

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of God's mercy toward us sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Essential Doctrine: God is Merciful

Mercy refers to God's compassion and is often expressed in God withholding something, such as punishment for sin (Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:5). Both mercy and grace are undeserved, meaning that there is nothing humanity can do to earn God's mercy and grace. If one could, then it would no longer be the free gift of mercy or grace.

1 Mercy is the marvelous, undeserved removal of punishment for sin (Titus 3:5).

Imagine a usurper took a good king's kingdom. The good king raised an army and fought through the usurper's army and castle until it was only the two of them fighting. The good king defeated the usurper and won back his kingdom. However, when it came time to punish the usurper, the man said, "I deserve mercy!" Explain what is wrong with the usurper's declaration.

- ▶ Can you think of any circumstance where someone could deserve mercy?

Read Titus 3:5.

- ▶ How would you define mercy?

Read 1 Peter 3:18

- ▶ What is the purpose of God's mercy? (To bring us to God)

2 God can be merciful to us because he was unmerciful to Jesus (Rom. 3:25-26)

Imagine someone burned your house down. The police caught the arsonist. However, when the arsonist's court date came, the judge decided to have mercy on the him. How would you react? Would you consider this act of mercy a good thing?

- ▶ What accusation might someone be able to make against God?
- ▶ How would you respond to someone who accused God of ignoring our sin instead of being merciful?

Read Romans 3:25-26.

- ▶ This is a difficult passage, but it addresses this very problem. What does it mean that God passed over former sins? (i.e., God did not punish those sins justly).
- ▶ So how does God sending Jesus as a propitiation make God both just and a justifier? (i.e., God sees justice is done on Jesus).

3 We are to reflect God's mercy to others (Luke 7:47).

- ▶ Share about a time when you showed mercy to someone. What happened?
- ▶ Share about a time when you saw someone show mercy to another person or when someone showed mercy to you? Why did these people show mercy?

Read Luke 7:47.

- ▶ According to this text, why was the woman so lavish in her kindness to Jesus?
- ▶ What does this imply about the way we should treat one another?
- ▶ This theme of showing mercy because we've received mercy is prevalent in Scripture. Where else have you seen this concept in Scripture? (Ex. Matt. 5:7; 6:12,14-15; 18:21-35).
- ▶ Name a few people you know to whom you need to show mercy.
- ▶ What are some specific examples of ways you can show mercy this week?
- ▶ In the process of showing mercy, how can you try to show your mercy is a reflection of the mercy Jesus showed to you?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How has this lesson helped you marvel at God's mercy?
- ▶ How can you help others marvel at God's mercy?