



LIFEgroup Homework

Week of October 18, 2009

Be Mercy Full

Matthew 5:7

March 24, 1989. A cold night off the coast of Alaska.

The captain of a tanker barked orders to a second mate. The orders were vague, the night was black, and the collision was disastrous. The tanker ship *Exxon Valdez* ran hard aground on Bligh Reef, dumping eleven million gallons of crude oil into one of the most scenic bodies of water in the world. Petroleum blackened everything from the surface of the sea, to beaches, to otters, to sea gulls. Alaska was infuriated, and Exxon, the company which owned the tanker, was humiliated.

The collision, terrible as it was, was mild compared to the ones that occur daily in our relationships. You've been there. Someone doesn't meet your expectations. Promises go unfulfilled. Verbal pistols are drawn, and a round of words is fired.

The result? A collision of the hull of your heart against the reef of someone's actions. Precious energy escapes, coating the surface of your soul with the deadly film of resentment. A black blanket of bitterness darkens your world, dims your sight, sours your outlook, and suffocates your joy. (Lucado, M. (1996). *The applause of heaven* (109). Dallas, Tex.: Word Pub.)

So how can we avoid the reef of resentment and experience the only path to happiness? That is the focus of our study.

Sharing Questions:

What is the most significant act of mercy that you have observed in your lifetime?

Getting Started (questions):

What was one principle, illustration or action point from the sermon that struck you?

Who is the most "mercy full" person you know?

Why do you think mercy is essential for the only path to happiness?

Homework:

Read Romans 12:2 and Philippians 2:5-11

These passages speak of God's life-changing process as follows:

- ❖ **"Know"** – listen to God's truth, read it and meditate on it.
- ❖ **"Be"** – live the truth – obey God's truth and take the character of Christ.
- ❖ **"Do"** – serve in truth – out of gratitude for what God has done.

What is the result of **knowing** only?

What is the result of **"being"** only?

What is the result of **"doing"** only?

What happens when a person tries to serve God without "being" spiritual?

Read Ephesians 2:4-7

What should result from experiencing the mercy of God?

Pastor Stan spoke of "God-given" mercy in the lives of Joseph, Moses, David, Stephen and Elizabeth Elliot. What other Biblical or historical individuals come to your mind when you think of "God-given" mercy?

Read Matthew 18:21-35

In one sentence, what is God saying about mercy from this parable?

How will God treat the merciless and unforgiving?

Personal application: ask God to show you anyone in your life that you have been harboring bitterness or resentment towards from hurts in the past. Choose to forgive them and ask God to give you a heart of mercy so you can enjoy the only path to happiness. Write a prayer to God expressing your desire:

Read John 8: 1-11

How was Jesus expressing mercy to this woman?

What do you think Jesus wrote in the ground each time?

What did Jesus say in verse 7 to this merciless crowd?

Why do you think the older ones left first? (vs 9)

After the woman was forgiven and received mercy, what did Jesus declare to her? (vs 11)

What does this say to the person who takes the mercy of God for granted and neglects hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

Write a prayer, asking God to give you a heart of mercy toward those who are helpless and captive to sin, hurting others, hurting themselves and missing the "only path to happiness."

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:7 (NIV)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."



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