

MERCY, A DOMINANT QUALITY OF TRUE CHRISTIANS

Note to the speaker:

Explain the Biblical term "mercy." Show practical ways we can be merciful every day. Instill a heartfelt desire to become merciful persons

FROM JEHOVAH AND JESUS, WE LEARN WHAT TRUE MERCY IS (14 min.)

Mercy is commendable, but there is uncertainty as to its real meaning and application

For example, you promised to punish a child if he disobeys; he does. Is it the course of mercy to withhold punishment?

Some may think yes, others no; still others feel it depends on the situation

Frequently, people think mercy is limited to situations where punishment is withheld

How can we know what true mercy is? When can and should we display it? How should it affect our dealings with our family members, neighbors, Christian brothers?

Jehovah and Jesus are our outstanding examples of mercy

Bible describes Jehovah as "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4) (Read Psalm 145:8, 9) (*w90 9/15 14*)

Jesus repeatedly urged showing mercy; record of his life proves he set fine example (Mt 5:7; 9:13)

Through their dealings and instructions, we can learn what true mercy is

God's mercy displays itself in more than his merely holding back judicial punishment

Often, he showed mercy in forgiving and not punishing repentant wrongdoers (Ps 51:1, 2)

However, more is involved, for the Hebrew word rendered "mercy" is understood to mean basically "to be compassionate" (Ps 145:8, 9; *w71 411-13; it-2 375-6*)

This is an expression of pity or compassion comparable to the pity or merciful feeling a nursing mother has when her baby is hungry (Isa 49:15)

Jesus showed that our mercy should be an *active* expression of compassionate feelings

When two blind men begged, "Have mercy on us," Jesus was "moved with pity" (Mt 20:30-34)

He not only *felt* compassion but *actively* expressed it by healing them

He also displayed mercy by *giving* to others both spiritually and materially because he saw they were in need (Mt 15:32-38; Mr 6:34)

Mercy, then, most frequently refers, not to a negative holding back from punishing, but to a positive action, to an expression of kind consideration or pity

It is not enough to *feel* compassion; we must *express* it if we would be merciful

We are strongly urged to display mercy as a *dominant* quality in our lives

Jesus showed this, saying, "Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy" (Mt 5:7)

Meant the kind of person who is characterized by mercy, who readily displays it

It is such ones who will be shown mercy by God (*w78 2/15 9-10; it-2 378*)

But Jesus condemned certain ones who made "gifts of mercy." Why? (Mt 6:2)

BIBLE RECOMMENDS MERCY THAT STEMS FROM RIGHT MOTIVE (7 min.)

Frequently, the "mercy" that individuals display does not stem from a good motive

During Jesus' ministry, this was true among religious leaders (Read Matthew 6:1-4)

Religious leaders made a showy display of giving, evidencing bad motive (*w78 7/15 30-1*)

We have likely seen that the same situation often exists today

Some individuals make donations to charity when they are assured that names will be announced or put on a plaque as large donors or that donation may be tax deductible

Sometimes material giving is merely an excuse for not mercifully providing what is really needed

How many men give expensive gifts to their wives or children instead of giving their time, affection, and loving spiritual guidance? Is true mercy evident? (*w88 3/1 24-5; w88 8/1 11 ¶5*)

When stemming from proper motive, true mercy is refreshing and beneficial

Such mercy is of great help to the recipient; may provide food and clothing

True mercy engenders desirable qualities in the recipient

He is stimulated to be more merciful himself; mercy begets mercy (Lu 6:36, 38; *w86 12/1 28-9*)

Mercy stemming from right motive encourages empathy and kindness

Such mercy produces lasting and proper satisfaction for one displaying it

There may not be outward praise from men, but within yourself you have the satisfaction of knowing you did a fine thing, something that imitates Jehovah's mercy

Also puts one in line for God's blessing (Pr 11:25; 22:9; *w80 3/15 25*)

But in what practical ways can we show mercy? Does it always involve material things?

SEEK TO SHOW MERCY IN YOUR DAILY LIFE (20 min.)

Let your material gifts of mercy reflect your Christianity (*w87 11/15 6*)

Our Christianity is displayed in all aspects of life and to *all* people

We do not show kindness and patience toward only our brothers

Jesus illustrated showing of mercy to all (Lu 10:29-37; w71 413)

Note that Samaritan was not only “moved with pity” but “*acted* mercifully toward him”

What would you have done in that situation? Note Jesus’ encouragement (Verse 37)

Our being no part of the world does not mean being calloused to those in the world

We do not love its ways, manners, false religions

But Christians do love and show mercy to *individuals*

Your neighbor may be part of a false religious organization, yet if his house was on fire, would you not warn him?

True, how one can best help depends on circumstances (Pr 3:27)

If you cannot swim, jumping into water to save someone would not be practical display of mercy; wiser to throw him a float or quickly seek aid

Each one must decide how and when to display mercy toward fellow humans

What would be your response to a person in poverty, a begging child, or a disabled person?

It is not merciful to encourage laziness, drunkenness, and so forth (Pr 20:1, 4; 2Th 3:10, 12)

In some situations, giving money to a person who asks for it would encourage him in a wrong course; that would not be true mercy (g80 5/8 21-2)

We must balance reasonings of our mind with merciful proddings of heart

Preparing a meal for sick neighbor or helping to care for her children may be one way of your reflecting the mercy Jesus urged in the illustration of the neighborly Samaritan

Is financial or material giving the most important way for you to show mercy? No!

Spiritual giving can contribute to the *everlasting welfare* of people

Record of Christianity shows that spiritual giving deserves greatest emphasis (w86 10/1 22-4)

Main thrust of Jesus’ service was spiritual teaching (Mt 4:23; g82 12/8 10)

By his *teaching*, he gave people reason to change their lives for the better

Apostles too concentrated on spiritual giving, aiding persons toward eternal life

Even when apostles healed others as a merciful gift, they directed attention to Jesus (Relate Acts 3:1-10)

Rightly, then, spiritual giving receives greatest emphasis among true Christians

With the new world just ahead, would not be the merciful thing for Christian organization to devote itself to giving medical help or distributing food (w87 1/15 7-9; w90 8/15 18-19)

Witnesses concentrate on spreading “food that remains for life everlasting” (Joh 6:27)

All of us can exert ourselves in spiritual giving

Amount to which you can make spiritual gifts of mercy is not limited by financial circumstances

Are still many sincere people who are like sheep without a shepherd (*it-2* 377 ¶4-6)

Jesus mercifully responded by teaching truth to such ones, and so can we

We can ask ourselves: ‘Do I feel moved to do all I can, not viewing it as mere duty?’

We can also show mercy daily by not being overly critical and by comforting others

Mercifully bear with weaknesses of others, not judging or being overly critical (Read Matthew 7:1-4)

Even when one definitely has erred, may be merciful course simply to overlook (w90 10/1 22-3)

Those in position to do so might feel it best to correct an error (Ga 6:1)

As individuals, if a person realizes he was wrong, why rub it in? (Pr 15:4; 18:21)

Demonstrate that mercy is a dominant quality in your life by comforting others (1Th 5:14)

Paul urged ‘comforting depressed souls,’ which would display our mercy and compassion; not doing it as an obligation but because mercy moves us (w83 8/1 9-11)

We have not exhausted the possible ways to show mercy or situations calling for mercy

It can be manifested by material and spiritual giving when moved to do so by right motive; we can also be merciful in not being too critical, by forgiving and comforting

Our display of mercy should extend not only to our family and Christian brothers but to others, as in illustration of Samaritan

WORK TO INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF MERCY IN OUR LIVES (4 min.)

Being aware of the Scriptural importance of mercy, we can work to increase its influence in our lives

Does not mean having a forced, artificial mercy, but means cultivating it, being conscious of it and responding to inward impulses to be merciful (Col 3:10, 12)

Matter requires our attention because imperfections work against mercy

We are confronted constantly with unmerciful spirit of the world

The more we let mercy be a dominant quality in our life, the more we will be like God

Can expect to be rewarded by God for showing mercy (Read Matthew 5:7) (g71 8/8 27)

God’s mercy to us may involve resurrection or preservation into new world without having to die

We have reason to thank him for the mercy of holding out that hope

The mercy of actually granting us eternal life is even more reason for gratitude and for us to let mercy be a dominant influence in our lives

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read)