



GOING DEEPER

In Matt 5:7 Jesus plants an important seed for Kingdom culture. He tells His disciples that those who show mercy will be shown mercy. One of the qualities of Jesus and His disciples is that they showed mercy. This is the culture within which the Kingdom of God bears fruit.

Ruth, an Example of Mercy

Ruth 1:6-18

Ruth was a Moabitess and a widow. She was married to one of Naomi's two sons; Naomi herself was a Jewish refugee. A Moabitess was a stranger to the Jewish people and was not permitted to enter the temple (*Neh 13:1*). She had her reasons therefore not to travel with her mother-in-law to Israel to live there. And yet she decided to not only follow her mother-in-law, who had lost both her sons, but to also follow the God of Israel. She was probably aware that there would be lots of oppression ahead but her love for Naomi was greater than her concern for herself.

Ruth was full of genuine love for Naomi and from that love she was able to show mercy. She wanted to help Naomi who was grieving, for she had lost her land, her husband and then her two sons.

Ruth's attitude is merciful.

Ruth 2:3-13

Ruth gathers together the ears of corn that are left following harvest. She quickly notices that there are extra ears to gather as Boaz, the owner of the field, looks upon her favorably. Ruth showed mercy and received this back in great measure.

Ruth 4:13

Ruth was a Moabitess, a stranger, someone who was banned from entering the presence of God in the temple. And yet she marries Boaz. Eventually she ends up in the genealogy of Jesus. The spiritual inheritance of belonging to God's people (the promised blessing from Abraham to all peoples) has become her own.

What does Jesus mean by merciful?

Luke 6:36

Luke 10:25-37

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Jesus teaches the disciples that God is merciful. He has compassion on those in need. Jesus makes it very clear in the story of the Good Samaritan that compassion is not only meant for your friends and family but especially for those in need.

The religious people know God and know a lot about His laws but they show no mercy. It was the Samaritan, someone upon whom Jews looked down, who did what is in line with God's character. He showed mercy.

What prevents us from being merciful?

Luke 6:36,37

James 2:1-9

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We often look at people's outward appearance or we judge them according to what we have heard said about them or what they have said themselves. This can prevent us from helping and doing good. God however is merciful and does not look at the outward appearance or listen to what is said about them. Even if people act badly, God is merciful towards them. Luke 6:35





Testimony

During a meeting a friend of mine did an altar call for people who raped others and asked them to come forward for prayer and forgiveness. I counted at least 25 men. Who would have thought that such people would have dared to come forward? There was already judgement in my heart. God thinks very differently about this. I will never forget the heart-breaking sound of men sobbing who were asking for and receiving forgiveness. Later on I heard that nearly all the men had themselves been raped as small boys. My heart broke when I heard one of the personal stories. It suddenly makes you look very differently at a 'rapist'. These men needed mercy and grace, not judgement.

Grace and Mercy

Mercy = eleos

This means having compassion on someone or helping someone who is in need.

Example:

Years ago I had a female translator who translated me from English to Russian as part of her work for school. She was being trained as a translator at this school. She was a committed communist and told me that she was willing to translate me but she would not become a Christian. Katja, the translator, worked with me for three days. Each day people were coming to me with the most horrendous stories. She saw how the grace and mercy shown to these people by Christians and God deeply touched these people and comforted them. On the last day I was talking to someone in English. Just at that moment Katja was called and met a boy called Yura who lived in the sewers of the city. He was very dirty and stank heavily. He did not have any parents and lived from what he could steal on the streets. Katja's heart was filled with mercy and compassion. She just started praying for this boy even though she had said that she did not believe. This experience changed Katja's life. She did not only pray for comfort for Yura but she met the God of comfort and mercy.

During an evangelistic event in Vienna, Austria, I was confronted with myself. In those days I just used to speak about God's love on the streets. Suddenly a smelly alcoholic came towards us. His clothes were dirty and torn. He was shouting very loudly and was disrupting our street drama. I was slightly angry and walked over to him and pulled him to one side. But during the conversation we started having, my heart was filled with God's mercy towards this man.

The next day he came back to the same place. He was still drunk and his hand was bleeding. I walked towards him and this time he came up close to me and wanted to give me a hug. I was slightly unsure at first, did I want to hug such a dirty man?! But then my heart was once again filled with compassion for him. With my whole heart I let him hug me. The gospel is wonderful, but it costs you everything!

EXERCISE



Pray today that God the Father will show you and let you experience His mercy for the world around you and especially the place where you live.

PRINCIPLE 35

Jesus teaches the disciples that God is merciful. He has compassion on those in need. Jesus makes it very clear in the story of the Good Samaritan that compassion is not only meant for your friends and family but especially for those in need. You will be shown mercy, when you are merciful like God is.