

- A. TELL STORIES: Dennis Pettigrew (1983) and Gabby
 - a. “People don’t play with Gabby because she’s different”
 - b. **SLIDE—PICTURES OF PEOPLE** There are always those in our midst who we will need to show mercy to who don’t look like us, act like us, talk like us or even deserve mercy
 - i. How will we treat them? The undeserving, the marginalized
- B. Why listen to this message? Because mercy to the marginalized, compassion to the needy is a REQUIREMENT of being a Christian
 - a. Keep in mind: this parable is a response to the question: What must I do to inherit eternal life?
 - b. “mercy” used more than 250 times in the Bible (depending on translation)
 - c. Mercy is important to God and central to our identities as Christians---YES, I SAID IDENTITIES-----why? Well, I’ll get to that a bit later
- C. This passage gives us a radical new paradigm on how to show mercy in an merciless world
- D. When asked a question, Jesus was fond of responding with a question. This passage asks us three questions this morning.
- E. **SLIDE—QUESTIONS Who needs mercy? Why can’t we show mercy? How can we show mercy?**
- F. **SLIDE--Who needs mercy?**
 - a. Simply—those left on their own on the side of the road—but who is this?
 - i. You can tell if someone is on the side of the road by how many people walk by them in life (like Gabby and Dennis Pettigrew)
 - ii. How often are their physical needs ignored?
 - iii. How often are their social needs ignored?
 - iv. Who is there for them when they suffer?
 - v. These are the oppressed, the marginalized, the suffering, those enduring injustice
 - b. Jesus here is saying more than even that
 - c. Those who need mercy are those who especially don’t look, act, or talk like us---it’s often someone or some people who you’ve never even thought needed help, mercy or compassion
 - i. In this story, the Samaritan helps someone, most likely Jewish.
 - ii. They were enemies
 - iii. The cultures hated one another
 - iv. The Samaritan crosses racial lines and social taboos.
 - 1. The Samaritan version of the Bible stated that he would have been defiled, ceremonially unclean
 - v. But he did it anyway.
 - vi. He gave his time, his spiritual reputation, his resources and all to help someone who was known to make fun of his culture and look down on it.

- vii. He didn't ask questions or complain—and he didn't ask anything in return. Think this is easy? Ready to go do it?
 - 1. Illustration: Think of someone who's constantly insulting you or looking down on you and that you don't like (I know, it's impossible because we love everyone 😊)
 - a. You're driving home...210 freeway...side of the road
 - b. You stop, wait for a tow truck, pay for it, take the person to a motel, console them throughout the night for their lost car, leave in the morning and give more money---WHO WOULD DO THIS?!?!
 - d. It's not only radical but also NECESSARY to being a Christian

G. SLIDE—Why can't we show mercy?

- a. **SLIDE-BIBLE VERSE** The Levite and the Priest, according to the Bible, would be ceremonially unclean for seven days if they were to touch the man
 - i. "Ceremonially unclean" is hard to understand in our modern lexicon....what do I mean?
 - 1. Story: Pastor and pornography store
 - ii. But don't write them off as simply being too religious (though that can often be a barrier to showing mercy when we value our moralistic standing above helping someone in need)
 - 1. But there's something deeper going on—by helping the man, the Levite and priest would have risked their social standing in that culture
 - 2. In essence, they could get "fired"
 - 3. Things they've worked so hard to get—reputation, status, career—would have been threatened by helping this injured man.
 - a. To Kill A Mockingbird, written by Harper Lee about an event which took place when she was 10 years old in 1936
 - b. Story takes place in "tired old" Maycomb, Alabama and is narrated by a six year-old girl, Scout
 - c. The book touches on the racial inequality in the South
 - d. Her father, Atticus, is assigned to defend a black man Tom Robinson for the rape of a white woman Mayella Ewell after it was proven she made sexual advances to Tom
 - e. Atticus Finch was insulted and threatened in the book
 - f. He dealt with stress and constantly explaining why he would bother to help a black man accused of raping a white woman.
 - g. Atticus Finch risked his social standing and career to help someone

- h. Atticus Finch represents how helping someone in need means a great risk to our families, our comfort, our careers, and anything else we hold dear
- b. Ultimately, we have an inability to show radical love and mercy because it often times threatens the very things we've worked so hard to build up and achieve

H. SLIDE—How can we show mercy?

- a. The Levite and the priest were displaying what I like to call contractual mercy
 - i. They knew what they were supposed to do, but drew boundary lines
 - ii. They had limits and terms to how and when they showed mercy
 - iii. There were conditions to be met (it had to fit into their schedule, it had to be on the weekends, it could only be to a certain gender or race, I don't want to help the poor people, I don't like the rich people, etc.)
- b. But this is not the radical, life-changing mercy Jesus is calling us to in this passage
- c. Well, if we avoid contractually showing mercy so long as certain terms are met? We must display covenantal mercy
 - i. Covenantal mercy is when you show mercy to someone regardless of who they are and how they respond
 - ii. Covenantal mercy is a promise to the people in your life to serve them and care for them even when it's not comfortable for you or makes you have to sacrifice
- d. Example
 - i. Most people read this story and place themselves in the role of the Samaritan—we always talk of being a “good Samaritan” in society—this leads to action, not motivation
 - ii. Where's our motivation? At the end of Luke, we see another person walking “down from Jerusalem” but this time on a very different road. He was carrying a cross and was on his way to an execution. The women were weeping for him as was the cultural custom at the time to show pity to the executed man.
 1. This man was Jesus
 2. Jesus walked from Jerusalem after being beaten, robbed of his possessions, mocked—only he wasn't left half dead, he was going to be left to actually die—and why? For us.
 3. He was being led down the road of sacrifice to be a substitution for us as a way to bridge the cosmic gap between a holy God and a messed up people (us).
 4. We couldn't get our relationship back with God, so Jesus was offering up himself to pay the debt we owed God.
 5. If anyone could have associated with the injured man on the side of the road, it was Jesus, right?

6. He was broken, beaten, robbed, and left for dead.
 7. But he didn't associate with the man in our story. In Luke 23:28, Jesus turns to those who are weeping for him and says "do not weep for me"
- iii. WOW! Why? Because he knew that we were the ones lying on the side of the road, lying there spiritually naked, confused, left at the bottom of our lives and he went to the cross to rescue us from that
 1. We were the ones living confused lives, chasing after vain idols of success and comfort
 2. We were the ones indulging in every physical sin possible
 3. We are the ones who are spiritually dead inside—rotting away from all the bad decisions we've made in life
 - iv. It was first Jesus walking by and seeing us on the side of the road. We are not the Samaritan—we were the ones dying. Jesus crossed the ethnic, social and cosmic lines to defile himself in order that we can become clean. Ceremonially defiled, cleans the wounds, gives of his money and promises to come back---and this is what Jesus has done for us
 - v. As much as we let this fact sink in---that we were the ones on the side of the road and Jesus rescued us—we will be motivated because we see the greatest act of mercy ever shown and it was shown to you and me and all of us.
 - vi. This is the Gospel—that even know we were mired in the filth of sin, spiritually dead and unable to even stand up and approach God, God sacrificed his son as a payment for our spiritual debt because he so radically loves us and wants us back in a relationship with Him and His children
 - vii. We can see the covenant promise Jesus made with us—not to contractually show us mercy—it wasn't conditional based on whether or not we picked ourselves up out of the ditch—it was radically sacrificial and unconditional and completely against every modern understanding of how to get into a relationship with God.
 1. Then we can get rid of our idols of success, comfort, bodily pleasure, reputation, etc. because Jesus then becomes our Lord, our identity and source of confirmation—the Gospel confirms us! **REMOVE SLIDE AND GO BACK TO NEW CITY CHURCH LOGO**

I. How does this change us? Practically

- a. If we understand the Gospel in this way and reset our hearts away from their idols, we'll be able to show mercy and love deeply/widely or endlessly/boundlessly
- b. Deeply/Endlessly

- i. **SLIDE—CHURCH PICTURE** There won't be vertical limits to how much mercy we show because we no longer worship at the Church of our Holy Comfort Zone.
- ii. We give up the idols of our time, energy, and resources and instead worship Jesus who gave endlessly of himself.
- iii. We won't put caps on our mercy.
- iv. We can give our money, we can give a Saturday morning each week or a welcoming dinner and never worry about "running out."
- c. Widely/Boundlessly
 - i. There won't be horizontal limits to how much mercy we show.
SLIDE—2nd CHURCH PICTURE
 - ii. We'll be able to cross racial, economic and social lines because we stop worshipping at the Church of our Blessed Reputation.
 - iii. We no longer care about what others think of us or who we associate with.
 - iv. We no longer worship the idols of reputation and status—but instead worship Jesus who crossed all barriers to rescue us.
 - v. We can drive to the "bad" parts of town—or talk with the "weirdo" in our office.
 - vi. We can touch the nasty, physical wounds of another
- d. If our hope and identity is in Jesus, then we're free to show mercy endlessly and boundlessly with no terms or conditions—no fears or doubts
- e. I said at the beginning that mercy is central to our identities as Christians—what do I mean by that?
 - i. Central because it's at the center of God's story for us
 - ii. The cross, death and resurrection of Jesus is not the end of the Bible—it's the center! Like this design Kevin came up with
 - iii. The Gospel is not the ABC's of Christianity—it's the A to Z
 - iv. As much as we embrace the fact that the center of God's story is the mercy he showed to us, the unloveable, we will have mercy and compassion move to the center of our stories
 - v. So as we close in prayer, let's ask of ourselves where is mercy, compassion, service in the centrality of our daily lives?