

The King's People: Mercy Me

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Date: 07 April 2024

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[0 : 00] with. We are returning now to the Beatitudes in our series, The Kingdom-Focused Church. So we're going to read ones we've covered and end on the one that we are going to cover today.

Let's pray. Father, your word is a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path. Father, we can't see where we're going without your word. We don't know what to do. Our culture, Lord, has many things it holds up and says, do this, do that, do this, believe this, believe that.

Some of them are good, but they all fall short of your word. So will you guide us with your eternal truth, your unchanging truth, your absolute truth, so that we know how we are to live and can follow Jesus. Speak to all of us, the preacher and those to whom he preaches, that we may see Jesus. Our eyes might be opened, our hearts might be set free to go in the path of your word, to follow him who has loved us. Pour out your spirit and grant your servant grace to preach your word and for your people to hear with their hearts, not just with ears. May Jesus be glorified. Save someone today, Father, someone who doesn't know you. Father, we ask you would save someone. Transform, show them how beautiful and marvelous and wonderful Jesus is and show them how much they need him.

We ask all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Matthew chapter 5, I'm going to begin reading in verse 3, on the end of verse 7, which is our text. Hear now the word of the living God.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Our text. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. That is the word of the Lord.

[2 : 29] Amen. You may be seated. If you're using the Bible in the pew, our text is found on page 809. 809.

And I want to encourage all of you to bring your Bibles. I know we put things on the screen. I try to as much as I can, but sometimes I can't. So bring your Bibles. It's okay. Even on your phone, it's okay.

But bring your Bible. You ever have a picture taken of you that you didn't like? What? I guess that means yes.

A guy had his picture taken. He was very upset with the photographer because he didn't like the picture. He rushed back into the photographer's studio. He's like, you know, Olin Mills, man. They charge you a bunch of money for these pictures, and you, they need to be right. Okay? So my boy goes back into the studio, and he's, he's like, I, this, this picture, this picture doesn't do me justice, man. Paid you a lot of money.

The photographer looked at him. Mister, with a face like yours, you don't need justice. You need mercy. Family, we don't want justice from God.

[4 : 01] We want a boatload of mercy. When Christ finds us, family, we're not pretty.

We're not pretty. It is only by his work in our lives that we start to become beautiful. Oh, we start growing in beauty because we begin to reflect him.

That's where beauty really comes from, God. Those of us who receive his mercy in Jesus then become conduits of that same mercy to our culture.

Sadly, too many of us think we're prettier than we are. Somebody ask you a question. Does Christ's mercy flow out of your life regularly?

Not drive by mercy on occasion, but are you growing in being a merciful person? Are you looking like Jesus?

[5 : 10] First of all, this series is about the kingdom, this is a review, because we haven't been here in a while. We're talking about the kingdom-focused church. The kingdom of God is the present rule

of Christ.

Right now, he is ruling and reigning, seated at the Father's right hand. It will culminate. His kingdom will culminate in his second coming when he comes to usher in the new heavens and new earth when righteousness will reign and all that is wrong will be made right.

This kingdom right now is made visible through what I call the embassies of the kingdom we call churches.

Churches that are faithful to his word and ways. And say, these churches have only one message, really. It is the gospel, the good news of the kingdom.

That's what our Savior preached. How can sinners be made right with God and live under Christ's rule, right? That's what the gospel shows us.

[6 : 24] How we can be made right with God. And those people who believe put Christ and his kingdom before all earthly allegiances and all earthly commitments, listen, including family, ethnicity, political, and national concerns, Jesus becomes first.

His kingdom becomes first. And then everything lines up because he shows us how to do family. He shows us how to do politics. He shows us how to do life as citizens of his kingdom.

And so his people begin to display certain characteristics, certain attitudes, certain actions, certain ways of thinking and living and loving that mark them as citizens of his kingdom.

That's why we're studying the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes represent the character of Christ and therefore those who are in his kingdom who call them his king.

The Beatitudes look like Jesus. And here's the wonderful thing. Dear brother, one of my deacons reminded me of something I said some time ago.

[7 : 54] All of these characteristics are already on your account. God sees you like this. He sees you as poor in spirit. He sees you, et cetera, all the way.

He sees you this way. What's happening each and every day is that we are asking Jesus to work out what he's already worked in. And so we begin to grow in Christ's likeness.

And all of these characteristics, this is not a buffet where you pick and choose. All of these characteristics begin to be reflected in all of us who walk with King Jesus.

So remember, the first four Beatitudes spoke of how we relate to the Lord. We recognize our spiritual poverty.

We mourn over our sins and those sins around us. We humble ourselves before God's will. That's meek. And then we hunger and thirst to live righteous lives before God.

[8 : 56] We hunger and thirst for righteousness. That's what we've already looked at. And now these last four, in general, speak of how we relate to people. First four, relate to God.

Next group, people. How we relate to people as kingdom people. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

First of all, the merciful are blessed. They're blessed. Blessed. The Beatitudes, that word means pronouncements of God's blessing. To be blessed is to experience God's favor, God's grace, and God's fellowship.

His presence with you is the great blessing. Christ with us, our hope of glory. Emmanuel, God with us. That is to be blessed.

You have his presence and his mercy and his grace and fellowship with you. Keep in mind, in Jesus' day, the Jews were part of the Roman world.

[10 : 03] The Romans ruled that area of the world, including Africa. And the Romans were not known for their mercy. They were brutal, especially with troublemakers.

Crucifixion was not uncommon as a way of punishment. They were not huge on being merciful. But that shouldn't surprise us. Because we're not huge fans of mercy today either.

We still say, don't we? Don't get mad. Get even. Get even. Get even. When someone suffers, especially for their sins, people still say, she got what she deserved.

If someone treats you wrong and gets caught, what do we say? What goes around comes around. When poor people don't get ahead and they seem to be trapped, we say, nobody gave me anything.

I worked hard. Why can't they? Sound familiar? I grew up in the same neighborhood.

[11 : 13] Went to the same school. I worked in the same environment. If I can resist that temptation, why couldn't he? We have scam artists who target the elderly, stealing their retirement savings with no feelings of guilt.

Human trafficking of the vulnerable. Human collateral damage in times of war that goes unaddressed. Sometimes it's even intentional. As combatants use non-combatants as human shields.

Our world can be a very merciless place. The New Testament describes a society that is steeped in being unmerciful.

Romans chapter 1, beginning at verse 28. Now, the word unmerciful is not used, but listen to the words.

Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, contentiousness, malice.

[12:29] They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips. By the way, when you gossip, you are being unmerciful to the person you are gossiping about.

And if you're listening to gossip, you're still a gossip. Slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.

How'd that get in that list? You see? God believes in children obeying their parents. Okay, I got quiet.

Foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things, all of those things, deserve to die.

They not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them. Merciless. Okay? That's a description of the Roman world, but also of our world.

[13:39] Merciless. There's one more passage, and I'm not trying to wig you out, but I think you need to hear this, really. 2 Timothy chapter 3, 1 through 5. It's on the screen.

Paul says, But understand this. In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless.

Swollen with conceit. Love is a pleasure rather than lovers of God. Having the appearance of godliness, but denying his power. Avoid such people.

Talking about the last days. The last days began with the coming of Christ. We're knee-deep in the last days. But here's the thing about this passage.

He's not talking about the world. He's talking about the church. The visible church. That's why he says in that phrase, Having an appearance of godliness, but denying his power.

[15:01] That's Christian people. People who claim to be Christian. And Paul says, Even sometimes places that call themselves churches can be places that are merciless.

Have mercy, O Lord. So what does our Lord actually mean by mercy? Let's get that out there. What does he mean by mercy?

Mercy is an act of compassion toward those who are pitiful. Afflicted and in need. Not just a feeling, it's a doing. Let me say it again.

Act of compassion toward those who are pitiful. Afflicted and in need. Mercy and grace are, if I were to flip a coin, Mercy is on one side, Grace is on the other.

They go together. You can't have one without the other. Grace is given to those by God. Grace is God's undeserved favor.

[16:07] It's given to those who don't deserve it. Mercy is given to those who are miserable. Miserable.

I love what pastor, theologian, St. Clair Ferguson, how he describes this. This is really good stuff. Listen, it's on the screen. Mercy includes kindness, but it's more than that.

Kindness is a friend calling you when you are well. Mercy is a friend calling you because you are sick. Mercy relieves the consequences of sin in the lives of others.

Those others being both sinners and those sinned against. You hear that? Sinners and those sinned against. Mercy is getting down on your hands and knees and doing what you can to restore dignity to someone whose life has been broken by sin, whether his own sin or that of someone else. That's real good stuff. Does it sound like you? With people who know you describe you as merciful.

[17:22] Our Lord says those who are merciful are blessed. Not will be blessed, but blessed already. They're already, already blessed.

They have the king's favor. We can come back to this in a little bit more, but we'll come back. Let me go on first. Why does God show mercy? I mean, really?

We rebelled against him. Why does he show mercy? Because the God of the Bible is a God of mercy. When Israel sinned by making the golden calf, Moses interceded for them.

Remember? In doing so, he asked God to show him his glory. And God agreed to show Moses some of his glory.

Here's how he did it. Exodus 34. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him. That's Moses there. Listen. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.

[18 : 49] How does God display his glory to Moses? He reveals his character. He reveals who he is.

And the first thing he says about himself is he is merciful and gracious. Merciful. That's not something that God just occasionally does.

It's who he is. It's part of his very nature that he is merciful and gracious. And he lists how he forgives his forgiving love by saying forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

That's what that means, that he's forgives any kind of sin you can think of. Our rebellion against God covers a lot of ground. And God in his mercy is able to forgive all of it.

All of it. In the New Testament, the Father is described in 2 Corinthians 1, verses 3 and 4, one of my favorite passages.

[20 : 01] He says, Paul is preaching, basically preaching here. He says, he's praising God.

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comfort us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

The word comfort keeps coming up there. Because God, whose mercy is multiplied, his mercy is not just one, it's all kinds of, that's why it's plural, mercies.

He's the Father of mercies. Mercy comes from him. Humanity is able to display mercy because we are created in the image of God.

Because we're fallen, we don't get it right most of the time. That's why we need Jesus. That's why we need Jesus. And that mercy pours out of us to comfort others, even as we have been comforted by God because of his mercy.

Old Testament, I could multiply, but Old Testament and New Testament show us clearly that God is a God of mercy. Where do we see God's mercy displayed at its best?

[21 : 28] You know where. In the life of Jesus. In the life of Jesus. Oh my goodness. Jesus comes and goes about showing mercy, healing illnesses, demonic oppression, hunger, and even death at times.

And of course, the ultimate, the apex of the mercy of God, the apex of the display of the mercy of Jesus is when he goes to the cross.

Where as the Son of God, the Holy Son of God, he pays the debt of sins of the unholy who trust in him. Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord.

When we are merciful, we bear the family resemblance then. We begin to elect the Father and the Son because of the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Mercy is a Trinitarian blessing upon those who trust in Jesus. Now, the king's people see mercy as a verb.

[22 : 45] Not a feeling. It's a verb. First, mercy addresses the pain that sin has caused physically.

As St. Clair Ferguson said, we do what we can to restore the dignity of the poor, the sick, the incarcerated, and victims of injustice. Now, those are very huge issues and they're quite overwhelming.

Right? If you think about that, you should feel, come on. I never do anything. I mean, how in the world can we address all of that?

How can one church really address all those things? Let me help you. Focus on your spheres of influence.

your world, where you live. Let's talk about our church. The Glenwood School provides a Christian private school primary education for those who can afford it as well as those who can.

[23 : 49] And with the vouchers now that are coming to our city, even more people will be able to afford such an education.

education. They could use some volunteers sometimes. Maybe you could help. We have GLAD, our Glenwood, thank you.

You saw me pause. I said, you know, Tudor's public school kids from grades one through five, they could use some volunteers. Are you available?

Talk to Elder Ron Lowe about his Every Valley Ministries that serves young African-American men in particular and some women. He could probably use some help. Our youth ministry might be an opportunity as well.

Hope for the Inner City, which led by our brother Anthony Watkins, he spoke at the Men's Breakfast yesterday, is always looking for help as they do community development here in East Chattanooga. Okay, I'm not giving ideas.

[24 : 53] We're being very practical. Are there people on your block who are having trouble making ends meet? Maybe God wants you to bring some meals or groceries or whatever.

Maybe you have influence in housing. Any builders here? Some of you work in building, in contractors, whatever. Or maybe you work in government or the courts.

How can God use you in those places to help restore dignity to the poor by affordable housing, just sentencing in the courts, fair policing, or just good government policies?

Your sphere of influence. Your sphere of influence. No one's asking. God's not asking you to do the impossible. He's asking you to be available where you are.

Where you are. Some of you will be called to go outside of your area, outside of your comfort zone. Some will be asked, amen, go. Go in Jesus' name.

[25 : 57] But don't sit there and talk about, I don't want to get involved. That's not mercy. That's not mercy. Mercy can be shown emotionally.

Caring for those who are grieving in our church or your neighborhood. Caring for those who are grieving on your job or your school. Maybe you have noticed people in our church who might be lonely. Invite them into your home.

Invite them to your small group. Invite them just out. Mercy. Mercy addresses spiritual issues as well. One of the, listen y'all, this is one of the big, this is just as big as helping the poor.

Mercy is an act of forgiveness. God, real quiet. When someone sins against you, the Bible talks about forgiveness as a debt, a sin as a debt.

You expect them to confess the harm they've done to you and make restitution which leads to reconciliation, right? Forgiveness is releasing them from the debt they owe you.

[27 : 08] it's not saying that's okay, they didn't mean it. That's not what mercy is. That's just being soft.

No, mercy means you look at the evil that was done to you and in the name of Jesus you release them. Doesn't mean you're reconciled yet because to do that both parties have to come to the table and confess their stuff.

But forgiveness precedes reconciliation. You let them go. You're not holding their sin over their heads.

Our Lord even told us to pray that way. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. That is an act of mercy. How can you do that? How can you forgive evil that's been done to you?

you can't. You can't. But the grace and mercy of Jesus in you can.

[28 : 15] You're not alone here. Bitterness will kill you. You hold on to something? You think you're holding the other person hostage?

They having lunch and dinner and going to the baseball games. You're the one dying. You're the one just curling up inside and shriveling up because bitterness, a lack of forgiveness, an unwillingness to forgive, it's like drinking poison and expecting the other guy to drop dead.

You're the one dying. bitterness shrinks your soul. Mercy sets you free. Forgiveness sets you free. You can't do it. But Paul says, Ephesians 4, 32, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

He repeats that in Colossians 3, 13. I got several, I'm going to read all of them, but that's the idea. Forgiveness comes because I recognize that I've been forgiven maybe even of worse stuff than I just did, than was done to me.

[29 : 31] We love holding people accountable for the evil they've done to us, but we forget the evil that we've done to others. God forgives that he may now empower us.

Because of the mercy and grace of God, he empowers us now to be conduits, vehicles of mercy to those around us. Forgiveness is one of the greatest acts of mercy that a human being can give. And if you're married, I hope you're growing in forgiveness. I tell my counselors, my counselees when I'm preparing them for marriage, I say, this is one area where you must grow. One area where you cannot afford to be lax and just say, oh, well, you know, I'm just me. No, you're not. Listen, if you don't want to forgive in your marriage, your marriage will be over. That last couple years, maybe a few years, maybe a long time, but eventually the bitterness will overwhelm you. And when your kids leave, that's when it breaks down.

[30 : 52] Forgiveness is gospel grace. Forgiveness is the power of the Spirit in us. To let people free and thereby freeing our own selves.

mercy from the king's people is received. How do people respond to mercy? Well, some people are overwhelmed by it.

When you show mercy to someone, when you reach out to someone and touch them and they're hurting and you give them a card or you bring them a meal or you show compassion or you go and sit with them or you help intercede, help them get their car fixed, whatever it is, some people are overwhelmed by that and they're blessed and they're so happy and they thank you, they fall on your neck and hug and kiss you and some of them, some of them will put their faith in Jesus because of the mercy of God through you.

We say hallelujah and we rejoice in those stories, yes. But some people do not respond positively to your mercy.

they take advantage of you. They come into your house or they come to church and they ask for help but this is just your scam.

[32 : 13] They do this all the time. They're always going around get taken because they know Christians are generous and they come and they take and you give and they go off and buy drugs or alcohol or they don't even say thank you and you feel used.

Because you were. Because you were. Yet if you close up your heart of compassion and mercy because of fear, because of fear, it will shrivel your soul.

God doesn't hold you accountable what someone else does. He holds you accountable for what you do. is your heart moved. I don't give everybody who asks me for money money.

You know, you drive down the street, some guy, he's got a sign and he says, I don't give all those people money. But sometimes my heart is moved. And I do.

Now, you don't have to give people money. I don't like giving people money. I prefer to buy them food. So sometimes I stop people, if I'm walking and someone grabs me, I take them inside. Some guy inside a Starbucks, I take fried chicken.

[33 : 30] I remember one guy, Sandy remembers this guy. We were at Temple University, which is in the heart of North Philadelphia, the hood. And this guy was on the subway stop every day.

And he always had a sign. It said, I remember begged and steal. And so that's how he got money. I remember begged and steal. One guy said to him, if you get a job, you won't have to beg or steal. That was rough, but it was funny. Well, that guy, a guy like him stopped me one day, and he asked me, right in the same place, he asked me, hey, man, can you give me a few dollars? He said, I'm hungry.

You hungry? I said, there was a Roy Rogers right there on the corner. And I said, okay, hey, man, I'm going to feed you. Come on, let's go. I'm a college student. I ain't got much money, but I got a little bit I can give to him. So we're walking toward Roy Rogers, and he stopped.

Brother Crumble, he stops me and says, do they sell fried food? I said, well, yeah, it's Roy Rogers, right?

[34 : 31] I said, I think they may have a baked chicken in there, but they said, I can't eat fried food. You can't? I'm looking at this guy.

You can't eat fried food? I said, but brother, you hungry. You said you were hungry. I'm going to buy you some food. It's only one meal. They're going to kill you. No, I can't eat fried food.

He just wanted the money to do what he wanted. He was lying to me. He was lying to me.

Sometimes you get taken advantage of.

Sometimes your money gets ill spent, but you cannot close your heart. The third thing, and lastly, God responds with more mercy. When we're merciful, God responds to us with more mercy. This speaks of the last judgment ultimately, but also in this life, the merciful receive mercy from God in this life and ultimately in the next. Now, is this legalism?

[35 : 33] What I mean by that, are we earning God's mercy by giving mercy? Are we earning something from God?

Thank you. Thank you. No. No way. Matthew 18, and we're going to end here. I'm going to wrap it up on this passage right here. Matthew 18.

You remember the story, right? This guy owes this king a boatload of money. He was an official. He was an official in the king's court.

This is Matthew 18, if you want to turn there real quick. He was an official in the king's court. He owes the king a lot of money. What that means is he embezzled. What's that mean? He embezzled the king's money. And the king says, I want my money.

Empty your pockets. Go to your house. Your bank account. Show me the money. I want my money. And the guy says, oh, be merciful to me. I don't have it. I can't pay you. Be merciful to me.

[36 : 33] Oh, I'll do what I can, but have mercy. And the king did. The man owed the king maybe a million dollars or more in our currency today. And the king says, I forgive you.

Go in peace. The guy goes out. He's happy. He's free. He finds it. And a guy comes up to him. He said, hey, hey, don't run for me.

Where's my money? Don't you run for me? Where's my money? The guy says, oh, man. He only owes him maybe \$15, \$20. He said, oh, man. I ain't got it right now. I'm kind of, I'm financially embarrassed.

I'm in between. You know what I'm saying? And I don't have it. But listen, be patient with me and I'll give it a bet. Be merciful. And the guy says, what? You ain't got my money? And he throws the guy in jail. And back in the day, he has to be called debtor's prison.

He throws the guy in jail. And when you get thrown in debtor's prison, you can't leave until you pay the debt. Or somebody pays it for you. The king's servants, because the king's servants are always there.

[37 : 35] And they saw what happened. They went and told the king, your majesty, remember that guy, that servant of yours, that you forgave all that money? Guess what he did? The king said, hold it.

No, he didn't. Send him an email. Please appear before the king soon. He comes in the king. He's happy. King, my boy. Kingy man. My dog. You know, he was happy. You know, because king loves him, right? He's the king's boy. And the king says, didn't I forgive you?

All that money you asked for me? How come you couldn't forgive that guy who owed you much less? Whew. I'm getting scared. Verses 32 to 35.

He says, you wicked servant. I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you? And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt.

[38 : 35] And Jesus ends it by saying this, so also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. Notice God's mercy comes with accountability.

God's mercy changes you. It doesn't leave you the same. See, this man did not truly appreciate or appropriate God's mercy.

His contrition was false. He appeared to be sorry for his sins, but likely he was sorry he got caught. His inability to be merciful and give what he has supposedly been given reveals he is foreign to the mercy of God.

He hadn't really experienced it. Hence he will not be shown mercy. He will be jailed. The word jailed is my, that's really soft.

The word is torturers. King James says it right. He was given to the torturers. It implies, I believe, because he would never get out.

[39 : 47] It implies eternal judgment. Should we not search our hearts then, asking God to deliver us from an unforgiving heart? Do you hold grudges because you believe you were treated unfairly?

Don't lie. Everyone who knows you knows it's true. You can't hide it. You can't hide an unforgiving heart. The people around you should tell you that you are unforgiving.

They should tell you. They're not being merciful to you if they're not telling you. Sometimes we're just afraid to say anything. Maybe because we don't want to hurt people's feelings or we're afraid of their response.

That's not mercy. Mercy reveals the sin of the other so that they can repent and find grace from God.

The king did not say to that servant, oh, no you didn't. It's all good. No, he didn't do that. He acknowledged you stole from me.

[40 : 58] He told them all this money you've taken. He revealed his sin to him. He showed him his sin and then he forgave him.

You see how it works? He showed him his sin. Didn't wipe it under the carpet. Didn't pretend, didn't say, I'm just going to be tolerant.

No. He said, you did this. I don't want you to know you did this. But I forgive you. You see, we do mercy wrong.

Either we're self-righteous. Why couldn't you do it? Because I did it. Or we're soft and quote-unquote tolerant. The world's view of tolerance.

And we pretend, we make excuses for people. Oh, he did it because he was sick. Oh, he did it because he had a father in his home. Oh, he did it because that's the way his family is.

[42 : 01] We make all these excuses. We're not being merciful by making excuses or being self-righteous. Mercy says you're wrong.

But I forgive you. And may you find hope in the Lord. Don't be afraid. We got to start doing mercy right.

Stop listening to your favorite Republican or favorite Democrat. they don't know about mercy in general. But God does. Let him use you to spread the true mercy of God in love and kindness, in humility, mourning over the sin, hungering and thirsting to do right before God, recognizing you are broke, spiritually bankrupt, and God had to have mercy on you because you messed up.

Such people, yeah, only such people can truly be merciful in the name of Jesus. Father, help us. You see how messed up we are.

I'm chief of that. It's hard, Lord, when people hurt you. But Lord, I thank you that you give us the ability to cast our pain upon you.

[43 : 30] Lord, we would love to be reconciled with people who hurt us, but Lord, they have to come to the table. But Lord, whether they come to the table or not, whether we're reconciled or not, help us not to live in bitterness so that our souls are corrupted and we influence others around us with that corruption.

Oh, God, deliver us from bitterness and make us a merciful people. Help us to love those around us and care about their dignity and before you. Oh, God, deliver us from being self-focused and afraid to get involved.

Thank you that you were not that way. Thank you that Jesus was not that way. He got involved, becoming one of us, living as one of us, being persecuted and abused just like us.

He died for us. rose again that we might know the mercy of God in him. Thank you for Jesus. His name we pray.

Amen. Amen.