

The Merciful Heart

November 8-14, 2026

It's sometimes difficult for us to reckon with the concept of mercy, the act of withholding punishment or consequences from someone who's done wrong. In a culture that is increasingly angry and anxious, mercy is seen as weakness or an excusing of bad behavior. But mercy is one of the most powerful ways we can love people.

Just as God was merciful to us when we didn't deserve it, we also can love people who have not earned our love. And, as we will see in this session, mercy reaches out to people who are forgotten by our society to show them the dignity and life-changing love of our savior.

WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO: SESSION 5, MATTHEW 5:7

READ MATTHEW 5:7.

Matt defined mercy as "the giving of undeserved acceptance and blessing." Think about the word "undeserved."

When have you been an undeserving recipient of kindness or mercy?

What was your reaction to that kindness or mercy?

Matt talked about "the fringes"—the edge of society filled with people who are "farthest from God imaginable." The Bible pulls no punches. Before receiving the mercy of God, we were his enemies. We were all on the fringes! "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4–5)

If the mercy of God is his "giving of undeserved acceptance and blessing," then God's mercy is an unspeakable kindness. And if "God's kindness is intended to lead [people] to repentance" (Rom 2:4), then we would be wise to ask ourselves:

To what degree do our life and ministry imitate the kindness of God?

What priority do you place on kindness in your interactions with strangers?

With the "sinners and tax collectors" of our day? With those on the fringes?

In what ways can you practice extending the mercy of God to others today?

Take a few minutes to meditate on the phrase, "Mercy triumphs over judgment." Reflect on the kindness and the mercy and heart of God in restoring the hope that was once lost due to sin. And take a few moments to consider that, because you're in Christ, you are called to show his mercy to others.