



## Be Merciful – Week 5

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Overview

In the fifth message of *Be Happy*, we discover that when we become vessels of mercy, we bring new life and expand our opportunity to receive more from God.

#### Discussion Questions

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

The definition of mercy in the original Greek word – *eleēmōn* (pr. ella-ay-mon) – implies actively showing compassion. Mercy is when we show compassion on God’s behalf. It demonstrates kindness even when others may not deserve it. Mercy is an action of unexpected love and compassion extended to someone undeserving.

- Why is it sometimes difficult to show kindness to others when we don’t believe they deserve it?
- Do you think it’s more difficult or less difficult to show mercy to someone you are in a close relationship with? Why?

In **Ephesians 2:4-5**, the Apostle Paul encourages us, **“But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”**

Jesus, who is God incarnate, is rich in mercy. Even when we fail and hurt His heart with our sins, shortcomings, and mistakes, He chooses to give us another chance because of His great love for us.

- Why does God choose to show us mercy?

In **John 8**, Jesus is teaching in the temple in Jerusalem when the religious leaders burst in with a woman who was “caught in adultery.” They put her in the middle of everyone and say in **verses 4-5**: ... **“Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?”**

They continued testing Jesus until He replied in **verse 7**: ... **“He who is without sin among you, let them throw a stone at her first.”** Each person was convicted and walked away, leaving only Jesus and the woman left. **“‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ and Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’ ” (John 8:10-11)**

Jesus demonstrates and exudes mercy when, legally, the woman should have been stoned. He doesn’t give her permission to continue her sin, but He does give her the power to overcome and

walk in victory. When Jesus showed mercy, the entire crowd came face to face with their own sin and need for mercy and walked away changed.

- How can we help others walk in victory when they have been shamed?

### Three Lessons from Jesus on Mercy:

1. Mercy sees the bigger picture.

The Pharisees saw the problem. Jesus saw the person. Jesus saw the pain in the woman's life. He saw her past and present, and He saw her value as a human being. Mercy gives us eyes to see beyond the current situation and recognize that everyone has value.

- Why is it important, as followers of Jesus, that we open our eyes to see beyond the shortcomings of others?

2. Mercy does something...now.

When Jesus shows mercy, He steps into the middle of the situation and brings reality and understanding to the conflict. He spoke up for the woman and challenged the Pharisees to examine themselves.

Judgment declares...	Mercy declares...
"You're wrong!"	"You're loved!"
"How dare you do that!"	"I could have done the same thing!"
"They got what they deserved!"	"God gave them another chance!"
"Shame on you!"	"Shame off you!"

We have the opportunity to be vessels of mercy and bring life.

- How do the above statements challenge past behavior? How will the mercy declarations inspire future behavior?
- What are some ways we can show mercy to others?

3. Mercy brings new life.

When those surrounding the woman were calling her for judgement, Jesus brought her mercy. Mercy points us to an abundant life and brings a new beginning. When we extend mercy to others, we receive it from others and increase our capacity to receive more from God.

- Why does extending mercy towards others affect what we receive from God?

## Life Challenge

When you catch yourself viewing someone with a worldly perspective that judges and does not show mercy, remember how Jesus views you and others every day. Extend the mercy and grace God gives you to others. **"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)**

## Prayer

*Thank You, Jesus, for not only giving us mercy every day, but also for modeling it. Give us the strength and wisdom to extend mercy to others and open our eyes to see the bigger picture and not just the current situation. Help us to live out the Beatitude in Matthew 5:7 and open our hearts to receive more from You. Amen. Pray for the specific needs of the group.*