

### 3.19 / Showing Mercy / James 2:10-13

Have you ever been/felt in desperate need of mercy?

Speeding ticket / CASA

**2:10-11** Whole law – keep it. You break a bit, you break the whole.

We want to say, my particular sin (show favoritism to the rich – that is looking down upon the poor) “no big deal.” The Bible doesn’t give us that option. No matter how we break the law – we are at the core – saying I choose my way rather than God’s way. I choose me over God. In essence – I worship me and live for me rather than worshipping and living for God.

Any choice I make - whether momentary and isolated or completely ongoing – any choice we make that has us worshipping ourselves rather than God is breaking God’s law – God’s way – God’s design. We are all lawbreakers. We have rebelled against God. Outside of mercy from God we are headed for eternal punishment. **We are in desperate need of mercy.**

Think unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23). “Please be patient. I’ll pay back everything.”

**2:12** James mentions the “**Law that gives freedom**”: This is the same law that James spoke of in 1:25 – perfect law – The law fulfilled through and taught by Jesus

- Mt 22:37-29 Love God, Love others
- John 3:16 whoever believes in him
- John 14:23 love me – obey teaching – I will be with them
- Gen 15:6 – Abraham believed
- Gen 22:18 – “because you obeyed”

2:8 – Royal Law – love others – royal because it came straight from King Jesus – to obey Him is to love him. To love Him is to believe in him.

Faith and obedience are inextricably linked. What Jesus teaches and what James emphasizes is

- the faith of obedience
- the obedience of faith
- faithful obedience
- obedient faith

**The perfect law that gives freedom is faith/obedience.** This two are so wrapped up together in scripture that you can’t really tell where one ends and the other begins.

Quantum entanglement occurs when two particles become inextricably linked, and whatever happens to one immediately affects the other,

#### Faith/Obedience

1. It’s **faith** in the **work and person** of Jesus Christ.

- His **work** is unmerited mercy poured out on sinners, people in desperate need for him.
- His **life** displayed this in countless ways – unmerited mercy poured out on sinners: prostitutes, tax collectors, the demon possessed, the rich, the poor, the foreigner, the man, the woman, the child. Those who were begging for mercy and those who did not even have the strength or the fortitude to ask for it (i.e. Zacchaeus and Matthew).

Unmerited mercy poured out on sinners. That's the work of Jesus that we're putting faith in.

2. Faith/Obedience – It's **obedience** which means we live out the mercy that we've received. As we have received unmerited mercy from God, we not extend unmerited mercy to other fellow sinners.

*So speak and so act* (2:12) – law that brings freedom – law of faith/obedience

#### More on the Unmerciful Servant – failure to extend mercy

He did not speak and act as one who was going to be judged by the law of faith/obedience. He spoke and acted as one who was going to be judged by production and he'd better produce – he was looking out for himself – striving to build up himself – protect and live for himself.

#### More on the Unmerciful Servant – consequence

He did not live out the mercy (that he had been offered) so he received swift and heavy punishment. This is a sobering story.

It is in line with what James says in **13a**.

**If you're not living mercy, you don't get mercy.** That's challenging... and a little scary.

In order to keep contemplating this passage I want to play around with two phrases:

**Get Mercy. Live Mercy.**

When you **get** mercy, you **live** mercy. If you don't **live** mercy, you don't **get** mercy. Getting mercy and living mercy are **inextricably linked**.

#### Get Mercy

By "get" mercy I mean two things:

- Understand mercy – Needed, unmerited, from God through faith in Jesus
- Receive mercy – faith in Jesus

Now remember... for Jesus, **faith and obedience** are inextricably linked... **"getting" mercy** (understand it and receive it through faith) **means living mercy** (also inextricably linked)

#### Live Mercy

Living mercy is extending the same unmerited mercy that was poured on us **to** those around us. Those who are different, suspect, troubled, lowly, deceived, hurting – those who – by our judgment don't deserve mercy or perhaps need far more than we can even begin to offer.

*Living mercy* is extending to others unmerited mercy. Get Mercy. Live Mercy.

Do you get mercy? Do you understand it?

Mercy declares that you aren't worthy. That's why it's called Mercy rather than just payment. You don't deserve what it is that you long for; you're not entitled to it. This informs you of what you already know deep down but it comes in stark contrast to a deeply held American value: "you can do whatever you set your mind to.", "you deserve great things."

You cannot build yourself up high enough and strong enough for the ultimate victory that you seek. You're pursuit of self-worship will crumble because you're not worthy of worship and somewhere deep down you know that. **But** you/we pitefully run after it any way – hopelessly seeking to prove that we are worthy.

Understand your need for mercy. Give up the endless futile battle to build yourself up enough. Turn from your worship of self and **receive** the mercy of God.

To understand mercy is to declare before God, "I need it."

To receive mercy is to declare before God, "I'll take it."

Get Mercy (that is understand it and receive it)

When you understand mercy and receive mercy you will **live mercy**. Knowing unmerited mercy you will no longer see others as objects of judgment but people (like you) who need mercy.

**13b** - *Mercy triumphs over judgment*. That's what Jesus did on the cross. His mercy triumphed over the judgment that we deserve. Our mercy on others can lead them to that same triumph.

Dwight Pinnock – *lives out the mercy that was extended to him. Through his actions others are led to receive the mercy of God. Mercy triumphs!*

Now when you live out mercy, you'll see that it is costly.

When you feel the cost, you'll be reminded of the cost that Jesus paid and you will understand it; you'll **get mercy** at a deeper level.

When you get mercy at a deeper level, you'll live it at a deeper level and it will cost you at a deeper level... etc. Get Mercy → Live Mercy → Get Mercy...

If you get mercy and live mercy, it will probably wreck the life you know.

But it will definitely give you the life which your heart longs for and your creator made you for.

**Reflection:**

Do you need the mercy from God?

Do you understand the mercy God offers through Jesus?

Have you received God's mercy through faith in Jesus?

How would God have you live mercy more deeply this week?