



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Lord, Have Mercy On Me!

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matt. 5:7, NIV)

Golf is one of the few sports with a built-in “mercy” mechanism—the concession. Perhaps the most famous concession occurred during the final match of the 1969 Ryder Cup at Royal Birkdale between Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin.

After Nicklaus drained his five-foot par putt, Jacklin faced a two-foot par putt to halve the hole, tie the match, and tie the Ryder Cup, allowing the United States to retain the Cup. Nicklaus conceded Jacklin’s putt.

Nicklaus told Jacklin, “I don’t think you would have missed it, Tony, but I wasn’t going to give you the chance.” Nicklaus’ gesture has become an iconic example of good sportsmanship.

Nicklaus had every right to require Jacklin to putt, but instead, he conceded the putt. Mercy begins when someone has the right to demand something from another person but chooses compassion instead.

As we move from the first four Beatitudes, which deal with a person’s inward spiritual posture—the recognition of one’s needs before God—the focus shifts to our outward behavior toward others. We move from receiving mercy from God to embodying and extending mercy to others.

It is critical to understand that this is more than a command to perform occasional acts of kindness. It is a call to develop a merciful character—a way of seeing and treating others.

The Greek word for mercy, *eleos*, connotes the active, tangible relief of suffering rather than mere pity or passive sympathy. Upon seeing someone experiencing distress, physical need, failure, or grief, Jesus, through His teaching and deeds, implores us to act to help others. Jesus showed mercy to sinners, the sick, and the marginalized. He modeled the attitude He calls us to have.

Scripture is filled with examples of God or one of His people exhibiting mercy. Joseph showed mercy to his brothers, even when he was in a powerful position and could have acted differently (Gen. 45; 50:15–20).

David spared Saul’s life, even though Saul’s repeated attempts to kill David gave him plenty of reason to seek revenge (1 Sam. 24:1–22; 26:1–25).

In Acts 7:54–60, we find Stephen praying for his persecutors. Even more significant was Jesus forgiving those who crucified Him while He was on the cross (Luke 23:34).

In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21–35), Jesus teaches us that it is inconsistent to receive God’s mercy while refusing to extend mercy to others.

Jesus turned the world’s view of mercy upside down. The world views mercy as weakness. In our Christian walk, mercy means having the strength to respond with compassion when the culture would choose the easier responses of anger, pride, or revenge. This kind of mercy is both challenging and beautiful.

What is our calling in all of this? We need to:

- Forgive people who hurt us (Matt. 6:12).
- Be patient with people’s weaknesses (Eph. 4:32).
- Help people who are suffering (Luke 10:25–37).
- Avoid being quick to judge (Matt. 7:1).
- Respond gently when someone is angry (Prov. 15:1).
- Pray for people who hurt us (Matt. 5:44).

Above all, remember how much mercy we have received, both from those around us and from our heavenly Father.

We should ask God for mercy, as David did in Psalm 51:1 and as the tax collector cried out in Luke 18:13. We are not telling God about a need He does not already know.

Rather, our posture is one of acknowledging our dependence on Him as we receive what He so graciously gives. Each day, we need to be mindful of Jesus’ words in Luke 6:36: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

PRAYER: God, have mercy on me because You are compassionate, and I have no claim upon You apart from Your grace. Forgive my sins, cleanse my heart, and give me the grace to live faithfully today.

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