

I Desire Mercy and not Sacrifice
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Introduction: We should often ask: “*What does God want?*”

- A. Men often assume they know what God thinks and wants. **(Isa 55:8-9)**
 - 1. When we are moved by pride we can think we speak for God.
 - 2. One of the greatest mistakes of the proud is to substitute the outward (that which man sees) for the inward (that which God sees). **(Ps 109:15-18)**
- B. The worldly man is puzzled by this and often fights those who try to teach them.
 - 1. Sometimes the battle between the “liberal” and “conservative” is not what it appears. Men’s labels are often not accurate. **(Zec 7:9-12)**
 - 2. Satan will always win the “PR war.” Things are not always what they appear at first sight. **(Mt 7:21-23)**

I. God’s appeal to fallen Israel

- A. God wants us to know Him and his character. **(Hos 6:1-3)**
 - 1. We must first be humbled in order to learn about our God. **(Deut 8:15-16)**
 - 2. God wants us to know with certainty that He is merciful. God is not just merciful, God is “the Father of mercies...” **(2 Cor. 1:3).**

Mercy -"the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it."

- 3. The Psalmist states, “His mercy is everlasting,” (Ps. 100:5)
 - 4. Moses had experienced this mercy and prayed to God with confidence on the basis of His mercy! **(Num 14:18-19)**
 - B. Our failure to know God will result in frequent failures. **(Hos 6:4-6)**
 - 1. Have you been a “yo-yo” Christian? **(2 Cor 4:1)**
 - 2. When we fail to see the mercy of God then we will often be overwhelmed.
 - C. God wants us to know that sacrifices cannot replace a merciful heart.
 - 1. Some of the most knowledgeable men in God’s law can be the harshest.
 - 2. True mercy will teach and rebuke. Mercy is not a cowardly watering down of God’s word. **(Mk 10:21-22)**
 - 3. When we are tempted to pride, we must keep God in sight. **(1 Cor 8:1-3)**
 - 4. What does God really want? **(Mic 6:6-8)**
 - 5. What God wants is not easy! Do we understand this?
 - 6. This is not a rebuke of sacrifices but rather a reminder of where to place the emphasis! Our worship can be for us and not for God.

II. Jesus defense of His evangelism

- A. God’s power in Jesus was shown though acts of mercy to the helpless. **(Mt 9:27; 12:7-10; 20:30, 34)**
 - 1. God wants us to see that we are spiritually like those with physical disabilities.
 - 2. It is this mercy that God opens the hearts of men.
- B. Jesus went to those who needed Him and who would receive Him.

1. There were some who were openly sinful. Many tax collectors were covetous, dishonest men. **(Mt 18:17)**
 2. This group of people did not try to hide their condition. They would not be tempted to play the hypocrite.
 3. Those that hid sin also needed Jesus but would not see or admit it. **(Jn 9:39-41)**
- C. Matthew wanted others to find the mercy of God. **(Mk 2:14-17)**
1. Jesus was doing the work of God and found strong resistance from those who called themselves God's people.
 2. In some churches an evangelist will face strong opposition if he has success in converting others of a different background.
 3. It can be a challenge for a church to truly receive and support new converts. We must also show mercy to the unmerciful. **(Titus 1:16)**
 4. It is not uncommon for the evangelist to be attacked for the weaknesses of the new converts or his work ignored or criticized if they fall away.
 5. Those who participate in evangelism often find themselves in a work isolated from what other Christians are truly interested in.
 6. Do we really know the God of mercy? **(Mt 9:12-13)**
 7. Are we merciful towards the lost and new converts?

III. Jesus conflicts over the Sabbath

- A. The Pharisees often had conflicts with Jesus over the Sabbath.
1. Jesus welcomed this conflict because He knew these men had a fundamental problem. He did not just whisper about them in the background.
 2. He sought to appeal to them through mercy. **(Mt 23:23)**
- B. When we fail to see mercy we can easily miss the meaning of God's word. **(Mt 12:1-8)**
1. What was the correct interpretation and application of God's word?
 2. Some pervert this passage to encourage lawlessness. **(Mt 7:21-23)**
 3. Jesus makes another attempt to appeal through mercy to their hardened hearts. **(Mt 12:9-14)**
- C. We must be careful to follow the whole council of God.
1. Have we limited God's word to a few favorite issues?
 2. Are we really the people that God is seeking? **(Mt 5:7)**
 3. Who are we really like? **(Col 3:12; Jas 3:17)**

Conclusion: Mercy has infinite value in the judgment day? **(Jas 2:13)**