

LSE 4-25-2021

This morning I want to take a look at two passages from James that mention “mercy.”

James 2:12-17

¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

James 3:13, 17

¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

Isn't it interesting that mercy is one of the characteristics of the wisdom that comes from above. Being peaceable, gentle and full of mercy are signs of Godly wisdom. Our society and much of western society seems to be headed the opposite direction. We often seem to favor confrontation, polarization and perpetuating conflict rather than truly resolving conflict and giving others the benefit of the doubt. If someone we don't agree with says something that could be taken three different ways, and one of them is offensive - that's often what we latch onto. That's pretty much the opposite of Godly wisdom.

What does this have to do with celebrating the Lord's Supper? Motivation and example. Jesus' sacrifice is the reason we can receive mercy. It is also the reason we can show mercy. Many people show by their actions that they don't deserve our mercy. Jesus' death reminds us that we have received mercy that we definitely didn't deserve, either.

The passage we started with from James chapter two reminds us that mercy is more than words. That can be a hard thing when it is our turn to give mercy. But it is a wonderful thing when it is us receiving God's mercy.

Prayer:

Precious Father, thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus and the mercy you show to us because of it. Please enable us to participate in this remembrance in a worthy manner. We confess that we are unworthy on our own. Thank you for forgiving us, cleansing us and clothing us with Your righteousness. Please bless the bread that reminds us of Jesus' real physical human body - how He lived perfectly and yet suffered so much for our benefit. Please bless the juice that reminds us of Jesus' blood, of Him giving His life for us and how He used His own blood to purchase us. Father, with this remembrance we declare again that we are yours. Help us to

remember to show mercy to others the way you show it to us each day. In Jesus holy and precious name we pray, amen.