
Words of Truth

Be Ye Merciful

By: Brian A. Yeager

Many years ago I sinned in a situation wherein I had no mercy upon an individual. While it may seem silly to some, this situation has remained on my mind since the day it happened. I went into a Taco Bell to place an order for my family. I could tell, from the way things were going, that the order was going to be wrong. To make a long story short, it was wrong. I had built up a level of irritation wherein I lost control and showed no mercy on the individual that messed up my order. I apologized, confessed my sins (lacking self-control [Galatians 5:22-23], carnal anger [James 1:20], and lacking mercy [James 3:17]) publicly (James 5:19-20) and privately (Psalms 32:5). Since then, I have worked diligently to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance (Acts 26:20). Nonetheless, this situation still haunts me.

If I can get so angry to show no mercy over tomatoes on a burrito, how can I expect mercy for my transgressions? I am certainly thankful that God allows us [Christians] to confess, repent, and receive forgiveness (I John 1:7-9). Aren't you? Aren't you glad God is merciful (Joel 2:13 and Hebrews 8:12)? Can you think of situations wherein you should have shown mercy and yet had no mercy? What does God teach us about being merciful?

The Scriptural Instructions Regarding Our Need To Be Merciful

Take time to study and consider the following Scriptures: *"The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh... He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God... Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy... Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful... Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye... If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment"* (Proverbs 11:17, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:7, Luke 6:36, Colossians 3:12-13, and James 2:8-13).

Our Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy (James 5:11). He expects us to be like Him (Ephesians 5:1). This requires, outside of this article, for us to study through the Scriptures and see the pattern He has left for us to follow in being merciful. We should constantly ask ourselves if we are acting as God would in each situation we find ourselves.

Considering Some Of The Pattern Of God's Mercy

God's mercy is an important component in our eternal salvation (Luke 1:76-79, I Peter 1:3, and Jude 1:21). We should understand that without His mercy, those of us who have sinned in our lives would perish in our sins (Ephesians 2:1-17). However, His mercy is conditional. Transgression of His will, without repentance, is not met with mercy. Notice what our Lord says regarding this: *"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Hebrews 10:26-31).

We should be able to see that being merciful does NOT include being compassionate towards those that continue in sin. Such people do not have the mercy of God (Romans 6:1-2) nor should they have ours (Luke 17:3-4). Mercy does come into play though when we consider how we deal with those who err spiritually (Matthew 18:15-35).

When we step into carnal matters, such as my Taco Bell incident, we should also consider the pattern of God. I did not know if the man making the food erred, the person placing the order erred, or even if the computer malfunctioned (Proverbs 18:13). Even if I did know those things, I should have been merciful because such a small matter means nothing in the comparison of a person's eternal salvation. My actions ruined my influence of at least one person there over NOTHING. Shame on me! I should have applied a merciful attitude in the spirit of application to realizing the principles of I Corinthians 10:27-33 regardless of how upset I was over the matter. God wanted to see my mercy more than my anger for sure.

God Desires To See Us Be Merciful

*"O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. **For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice;** and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me"* (Hosea 6:4-7).

Conclusion

I will conclude with something for us to study on your own: *"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (Matthew 9:10-13).