

Mercy – Not Getting What You Deserve, Part 3
Jesus, The Face of Mercy
1 Timothy 2:5-6a

If you do Facebook am I your friend? I say that not because I want you to be-friend me which is okay if you do. But I ask what does it mean for me to be your friend?

I say this because I wonder if through all the use of being a friend we see now has watered down what it truly means to be a friend.

If I befriend you on Facebook does that make me your friend, really? I make a contribution to the SPCA, the organization that cares for homeless animals then I am declared a friend of the SPCA. If I make a donation to Christian radio then I become a friend to K-love or some other radio station. And on and on it goes.

A few years ago there was a youth pastor who worked under me and it seemed like everyone he met, even once, he would described them as his good friend. I am not sure he or others have really grasped what it really means to have a good friend.

Webster says that a friend is described as a person who you know and who knows you intimately, not in a sexual way, but in a deep, personal relational way.

I think if we were to look at the landscape of our lives our list of what we call friends would diminish greatly to a list of acquaintances. People we do life with but only slightly know.

I wonder if that is true for most of us concerning Jesus. He is someone we slightly know but really, He falls into more of an acquaintance than a true friend. But the reality of Jesus is, He want to be your friend. He is standing ready to your friend. In fact, He is already your friend whether you know Him or not.

1 Timothy 2:5-6a, “For there is one God and one mediator also between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all...”

- 1. Jesus befriended all humanity by dying for them, whether they befriend Him or not**

For the last couple of weeks we have focused upon the mercy of God. Last week we spoke of all that God accomplished on the cross through Jesus, this week we will look at the man Himself and see how the mercy of God worked through Him.

When Jesus burst on the scene, the first thing He did was to acknowledge the ministry given to John the Baptist by being baptized by him. Jesus then was propelled by the Holy Spirit out into the desert where He faced the temptations of Satan. As you know He passed those tests with flying colors and as He came back from the desert His ministry began.

Look with me at **Matthew 4:23-24, “Jesus traveled throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching everywhere the Good News about the Kingdom. And He healed people who had every kind of sickness and disease. News about Him spread far beyond the borders of Galilee so that the sick were soon coming to be healed from as far away as Syria. And whatever their illness and pain, or they were possessed by demons, or were epileptics, or were paralyzed – He healed them all.” (NLT)**

This really sums up the earthly ministry of Jesus. Certainly He accomplished a lot on the cross, we looked at a number of those things in the scriptures we had last week. But right off the bat, as He shared the good news of God’s coming kingdom, the salvation from sins and eternal life that was going to be offered, He began to heal the people’s physical needs.

Matthew tells us He healed them all. If you think about this in light of what we have been speaking about in the last couple of weeks, God's mercy, this is what Jesus was displaying, mercy.

We see here that Jesus spoke of the coming kingdom but

2. Jesus didn't **pre-qualify** the worthiness of those who were coming to Him for a healing

He didn't necessarily know what their background was or maybe He did, He was Jesus after all. The only thing Jesus saw was the need of the people and He had compassion on them all. By meeting their need He was giving them, not what they deserved but what He wanted to give them. Just like His Father God Jesus was full of mercy, goodness and truth.

In one of the first individual interactions and healings mentioned, a leper came to Jesus. Look with me. **Matthew 8:2-3, "And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'**

Jesus didn't ask him all lot of qualifying questions. All Jesus knew was the man came to so Him. So what did Jesus do?

Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

A couple of amazing things that occurred. First, a leper was an outcast. By law they were not to approach anyone. That is why leper colonies existed. People with leprosy were pushed aside, made to live in despicable places with others who were suffering and it could happen to anybody.

No one approached a leper for fear of contracting the disease themselves but contracting it was rare. The people in Jesus' day did not know this. Jesus, in His compassion and mercy, crossed over taboos and touched this man and cleansed him.

Watch this clip from the movie Risen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoU_tv7xB2o

This is probably much of the way it happened. A chance meeting. Jesus not knowing anything about the person other than they were suffering. That they deserved or did not deserve a healing wasn't the issue. Mercy was.

Time and time again you can read about Jesus healing those He came in contact with. He healed them from sickness, blindness, death and most importantly soul sickness.

Let's look at another healing. **Matthew 20:29-34, "As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, 'Lord have mercy on us, Son of David.' The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' And Jesus stopped and called to them, and said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.' Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him."**

Here we see the crowd response don't we? They sternly telling the blind men to be quiet. Jesus was too busy, too important for Him to meet their needs. This was the crowds thoughts wasn't it? But it wasn't Jesus' thoughts or heart. There was no thought if the blind men deserved to be healed, Jesus heard their cry for mercy and in His mercy He healed them.

As you read through the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you will see this happening again and again. Someone cries out to be healed and Jesus stops what He is doing and in some cases even goes miles with them to bring a healing to a person in need.

This is mercy in action. This is people receiving mercy from the hand of Jesus. This is people getting not what they deserved but what God and Jesus, in their mercy wants to give them.

This is God, this is Jesus, the God-man, the exact representation of God on earth in human form. Full of mercy, goodness and truth. And Jesus is the same for us today.

3. There are no prerequisites to become the friend of Jesus

There are no requirements of cleaning up your act before you approach Jesus. You can be a leper, a blind man, a prostitute, lame, a beggar, a tax man, a fisherman and many other things.

You can be stuck in sin, stuck in an unhealthy situation, stuck in the crazy cycle of life. It doesn't matter to Jesus. All He wants is for you to come to Him for the healing He has for you.

Read this next story with me.

Luke 7:36-39, “Now one of the Pharisees (religious leaders) was requesting Him (Jesus) to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this, he said to himself, “If this man (Jesus) were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.”

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This passage does not specify what kind of sin this woman was involved in but tradition has characterized this woman as a lady of loose morals, possibly a prostitute.

This was not uncommon then and still isn't today. Women, with no other means to support themselves or their children, turn to prostitution in order to feed their starving children. We cant imagine what must have happened in the heart of this woman, the emotional and physical things she must have gone through.

By coming to Jesus she is broken, feeling totally unworthy but yet desiring a healing of some sort.

Again, the people around Jesus only saw her sins and judged her for them. That she was touching Jesus was too much. That Jesus allowed her to touch Him was almost more than they could bear.

But Jesus knew didn't He? He knew what this woman had done, was doing. Her saw into her heart the pain and suffering and knew for her to humble herself in the house of the Pharisee was tremendous. He felt her tears, her hair and the perfume splash upon His feet and He saw into her heart. And in a moment of great mercy He said to her, **vs. 48, “Your sins have been forgiven.”**

Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give your rest.

John 14:27, “...My peace I give to you; not as the world give do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, not let it be fearful.”

This is the person who is Jesus Christ. This is the one who calls you to come unto me and I will give you rest. This is the one who said I will give you peace.

Like the blind men, the leper and the sinful woman, there are no conditions to coming to Jesus. They came seeking a healing and they received it. Jesus is the same merciful person He was 2,000 years ago. He hears the cry for mercy, He sees the one who bows down in humility before Him, he feels the tears splash upon His feet and He reaches out His hand to us and says, I am willing.

What an awesome God we serve. What a wonderful Lord is our Savior Jesus Christ. Full of mercy, goodness and truth and for this we can sing His praises.

Let's pray