

**The Rock: 04-24-2022****A Year with the master**

**Title**: Blessed are the merciful

**Scripture**: Matthew 5:7, John 8:1-11  
(black bible Pg.831 ESV)

**Theme**:

Grace and mercy tempers truth, never does it remove it.

**Introduction**:

Preaching on what it means to be merciful, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said the following:

"We must remember...that it applied specifically to God Himself...God is merciful; but God is righteous, God is holy, God is just, and whatever our interpretation of merciful may be, it must include all that.

Mercy and truth are met together, and if I can think of mercy only at the expense of the truth and law, it is not true mercy."

There are so many places in the ministry of Jesus where we could land when it comes to mercy. His healing of Jairus' daughter, perhaps.

The healing of the woman with the issue of blood, or the deliverance of Mary Magdalene from seven demons.

Perhaps one that many know, is the story of the good Samaritan. All of these are so good and would be worth our time.

I chose the text from John eight however, because I was drawn there, as it seems to encompass that royal law James talked about where; mercy triumphs over justice.

It is one of the reasons I started with the quote from Llyod-Jones. Far too often we think mercy means forgiveness without accountability.

Mercy could not be further from that, as we will see. Mercy and forgiveness only work together when we realize that we all are accountable for our actions, and that God's forgiveness is actually a show of mercy.

Why do I say that? Because someone paid the price for our mercy and for our grace. Jesus paid it all, and therefore, as a result I receive mercy. This will all unpack itself as we go forward this morning.

**The Story:**

So, into chapter eight we go, as we find Jesus just going about life and ministry, teaching again in the temple.

**-John 8:2 (ESV)**

"Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them."

In typical fashion, he would have been seated in the midst of the crowd and teaching whatever was his topic that day as everyone sat around him listening and learning.

Then through that crowd comes an angry group of pharisees and Scribes, dragging along with them a woman caught doing something she shouldn't have been:

**-John 8:3-5 (ESV)**

"The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"

No time to think Jesus. Right in front of everyone, we are going to put you on the spot -give us an answer.

But Jesus stays above the created chaos and saw what was really happening. A great lesson for us all. Never get sucked into someone else's chaos and then feel as though you have to run with it. You don't.

In the middle of this we can learn a few things about mercy. Jesus doodles in the sand. He allows his accusers off the hook as well -when He saw what was happening, he gives them an out.

It is the same story every time, as Jesus sees right past what is a set-up and into the hearts of the people involved.

There is such an arrogance from the leaders here. Look at a few verses at the end of Chapter 7:

**-John 7:47-49 (ESV)**

"The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

They claim that the crowd is cursed because they don't "know the law". Yet the Pharisees do, and still miss who Jesus is.

Not only that, they use the law as a means to manipulate, to de-value, and to

destroy. It is no wonder Jesus is always so frustrated, angry, and hard with them.

They are always right and always wrong at the same time. Look at what he tells His disciples in Matthew 5:

**-Matthew 5:20 (ESV)**

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We tend to think that the Pharisees are always just wrong and unrighteous, but they aren't. In fact, their righteousness according to the letter of the law was something that the disciples were being challenged to exceed.

How? Again, in Matthew Jesus scolds the Pharisees once again for only getting half the story right:

**-Matthew 23:23-24 (ESV)**

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!”

They are to remember the heart of the Law  
This was the part they were missing -We  
aren't told to go about life however we  
want, but to go about life in a  
particular way.

Obeying the letter is one thing, a  
necessary thing, because we are saved.  
(Not to be saved) But the deeper, more  
important part is doing so, "from the  
heart."

Following the Law without the temperance  
of the heart makes for legalism. This is  
what the Pharisees were guilty of. Obey  
the letter of the law at all cost.

Following just the heart of the law,  
without any reference point of the Law of  
God leads to licentiousness -an anything  
goes type of attitude, because, after  
all, God loves me.

That is actually not love, nor is it  
grace or mercy. Why? It is not tempered  
with the truth of God's word, told to us,  
in love.

We see the right application of mercy  
here in this story of the woman at the  
wall. Again, Jesus is at the temple with  
a crowd gathered, and the Pharisees barge  
in with this woman "caught in the act of  
adultery".

That statement always leaves my cynical self with a couple questions:

1-How did they know?

2-Where is the guy?

Two Great questions to ask. Because, if you can stay above the chaos of the moment, what we discover is a set-up, a ruse to get to Jesus. This has nothing whatever to do with the woman.

**-John 8:6 (ESV)**

"This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground."

Here's the deal -Under Roman rule the Jewish people could not enforce capital punishment. Yet, under Jewish law, the act of adultery was a sin punishable by death.

It's a perfect plan on their part, or so they think. Why? If Jesus condemns her and honors God's law, Rome would come in and punish Him for violating their law. Problem solved for the Pharisees.

If Jesus says, no, under Roman rule we aren't allowed to execute people, they could declare: "See we told you He denies

God's law, and is a friend of Rome." Again, problem solved.

Except it wasn't, because Jesus saw right through it. He saw the de-valuing of a child of God, even though she was caught in sin.

He saw the manipulation of human beings just so they could get at Him, using people for their own malicious ends. It's no wonder he just sits down and starts to doodle in the sand.

Who knows what he drew, wrote or whatever it was? It's what he says next which shows that He is balanced and unswayed by all the things going on, never going from one extreme to the other.

We tend to do that, emotionally charged, we fight for the radical end of the pendulum swing. Not really looking for the balance in the middle. Asking and thinking: "What is really going on here?"

How does one show mercy here? Because, Jesus never says the men are wrong, yet they are. They are because of the how and the why they are doing what they are doing.

Jesus will never be sucked into that game, He slows everything down, moving away from emotion to fact. In other

words: "You are right, the law does say that."

**-John 8:7 (ESV)**

"And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

So, whichever of you hasn't missed the mark, have never sinned in your entire life, feel free to throw the first stone.

This is judgement tempered with mercy! Why? Because Jesus was the only one present who had the right to throw the first stone, and all he is doing is doodling in the sand. He isn't exercising that right.

"Listen guys, you're right, she should be stoned, but so should the guy whom you caught with her. But he's not here, So, if you are confident that your heart is so right to stand before God that you can condemn her -Throw away."

A risk? Sure, there could be some arrogant fool who thought they could, but Jesus knows the heart, and nothing happens, except as He doodles some more, they are left to ponder, to think it through.

Showing contempt perhaps toward them as the question they threw at Him was an obvious trap. Jess lets the challenge hang there.

What they found was that this was not going according to plan. Jesus had actually turned it all around and made it about them.

He's made it about my heart before God, and He's giving me an out. I can choose to throw a stone or leave. Make sure you are qualified before you throw it.

Understand that in life the biggest problem person you will face is always the one looking back at you in the mirror. That doesn't mean we do things wrong; it just means that we should be more reflective about our own heart condition than we tend to be.

Because, the love of God in Jesus is always tempering justice with mercy. It doesn't matter how well you know the law and the Book; all have sinned and somehow have come up short of God's glory.

Jesus opened the check book of grace through the life He lived and says: "I've got you covered; I'll pay that." Paid in full through the death and resurrection.

Every human being has value, even the accusers in this story. Jesus has shown

them mercy and they were smart to take it:

**-John 8:8-9 (ESV)**

"And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him."

Jesus, staying above the chaos of emotions and accusations, looking deeper into the heart of the matter, all in order to bring restoration to lost image-bearers.

How can we extend this kind of mercy? How are we already doing it? Are we?

First- Always examine yourself first. I find more success that way. It's when I spend too much time on "other-examination", rather than "self-examination", that I find my emotions driving the car all by themselves.

That leads to chaos, to an unsteady way of thinking, and then I can 't help anyone, least of all myself. If, however, we have a healthy view of ourselves before God, understanding His grace and mercy toward us, we will then have a healthy outlook toward others.

Balancing the Law (written code) with the heart of it -justice, mercy and faithfulness (remember Matthew 23) in a world which has very little of that. Never neglecting one for the other.

Back to our story as we see the older men starting to drop their stones. With age comes wisdom and humility. The young bucks, well they are a bit slower, but finally think better of it and leave also.

It's now just Jesus and the accused woman. Notice what He doesn't do. He doesn't "let her off the hook." In other words, the accusations against her were most likely true. Look at verse 10:

**-John 8:10 (ESV)**

"Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

Has no one condemned you? Executed judgement against you on these charges? No, they haven't.

Now, he doesn't just tell her to leave then and go about life. After all the whole thing was just a ruse gone bad. An attempt to trap me in something. Yet, what she did was still wrong.

How do we know, and why can we say, "it was wrong."? The Law, the moral code of God's word says so. There is an actual reference point by which to understand and know truth.

Not "your truth", "My truth", but The Truth.

In order for her to be restored, she too needs to recognize her heart before God. Much like her accusers having to examine themselves, she is being told in this statement that what you did violated God's law.

Jesus didn't say to her, "Be on your way, these were false charges." Or, "You can leave now, your excused because they were bad, and you were a victim."

Instead, it's that question of, "has anyone condemned you?" Look at what she says in response:

**-John 8:11a (ESV)**

"She said, "No one, Lord."

Don't miss that. She didn't say no one, sir, or no one Rabbi. She said, No one Lord.

A confession, repentance, acknowledgment of: "I've done something wrong, and you know it, Lord."

**-John 8:11b (ESV)**

"And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

That is grace and mercy because it is tempered with forgiveness and justice /accountability.

"From now on, sin no more." It's not free pass to do whatever, it is the free pass of salvation, and because of that, do right next time child, do right.

Truth, justice and mercy is shown as He had shown it to the men. You are pardoned, but not so you can go right back to doing whatever you want.

Don't cheapen my grace and mercy by using it as an excuse to do anything and everything.

No, and here is the lesson for us all, BECAUSE His grace has been given to us, and we are saved by faith in Christ and His work, we ought to strive to have our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees.

One of the ways in which we do that is to show mercy, because you have been shown mercy. Show grace, speak the truth in love, in the tenderness of restoration.

Acknowledge wrongs, especially your own.  
It will keep you in the attitude and  
mindset of gratitude.

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

The more you pour it out, the more your  
cup will overflow.