

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

21 September 2025

Be Merciful

Text: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful". *Luke 6:36.*

You were created to be like God.

You are to reflect the moral image of God in your character.

This was basic in the teaching of Jesus our Lord.

He states this plainly in our text: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

This is another of those basic ingredients that must be in a life if it is to withstand the storms that come to test it.

What did our Lord mean by this word merciful?

The word could be translated "compassionate."

It means to be sympathetic with another person, to grieve and sorrow with them, to be responsive to a need that is seen in their life.

In connection with this admonition, Jesus makes three other admonitions.

Each of them brings before us situations in which we need to practice mercy.

We must be merciful with the faults of others.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned."

These two admonitions go together, comprising the one admonition to be merciful with the faults and shortcomings of others.

"Judge" could be translated "criticize."

Our word criticize comes from the Greek word that is translated here "judge".

It means to express a censorious spirit, to be critical of others, to judge them.

"Condemn" comes after judging.

It means to pass sentence, to assign a penalty.

It is acting on the judgment one has formed.

Ultimately, to "judge" and "condemn" are the work of God alone.

He alone has the knowledge necessary to make judgments and pass sentences.

Everyone we will meet in life will have some flaw.

All of us have sinned and continue to come short of God's ideal for our lives.

Every one of us is in great need of the mercy of God.

We need for God to be patient and sympathetic with our flaws, failures, and shortcomings.

Jesus, gave a parable about the man who received God's mercy but was unwilling to extend mercy to his fellow man.

In the end God withdrew his mercy and turned him over to the tormentors to collect all that he owed.

Yet how many of us are guilty of relating to other people as through we are morally superior, as through we are their judges?

Parents can fall into this error in relating to their children.

Marriage partners can tear a marriage apart by living this way.

Many churches have been destroyed by people who did not know the meaning of "mercy".

We must be merciful with the offenses of others.

Sooner or later some of the flaws in others become personal.

They act toward us in such a way that we are tempted to do more than judge and condemn; we are tempted to seek vengeance.

It is to this situation that the Lord speaks when he says, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven".

The meaning of forgiveness.

The word Jesus uses for "forgiveness" in our text is graphic.

It is the opposite of "judge" and "condemn."

It means "to pardon," "to set free".

The root idea of the word is "to loose from."

So, to forgive people is to release them from responsibility for whatever they have done against you.

Can we forgive if those who sin against us don't seek our forgiveness?

Technically, we cannot forgive until they seek forgiveness, but we can be forgiving.

We can have forgiveness ready in our hearts and even be seeking opportunities to extend it to those who have wronged us.

This is surely true of God.

The reason for the forgiveness.

Forgiveness is encouraged because we will need forgiveness ourselves: "And you will be forgiven."

Nothing will encourage forgiveness more than a little self-awareness.

The person who refuses to be forgiving toward the offenses of others is manifesting the worst kind of pride.

Such an attitude suggests that that person feels he or she will never stand in need of such forgiveness.

Surely we must practice mercy when we are offended and extend forgiveness to the offender.

When we do, we are acting like our glorious heavenly Father.

We must be merciful with the needs of others.

In the last statement of this paragraph, mercy is seen in yet another life situation.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

We are to be a giving people.

"Give" is a present-time imperative in the Greek text.

This means that such generosity is a mandate from the Lord.

It also means that this is to be a habit.

Jesus is not admonishing us to be supportive of the church in this text, but rather he is urging upon us "giving" as a lifestyle.

Whenever we meet a fellow human who has a need, we are to be merciful.

We are to respond to the need according to our ability.

Again God is our pattern.

In the promise of wisdom that he give, James refers to God as the one "who gives generously to all without finding fault."

Our God is a liberal giver.

The promise to the giver is staggering in its implication.

You will be rewarded for your giving with the same measure that you use in giving : "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

If you give encouragement, it will come back to you.

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

Showing mercy is a principle on which you can build your life.

Spread mercy abroad in the land.

Such mercy will be a welcome change in this broken, suffering world.

A merciful life can be confident when the storms begin to come.

If we have given mercy, we will receive the mercy of the Lord in this life and in the life to come.

May God help us to live this way and reap the rewards promised.