

For the coming week:

To help you extend the lesson and to encourage you to make it personal, take time during the coming week to consider the following items:

Read God's condemnation of Israel in Hosea 1-4 and compare His description of the nation's rebellion with His response in Hosea 11:8-9. Consider how He acted with the nation in ways that both addressed their idolatry while also satisfying His love for them.

Reflect on the ways in which you believe you have experienced God's mercy.

Act on your reading and reflection by identifying one way you can be a more merciful person in your relationships.

THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS

Mercy, Matthew 23:23

Sunday 9.22.19 (am)
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“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees”¹

Rather than exalting God through the spiritual authority they claimed, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for exalting themselves at the expense of the people they claimed to teach and lead (*Matthew 23:1-12*). In particular, Jesus censured them for neglecting “the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness” (*Matthew 23:23*).

To appreciate the seriousness of Jesus’ accusation, we need to consider mercy’s place in the Bible:

Mercy is a defining characteristic of God

God’s mercy seeks a relationship

***God’s mercy overwhelmingly counterbalances
– but does not disregard – His justice***

***God expects His people to be merciful like
Him***

***The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates
the look – and challenge – of mercy***

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

Applications

- Few people intend to be merciless, yet judgmental and merciless attitudes commonly exist.
- Cultivate humility; self-righteousness and mercy cannot coexist.
- We cannot be merciful people if we do not actively love the people around us.
- Our mercy must extend to the hurting, powerless, and marginalized people around us; we must even extend it to our enemies.
- We must advocate for God’s standards of behavior, but we must do it in ways that connects people to His mercy rather than merely His judgment.

Notes
