



Calvary of Albuquerque

Healing Misery with Mercy - John 5:1-16

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

One of Jesus' most distinguishing characteristics in His earthly ministry was His mercy toward people who were hurting. This is not astonishing, for the prophet Micah announced that "God delights in mercy" (Micah 7:18). Jesus standing among the squalid misery of sickness and hopelessness while at a feast in Jerusalem is a perfect setting to show how Christians can show mercy to a world in misery. But be warned: not everyone will be sympathetic to your cause!

OUTLINE

- I. Gather Frequently (v. 1)
- II. Observe Compassionately (vv. 2-6a)
- III. Confront Honestly (vv. 6b-9, 14)
- IV. Expect Adversity (vv. 9-16)



Making It More Than a Sermon:

1. Think of an episode in your life when you were miserable. What things did you do to make it better? How did you get out of it? What did you get out of it?
2. Find a family or an individual to help this week. Suggestions: take over meals, do yard work, clean their house, or simply sit, listen and encourage.
3. Have you ever been "burned" while trying to help someone else? Did it make you hardened to any future risk? How did this "backfiring" effect prevent Jesus from any further merciful ventures? (See John 5:18-21.)

DETAILED NOTES

Mercy is a gift that is wonderful to receive, but harder to dispense. It is not a natural human trait. We admire strength and courage, but have trouble with those who require help. "God helps those who help themselves" is not in the Bible, it's a saying of Benjamin Franklin in "Poor Richard's Almanac." God is the hope of the helpless (Psalm 10:17), and mercy is one of God's attributes. It is mentioned close to 300 times in the Bible, revealing that mercy is a priority (Psalm 34:6, Ephesians 2:1-4). Bethesda means place of mercy, but it was not a merciful place, it was a hangout of misery. When the Romans ruled, mercy was considered a weakness, but courage, strength and justice were glorified. According to a Roman philosopher, "Mercy is the disease of the soul." These views are recorded and revealed in Romans 1:28-31. However, Jesus healed the body and the spirit, and He calls His followers to do the same. (Matthew 5:7)

- I. Gather Frequently (v.1)
 - A. Probably at the Passover
 - B. Judaism far from perfect, but Jesus limited to working through it
 1. Gathering as the Biblical Law required (Galatians 4:4)
 2. Uses it to further the Father's agenda
 - C. Get to know the needs of others (Galatians 6:10)
 - D. Why do people go to church?
 1. Obligation
 2. Social
 3. For God and His Glory (the Word, worship, contributions)
 4. God can use us to minister to others (Hebrews 10:25)
- II. Observe Compassionately (vv. 2-6a) How we see people
 - A. Pool of Bethesda
 1. 2-3 feet deep
 2. Large rectangular pool
 3. Used to wash animals, especially sheep, before they were sacrificed at the temple
 4. 300 people gathered on most days, 3,000 people on feast days
 5. Underground spring bubbled up, story of an angel stirring water and healing
 6. The people were impotent, sick people, without the strength to help themselves
 - B. Jesus saw (*idon-* to look at, often perceiving more than what you see)

1. Scanned crowd and came to rest on this one man
2. Sensitive to needs (Matthew 9:36)
- C. Christian church merciful
 1. Works of mercy (hospitals, orphanages, and natural catastrophes)
 2. Ask God to keep us sensitized to what we see
- III. Confront Honestly (vv. 6b-9, 14)
 - A. "Do you want to be made well?"
 1. Used to the lifestyle
 2. Instant healing would mean giving up a good living
 - B. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."
 1. Eternal suffering as a result of unrepentant sin would be worse
 2. Not just physical healing, but dealt with the soul
- IV. Expect Adversity (vv. 9-16)
 - A. Pharisees had become list makers
 1. Man made regulations were added to the biblical regulations
 2. No joy in the healing
 - B. Hard-hearted legalists are all about the rules, not mercy and doing good
 - C. Ask for eyes to see those hurting around you (Matthew 25:35-40)

Figures Referenced: Charles Spurgeon, Richard Dawkins, JA Finley, St. Augustine

Publications Referenced: "Poor Richard's Almanac," by Benjamin Franklin

Cross References: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 10:17; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 9:36; Matthew 23:23; Matthew 25:35-40; Romans 1:28-31; Ephesians 2:1-4; Galatians 4:4; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 10:25;

Hebrew terms: *Bethesda*-place of mercy

Greek terms: *idon*- to look at