



-- Video – This Hand

How is such an act possible? How on earth could the sinless Son of God freely give His flawless life for sinners such as you and me? Moreover, how could Hebrews 12:2 be true, when it says, “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross...*” What could possibly motivate our Lord, Jesus Christ, to leave His heavenly throne in order to suffer the most outrageously unfair, inhumane death imaginable, and do it all for the sake of wretched sinners?

-- One word: Mercy

1.) Mercy is Jesus’ motivation.

A. Why did Jesus come?

1. 1 Timothy 1:15 – “*Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*”
2. Matthew 9:12-13 – “*On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*”

3. Jesus came in mercy.

B. Why did Jesus die?

1. Mark 10:45 – “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”
2. 1 Peter 3:18 – “*Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*”

3. Jesus died in mercy.

2.) Mercy is Jesus' mission.

- A. Up until Luke 9:51, most everything in Luke's Gospel has been focusing upon Jesus' arrival.
 1. The angelic prophesies to Zechariah and Mary
 2. The birth of Jesus; the presentation of Jesus in the temple; the boy Jesus mesmerizing the teachers in the temple
 3. Jesus' baptism and temptation, marking the inception of His public ministry.
 4. The many miracles of His early Judean and ministry and the year-long Galilean ministry we have been examining since v. 4:14.
 5. Calling His disciples and sending them out to announce the Good news of His coming.
 6. The first confession of Christ by Peter.
 7. The Transfiguration – The most radiant picture of Jesus' arrival.
- B. From this point forward, most everything in Luke's Gospel switches its focus to Jesus' departure.
 1. The focus shifts from the crowds to His disciples.
 2. The focus shifts from miracles to the cross.
 3. Beginning after Peter's confession of faith in 9:27, Jesus begins directing His disciples' attention to the cross.
 - a. Luke 9:22-23 – *[Jesus] said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."*
 - b. Luke 9:44 – *"Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men."*
 4. Jesus resolutely fixes His focus on His departure.
 - a. Luke 9:51 – *"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."*
 - b. Though mercy is not directly mentioned here, it is clearly implied.
 - c. Jesus made it His mission to march towards mercy.
- C. Christ's motivation became His mission.
 1. More than simply claiming to be motivated of mercy, Jesus made that motivation His mission.
-- v. 51 – *"Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."*
 2. This is a fundamental truth of human behavior—our truest motivations shape our life's mission.

-- Luke 12:34 – “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

We ought to pay very careful attention to this point, because the same is true of us. Our motivations will frame the missions we pursue in this life. If, for example, my motivation in life is to grow glory for myself, then I will surely pursue pathways of personal power and personal pride, leaving my Lord with sloppy seconds and missing mercy altogether. Or if the driving force in my life is to “live it up,” then my pursuit of momentary happiness will certainly to trounce upon God’s purpose to grow holiness in my heart.

If, on the other hand, my motivation in this life truly is to glorify God in all that am and all that I do, then my mission will not stray far from God’s perfect purpose for my life. In that case, my mission will reflect Christ’s mission. And if that is going to be true of me, then my mission in life ought to be marked by mercy. If my mission is to be like my Master’s mission, then mercy must matter to me.

3.) Mercy is Jesus’ Mandate.

A. The Samaritans rejected Jesus because He was headed to Jerusalem. (v. 53)

1. They hated the fact that He was going down to worship at that temple which they despised.
 - a. Their temple had been destroyed the Jews, led by John Hyrcanus, about 150 years earlier.
 - b. Their meager outdoor worship facility than couldn’t compare to Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem.
 - c. This was a bone of contention and a root of jealousy.
 - d. Remember Jesus conversation with the woman at the well in John 4.
2. Because it was Jesus they rejected, this was no minor offense.

Remember, this was not just anyone that these Samaritans were rejecting, this was Jesus Christ. This was the Alpha and the Omega...

Therefore, this rejection was no minor offense. It was no mere misdemeanor. It was not a mild mishap, misstep, or mistake. No, this was the most miserable and malevolent malice imaginable. This was the poorest possible decision of all decisions possible. This was self over Savior, evil over good, death over life. And let it be understood that this incident was worthy of their incineration. Let me say that again... This incident was worthy of their incineration.

B. James and John wanted to incinerate these Samaritans (v. 54)

1. What made them think they could do that? They were thinking back to the account of Elijah in 2 Kings chapter 1.
 - a. In that account Elijah is in the very same area where the disciples were. (Remember, also, that three of the disciples had just seen Elijah on the mountaintop.)
 - b. King Ahaziah sent three delegations of 50 men to capture Elijah.
 - c. (Summarize the details of 2 Kings 1)
2. The disciples were asking to do what they knew God had done through Elijah.
 - a. King Ahaziah had merely rejected Elijah's prophesy that he would die.
 - b. These Samaritans had done much worse—they were rejecting Jesus.

D. Jesus rebukes James and John. (v. 55)

E. Christ's mission must become our mandate.

1. Luke 6:35-36 – *But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*
2. James 2:12-13 – *Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!*
3. Examples
 - a. Even while we rightly preach against homosexuality, we ought to, at the same time, be the most merciful people around to people caught in a homosexual lifestyle.
 - b. Even while we correctly preach against abortion, we ought to, at the very same time, be exceedingly merciful to any woman suffering from the guilt of an abortion.
 - c. Standing for the truth in no way precludes mercy nor should it ever diminish it.
-- Jude 1:21-23 – *“Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”*
4. Why? Because mercy matters.

- a. Mercy matters because every single person is created in the image and is loved so much by God that Jesus died to save him/her.
- b. Mercy matters because only God is qualified to dispense judgment on people.
 - Romans 12:19 – *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”*
- c. Mercy matters because we have been shown mercy.
 - Read Matthew 18:21-25
 - 1 Peter 2:10-12 – *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy... Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*
 - The greatest mercy of all has been poured out for anyone who will receive it in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - G.O.S.P.E.L.