



Extravagant Mercy, Luke 18:9-14

Extravagant Mercy

- In a small cemetery of a parish churchyard in Olney, England, stands a granite tombstone with this inscription: “John Newton, pastor, once an infidel (*nonbeliever in God*) & Libertine (*morally corrupt*), a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy.”
 - You may not remember his name, but all of us know the song he wrote as a testimony of his life: “*Amazing Grace*”
 - This hymn would never have been possible without the Extravagant Mercy of God

Extravagant Mercy

- Mercy is the compassionate treatment of those in distress, especially when it is within one's power to punish or harm them
 - Mercy is unearned and undeserved goodness shown
 - Mercy appears in the Bible as it relates to forgiveness or withholding punishment
 - **Psalm 51:1 NLT**, "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins."

Extravagant Mercy

- God also shows his mercy for those who are suffering through healing, comfort, the alleviation of suffering and caring about those in distress
 - Jesus' healing came from His compassion flowing through mercy
 - **Matthew 14:14 NIV**, "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick."
- **Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT**, "22 The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. 23 Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning."

Extravagant Mercy

- Mercy is the fruit of compassion, a gift given to someone who is suffering by someone acting with compassion
 - **Micah 6:8 NIV**, “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.”
 - God makes His extravagant mercy available to all
 - But because God created us with the ability to choose, we have the “*power*” to accept or reject God’s mercy

Extravagant Mercy

- The parable today will not hit you as hard as the Jewish people at this time
 - The Pharisees were admired and looked upon favorably
 - If there was anyone God would accept it was the Pharisees

Extravagant Mercy

- The parable today will not hit you as hard as the Jewish people at this time
 - The Tax Collector was the most hated man in Israel
 - Tax collectors in the Bible were Jews who were working for the hated Romans
 - It was common knowledge that the tax collectors cheated the people they collected from and because of their skimming off the top, the tax collectors were well-to-do
 - If there was anyone beyond the forgiveness of God, it was the Tax Collector

Extravagant Mercy

- Terms defined
 - We were created for **Righteousness** - is the quality of being right in the eyes of God, including character (*nature*), conscience (*attitude*), conduct (*action*), and command (*word*)
 - Righteousness is based upon God's standard because He is the ultimate Lawgiver
 - Since we are not righteous, we must seek **Justification** - is an act of God whereby He pronounces a sinner to be righteous because of their faith in Christ

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- “9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.”
 - Why are they coming to the temple?
 - **Romans 14:11-12 AMP**, “11 As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.” 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
 - **Isaiah 64:6 NLT**, “6 We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags (*beyond gross*).”

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

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 - Why are they coming to the temple?
 - We are instructed to seek God’s rule in our lives
 - **Proverbs 21:21 NLT**, “21 Whoever pursues (*God’s*) righteousness and unfailing love will find life, righteousness, and honor.”
 - **Matthew 6:33 NLT**, “33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- “9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.”
 - Jesus presents us two extremes of people seeking God’s righteousness
 - Pharisee
 - **Matthew 23:25 NIV**, “25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.”

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

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 - Jesus presents us two extremes of people seeking God’s righteousness
 - Pharisee
 - **Matthew 6:16 NLT**, “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.”

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- “9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.”
 - Jesus presents us two extremes of people seeking God’s righteousness
 - Tax collector
 - Jesus used the commonly held opinion of tax collectors, **Matthew 18:17**, “treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector”
 - They were thought to be beyond forgiveness or redemption

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- “11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’”
 - The Pharisee separate himself from the sinners
 - He would have been well dressed, stood tall, face toward heaven with arms lifted up, praying loudly for all to hear
 - What did the Pharisee ask God for?
 - He approached God in his own confidence that his righteousness acts were enough for God to accept

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- 13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”
 - The tax collector stood at a distance, did not consider himself worthy to even approach close to God
 - He would not even look up to heaven like a child that knows they have done wrong and will not look you in the eye
 - He continually beat his breast as a sign to himself of the sinful heart within him
 - What did he ask for?

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

- 14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves (*before God*) will be humbled, and those who humble themselves (*before God*) will be exalted (*lifted up or held in high regard*).”
 - Justification or a right standing before God, is God declaring us righteous
 - Justification has to do with God’s declaration about the sinner, not any change within the sinner
 - Justification does not make anyone righteous; it simply declares him to be not guilty before God and therefore treated as righteous

Scripture – Luke 18:9-14 NIV

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 - God chooses to look upon us through the righteousness of Jesus Christ
 - **Romans 5:1-2 NIV**, “Therefore, since we have been justified (*NLT - made right in God’s sight*) through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.”

A calloused heart makes it difficult to sense the extravagant mercy available to us by God

- Leprosy is an infectious disease that causes severe nerve damage in the arms, legs, and skin areas around your body
 - You can't feel the hurt caused by injury, so it gets infected
 - Sin is an infectious disease that form callouses around your heart muting the voice of God making it easier to resist
 - This is why we must deal with the sin in our lives quickly
 - This is why we must look out from own lives with our eyes of mercy

A calloused heart makes it difficult to sense the extravagant mercy available to us by God

- **Hebrews 3:15 NLT**, “15 Remember what it says: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.”
- **Exodus 8:15 NIV**, “But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.”

A calloused heart makes it difficult to sense the extravagant mercy available to us by God

- The Pharisee had the calloused heart of self-righteousness when he approached God and God rejected him
- The Tax Collector's heart was open and raw as he humbly approached God in faith seeking mercy and God accepted him
- **Hebrews 3:12 NIV**, "See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful (*rebellious*), unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God."

There is no one so vile, so sinful that they are outside of God's mercy

- One of the greatest lies Satan tells us is we have exceeded God's mercy, forgiveness, love
- Why would God extend mercy to those who made a living off of denying mercy to others?
- It is rather outrageous that God shows mercy so easily to such a one like this Tax Collector
 - Notice he didn't promise to change or find a new occupation
 - God's mercy did not come to him because of what he promised but simply because he came humbly seeking it

There is no one so vile, so sinful that they are outside of God's mercy

- True change flows through God's mercy received
- King David was an adulterer, murderer, sin concealer but received God's mercy when he confessed his sin to God and repented of it
- Saul was a man who hated and tried to destroy the church, arresting Christians to be persecuted, yet he found God's mercy on a dusty Damascus road

Extravagant Mercy - Questions

- What sin debt have you been carrying simply because you do not believe you deserve God's mercy?
- What sin debt against you are you holding in your heart because you do not want God's mercy extended to them?
- Have you allowed callouses to form around your heart making it difficult to hear God's voice today?
- How shall you pray to a wildly merciful God?

Extravagant Mercy - Questions

- How shall we live, having learned of such a boundless mercy?
- Do you hear God's voice this morning calling you into His extravagant mercy?
- As Jesus was hanging on the cross about to take His last breath, He asked something of His Heavenly Father
 - **Luke 23:34 NIV**, "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing
 - This is what He is offering you this morning, extravagant mercy



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