

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Blessed Are the Merciful

Matthew 5:7

Mr Wee Hian Woon

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- Worldly culture promotes self-glorification. However, the more self-centred we are, the more difficult it is for us to be directed by the beatitude of Mercy, which is others-centred. The Greek word for merciful is *eleemon* which means actively compassionate, engaging both the heart and the hands. Being merciful is feeling sorry enough to help that someone. Mercy is kind feeling, followed up with kind actions.
- Jesus gives a range of examples of mercy, from simple deeds by unknown brothers/sisters in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:35-36) where no act of mercy is too small for God to notice, to the extensive help provided by the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:34-35). However, "For they will be shown mercy" should not be interpreted as advocating that we earn His mercy by doing good and showing mercy. God's grace is already promised in the beginning of the Beatitude. As we are shown mercy by God, we extend our mercy to others because we are grateful, as an evidence by the visible fruit of mercy.
- Christians agree that we should do the deeds of mercy, however, within our self-defined limits. For example within constraints like time, convenience, comfort level in interacting with the poor and needy. Other times, we might respond out of obligation or guilt. But when God sent His Son to die for us, He did not impose any limits or conditions on us.
- To show mercy like Jesus, we need to suspend rationalization. Instead, think generously, think sacrificially and think humbly. The Romans and Greeks despised mercy and saw it as a sign of weakness. The Pharisees were blinded by self-righteousness that they couldn't extend mercy. But Jesus cares about mercy, He is always moved with compassion to act (Matthew 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41). As Jesus said "Go and do likewise," we can do more, one seed and one sprout at a time, whether simple or extensive acts of mercy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Christian and non-Christians all agree that acts of mercy are good and necessary for mankind. What are some examples of acts of mercy you observed in your daily encounter?

[Children's Activity: Get the children to re-enact the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) to help them identify and discuss the various acts of mercy. Role play the following: Robbers who rob the victim, the priest, the Levite, the good Samaritan, the Inn Keeper. Discussion can include "what ifs", for example, What if the Inn Keeper does not want to dirty his rooms because of the blood?]

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2. Jesus demonstrated mercy because He was moved with compassion for the people (John 8:10-11; Matthew 14:14; Luke 7:13). His compassion and love for people caused Him to act in mercy. What should be our motivations, as a Christian, for practising acts of mercy?
[Verses to help us go deeper: Lamentations 3:22-23; Luke 6:36; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4]

3. The preacher classifies acts of mercy into 2 broad categories – simple (the unknown brothers and sisters) and extensive (the Good Samaritan). How can we suspend rationalization and to think generously, sacrificially and humbly towards others who need mercy? What are some acts of mercy you can do today?

PRAYER POINTERS

- Give thanks to God for His mercy that redeemed us through Christ Jesus.
- Pray for God inspired compassion and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Pray for His strength to enable us to practice mercy toward the poor and needy.

MEMORY VERSE

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy [Matthew 5:7, NASB].

PRACTICAL HANDLE

The most immediate and practical way you can exercise deeds of mercy as a CG is by working with the Outreach and Social Concerns Ministry (OCS). The OCS supports needy families financially and need volunteers to visit these needy families in Toa Payoh. Get in touch with Angel from church office to find out how you can partner as a CG.