, You are merciful towards us. If we ever doubt that, may we forever look to Jesus; may we forever embrace Jesus and what He's done for us, by the Holy Spirit's power. Transform us, Father, into people of mercy because You have been merciful towards us. In Jesus' name, amen."

2. According to Jesus, our happiness is rooted in being merciful. Read Matthew 5:7. Discuss Jesus' words.

3. Pastor Derwin said, "Mercy is an essential attribute of God."

a. Read Psalm 86:15. How is God described in this scripture?

b. God's steadfast love and faithfulness means that He is committed to fulfilling the covenant (Upward, Inward, Outward) for us and is committed to living it through us. His motivation is love towards us, the healing of the world through us, and our happiness as He forms Christ in us. How does this (and should it) impact our daily lives?

4. Pastor Derwin quoted A.W. Tozer in saying, "Mercy is God's goodness and love confronting human suffering and guilt."

a. Read Ephesians 2:1-5.

b. Outside of Jesus, what is our problem?

c. What is God's motivation for what He's done for us? Discuss how Jesus' actions have changed you.

5. In Pastor Derwin's words, "What does mercy look like in your life? The Good Samaritan." Read Luke 10:30-37.

a. Note: Geographically, the dangerous road between Jerusalem and Jericho dropped roughly 3,500 feet in elevation. The priest was "going down from Jerusalem" and not up to it (see verse 30 and note), where contact with a corpse would have rendered him unable to fulfill his temple obligations. Since he was leaving the temple, his concern was not on matters of purity; his actions display his lack of regard for his neighbor.

b. Note: The popular designation of this parable as the "Good Samaritan" is a misnomer; no Jew would ever have referred to a Samaritan as "good." Jesus makes the protagonist of His parable a Samaritan to add shock value to the story, to show the universality of the term "neighbor," to demonstrate the depths of mercy that should be extended to one's neighbors, and to strike at the heart of the lawyer's self-righteousness (see verse 29 and note). The inclusion of a Samaritan in this story recalls 2 Chronicles 28:8-15, where Samaritans care for beleaguered Jewish captives. (Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). Faithlife Study Bible (Lk 10:33). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.)

c. Note: The amount of money the Samaritan gave would have paid for two months in the inn. This was crazy merciful and generous!

d. Action Step: Discuss what Jesus is saying to you about being merciful and being happy.

Soul-tattoo: Receive Jesus' mercy and then go be merciful. Receive Luke 6:35-36.

6. Close in prayer.