

# For the Living of These Days

## Session 10: Micah – Love Mercy

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*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 NIV*

### **What is Mercy?**

Definition - compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.

When it's within our power or right to punish or harm someone but we show compassion and forgiveness instead, we're demonstrating mercy.

Mercy looks beyond what a person deserves through eyes of:

- Compassion
- Kindness
- Forgiveness
- Empathy

Mercy is an extension of and expression of love.

Mercy is a characteristic of the One True God.

### **God's mercy toward us**

*"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23*

*New Revised Standard Version*

Psalm 25:10

Psalm 86:15

Ephesians 2:4

*"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,"*

*Titus 3:5*

*"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but  
according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit"*

### **God has shown us what is good! Loving mercy is a good thing. We are to follow the example of our merciful God.**

Deuteronomy 7:9

*"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant  
and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand  
generations..."*

Leviticus 19:18

*"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but  
you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD."*

## **What Micah and the prophets said about mercy**

Micah 6:8

Hosea 6:6

Zachariah 7:9

Micah 7:18

*“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.”*

## **How did we LOVE mercy?**

Love mean?

Delighting in God’s mercy toward us.

Being so grateful for God’s mercy that we delight in and long to extend mercy to others.

Our merciful actions reveal to others our merciful God.

Mercy involves sacrifice

God’s mercy for us cost Jesus His life. Jesus took the penalty and punishment that we deserved. Mercy will cost us comfort and time. It will cost us money and status. And it will give us heartaches.

But true mercy always has an element of sacrifice to it. It's the way we respond after something has been taken from us. It's how we react after we've been treated poorly.

Victor Hugo’s example of loving mercy:  
Les Miserables’ Bishop Myriel

## **What Jesus said about mercy**

*“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”* Luke 6:36

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”* Matthew 5:7.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant – Matthew 18:21-35

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats – Matthew 25:31-46

## **What the early church leaders said about mercy**

*“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”* Colossians 3:12-14.

Romans 12:8

The spiritual gift of being merciful

James 2:13

Mercy triumphs over judgment

James 3:17

Godly wisdom includes loving mercy

Jude 1:22

Be merciful to those who doubt

## **When have you found it most difficult to love mercy during the living of these days?**

Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" tells the story of Jean Valjean, a man who has just spent 19 years doing hard labor for the crime of stealing bread. As a criminal, Valjean isn't welcome anywhere. So he ends up being taken in by a local church.

Knowing that God's law requires love, charity, and hospitality, Bishop Myriel tells Valjean, "Though our lives are very humble, what we have we have to share."

In a desperate act, Valjean takes off in the middle of the night with the church's silverware and is caught by the police the next morning. When questioned about the silver, Valjean tells the authorities that the bishop gave it to him. The police take him back to the bishop to corroborate his story.

Bishop Myriel is in a difficult position. He has shown this criminal charity and has been repaid with the theft of one of the church's few extravagant possessions. He is well within his rights to tell the truth about this betrayal, and no one would question whether he did the right thing.

But instead of turning him in, the bishop grabs silver candlesticks from the church and shoves them into the criminal's hands. He tells that police that not only did he give Valjean the church's silverware, but he had also forgotten to take the candlesticks.

After the police have left, the bishop tells Valjean, "Forget not, never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man. . . . Jean Valjean, my brother: you belong no longer to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!"

Bishop Myriel acted mercifully when it seemed obvious that Valjean should be punished. Moreover, his act of compassion could have resulted in others being victimized by Valjean.

To see this situation from God's perspective, the bishop had to sacrifice his pride and righteous indignation. Valjean had already responded to his kindness by stealing from him, but this act of mercy was akin to being victimized twice. He was sorely mistreated and was now letting this person get away with it.