



Links Players

KINGDOM INVESTMENTS 5: MERCY

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy...” (Matthew 23:23, NIV)

THERE IS AN IRONY TO TODAY’S LESSON. Jesus, you’ll recall, was standing toe to toe with some of the religious leaders of his day, and he was giving them a very large piece of his mind. While his mercy for them had likely not run out, his tone was anything but gentle. He wanted them to know they were far off the mark. And one of the points he was making was that they had neglected mercy in their treatment of others.

Jesus, of course, had every facet of the game at his disposal. He wasn’t just a long bomber, a keen wedge player, or a deft putter. So the fullness of God’s character showed through him, and when he needed to confront proud righteousness, he did.

But here is one thing we know about God’s kingdom: It is the place where God’s people are meant to act out God’s heart. And God would have us act with mercy.

Jesus provides an outstanding picture of this. Wherever he went, the people brought to him the sick, the crippled, and the possessed. Jesus had no rebuke for these needy people. Instead, he provided healing. He met the lowest people’s needs with great acts of mercy.

We may not be able emulate Jesus precisely here. The healing power he possessed was unique, even though we still see healing happen today. But the heart behind the healing is what we must pursue. People with special and occasional needs still surround us. Sometimes these folks are “hiding,” shut in at home or in a care facility. We’ll have to look for them, go to them, help them.

But rendering mercy is not only a matter of physical assistance. The act of mercy has many times been defined as not getting what we deserve. We have acted dishonorably or, even worse, with gross misbehavior. The kind of mercy we need then looks like forgiveness, the very thing Jesus went to the cross to secure for us. Yet not just for us—for others as well. And the question of whether we are willing to offer merciful forgiveness may demand more of us than whether we are willing to help an ailing widow or a recovering addict. The requirement of forgiveness hits close to home. But if we try to wiggle out of it, we are stating, “Jesus is good enough for me, but not for this other.” This is something we can never say!

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/POsbcB861hk>

Opening questions Who is the most complete golfer you know, one with “all the shots”? How about the most complete person, one with many fine qualities?

READING 2 Samuel 24:10-14; Romans 2:1-4; Romans 5:6-11

David’s sin and God’s mercy (2 Samuel 24)

Why did David choose the punishment he did? How have you found God to be merciful to you in ways that people are not?

How God gets our attention (Romans 2)

Without reading this passage, in what ways would you tend to think God gets our attention when it comes to our sin and need for repentance? What three attributes of God are really at play in moving us to repent? What does it mean to repent? Have you done so?

The ultimate mercy of Christ (Romans 5)

From this passage, how do you see God’s mercy at work in your salvation? According to verse 11, what should our response to our salvation be? How often do you celebrate your salvation?
