
Encounter(ing) God

Keeping Mercy Part 7

Steve Berger

March 3, 2019

Review... Truly encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- 1) Contrast “Knowing About” and “Encountering” God
 - a. Knowing – *aware and informed*
 - b. Encountering – *revealing (seeing) and transforming – MEETING!*
 - c. The image of God you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life.

We want to make sure the image of God we carry is correct!

Listen – when we talk about Encountering God, we’re talking about Encountering Who He is – His character, IN US, THROUGH US, we become image bearers, no clearer summary of His character than in Exodus 34.

**Background – Moses says, “Show me Your glory” – God shows Moses His character!
If we want to know what’s glorious about God – it is Who He is!**

Exodus 34:6-8

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. (*Moses obviously encountered God*).

Mercy

- a) **Mercy** – evidenced by lovingkindness, unfailing love. **NOTICE** – 3rd time Mercy shows up!
- b) **Take home** – God Kept Some Mercy for Me. **When you see it declare it!**
- c) **Today** – Unpack six stories where Mercy was encountered in real life, very needy situations!

In order to experience the full impact of today’s sermon, watch the video online, as Pastor Steve takes on the persona of each of the six characters to tell their stories.

Matthew or Levi

Matthew 9:9-13

- a) born Levite, priestly class, called to worship in Temple... but did not follow that path
- b) became tax collector, Publican, traitor, worked for Romans, thief, stole from my people
- c) hated by Jews, hostile, harassed, hissed at, spit upon... hated who I became!
- d) one day the Rabbi walked by, changed life with two words, "Follow Me." — Me???
- e) put Jesus to test — invited to house with other corrupt friends, sinners. He accepted, wasn't afraid.
- f) Pharisees ticked off, uptight religious people do that when Mercy shows up to touch guilty

g) Matthew 9:12-13

When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (I realized- God Kept Some Mercy for Me).

Application — *Mercy doesn't cower in front of rebellion, it can conquer it with kindness!*

Canaanite Woman

Matthew 15:21-28

- a) Canaanite — gentile, pagan, no right or claim to God's promises for Israel.
- b) have daughter severely demon possessed — you can't imagine what I've been through — I love my daughter.
- c) I heard the miracle worker was coming — "Jesus, Son of David, Have mercy on me!"
- d) He said NOTHING! Disciples gave word to send me away
- e) When He spoke, Jesus said, "I'm here for the lost sheep of Israel"
- f) I threw myself at Him and worshiped — "Lord, help me"
- g) Jesus — "not good to give the children's bread to dogs"
- h) I said, "But Master, even the little dogs get crumbs that fall from the table."
- i) Jesus — "great is your faith, you have your desire." My daughter was healed immediately.
- j) I realized — God Kept Some Mercy for Me.

Application — *Mercy won't remain silent to the needy, but may test its tenacity for a testimony!*

Blind Bartimaeus

Mark 10:46-52

- a) name means “son of unclean one” — every time someone calls my name, I’m reminded of my and my family’s uncleanness, blindness, and poverty. *I beg all day, every day.*
- b) I heard Jesus was coming by — I cried out loudly, “**Have mercy on me.**”
- c) many told me to be quiet — I just got louder — I’m used to rejection and begging.
- d) Jesus — stopped in tracks, called me to come — I threw robe off and stumbled toward His voice
- e) Jesus asked, “What do you want?”
- f) “I want to see!”
- g) Jesus — “Son of the unclean one, your faith has made you well.” Healed immediately, I followed Him.
- h) I realized- God Kept Some Mercy for Me

Application — *Faith and persistence can stop mercy in its tracks, and bring a miraculous answer!*

Zechariah and Elizabeth

Luke 1

- a) parents of John Baptist, but before that... faithful priest and godly wife
- b) but old and barren, no children, little hope, big questions, and bigger heartache
- c) but because all things are possible with God, miracle happened, they conceived, people said God of “Great Mercy” has visited you
- d) it’s been said that “delayed blessings bring double honor”
- e) John was last of Old Testament prophets, went before the face of the Lord, preparing people for Messiah, Jesus said there was “no greater man born among women”
- f) from the moment we became pregnant I realized — God Kept Some Mercy for Me

Application — *Mercy doesn’t always come quickly, but it is worth the wait!*

Samaritan Leper

Luke 17:11-19

- a) Jews called us dogs, pagan half-breeds, part Jew, part gentile
- b) there were 10 of us lepers, calling out “unclean,” as we struggled through our existence.
- c) heard Jesus was coming, standing at a distance, began yelling, “**Have Mercy!**”
- d) Jesus said to “go show yourself to the priests.” As we went we were healed.
- e) I alone returned to give God glory, I realized — God Kept Some Mercy for Me.

Application — *Mercy doesn’t always produce instant results, sometimes results happen as we go in obedience.*

Saul of Tarsus / Apostle Paul

Acts 9 and various Epistles

a) 1 Timothy 1:13-16

Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

b) blasphemer — railed against Jesus and His followers, made them blaspheme, Acts 26:11.

c) persecutor — even to foreign cities, beyond measure, tried to destroy church, Galatians 1:13.

d) insolent — injurious man, imprisoned and beat followers of Jesus; Acts 22:19, oversaw Stephen's stoning and martyrdom.

e) BUT GOD — showed me mercy because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. He wanted to use my life to show the longsuffering mercy of God — God Kept Some Mercy for Me

Application — mercy knows no limits if we will repent when given the opportunity.

Two biggest lies about mercy

a) **God has no mercy for you. Manipulates your guilt**

b) **You don't need God's mercy. Massages your pride.**

We all need God's mercy in some way(s)! Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly!

So — from a rebellious tax collector, to mother of severely demon-possessed daughter, to blind beggar, to barren parents, to Samaritan lepers, to murderous blasphemers... the mercy of God is available to all who desire it.

Discussion Questions

1. Is there a time in your life you were rebellious? How did God's mercy meet you?
2. Can you give an example of God's mercy not remaining silent to the needy?
3. How can faith and persistence interact with mercy?
4. If mercy is a long time in coming, is it any less merciful?
5. What relationship can mercy and obedience have?
6. Which of the two biggest lies about mercy whisper to you the loudest?