

Rediscover Jesus, 33: “The Mercy of Jesus”

Luke 9:51-56

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Personal Introduction

Hi everyone. If you don't know me, my name is John and I'm a pastor at HMCC of Tangerang, and it's my privilege to preach the Word of God to us today.

Sermon Series & Scripture Introduction

Today, we are continuing in the sermon series, studying through the Gospel of Luke in order to Rediscover Jesus, for some of us, discover Jesus for the first time, to learn who Jesus is, what he did, and what it has to do with our lives today.

Last time, we saw how the disciples of Jesus were in need of correction and guidance. Their sense of privilege as Jesus' disciple was quickly turning into pride, and we saw how we could easily fall into such destructive tendencies when we don't fix our eyes on Christ, whether it is the tendency to exalt ourselves or tendency to be exclusive, or both.

Today, we'll see how the disciples are still in need of correction and the lesson at hand will be on mercy. We won't necessarily see the word, “mercy,” in this text but we will see the various actions of mercy lived out in Jesus Christ. So let's take a look at today's passage.

Scripture ReadingLuke 9:51-56 (ESV)

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ And they went on to another village.

This is the Word of God. Amen.

Sermon Introduction

- Do you know the game called, “Mercy”? It's a game I used to play as a kid, because there weren't as many video games, or phone or tablets to play on. So we played this game called, “Mercy.” And it was a terrible game.
 - “Mercy is a game of strength, skill, endurance, and pain tolerance. The game is played by two players who grasp each other's hands with interlocked fingers. The goal is to twist the opponent's hands, bend the opponents fingers until the opponent cannot handle the pain anymore and surrenders.” To surrender, the loser has to cry out, “Mercy! Mercy!” and the winner will let go. Ironically, we were not so merciful playing a game called, “Mercy,” but rather merciless toward each other, where we enjoy the suffering, pain and humiliation of another person. This is not true mercy.
- Mercy is quite a big concept because mercy is a package of kindness, compassion, gentleness, forgiveness, love and care. All of that is packed into one word, mercy. And true mercy is given at a great cost to the giver for the great benefit of an undeserving receiver. So when someone is merciful, it describes how kind, loving and caring someone is. But on the other hand, when someone is merciless, it describes how cruel, hateful, heartless, unforgiving. And this is often how people interact with one another, especially when they hurt and sin against each other. It's very difficult if not impossible to find mercy between sinners. We might have experienced a time when we made a mistake and we needed to beg for mercy, knowing that we could only expect consequences that we deserve for our mistakes. But only Christ offers undeserving sinners true mercy, by suffering our consequences for us, by suffering in our place. And receiving Jesus' mercy changes everything about

ourselves, transforming us from a merciless people to a merciful people. And only when we experience the mercy of Jesus for ourselves will we be merciful toward others.

The One Thing

So, the One Thing for us today is this:

*Receive the mercy Jesus offers
and be merciful like him toward others.*

Overview

We'll look at Luke 9:51-56 in 3 parts, looking at the 3 ways Jesus is merciful as highlighted in this text and how it impacts our lives. We see his mercy as...

1. Jesus resolved to die for undeserving sinners (v.51)
2. Jesus reached out to those who were avoided by others (vv.52-53)
3. Jesus rebuked his disciples for not being merciful (vv.54-56)

Prayer for the Preaching of the Word

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end and they are new every morning.

Lord, teach us, help us, enable us to be merciful as you are merciful.

Sermon Outline

I. Jesus resolved to die for undeserving sinners (v.51)

- In his mercy, Jesus resolved to go to Jerusalem to die for our sake according to God's sovereign plan of redemption.
- Let me explain how we see this in verse 51. It says...

Luke 9:51 (ESV)

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

- The phrase, "When the days drew near," already points to the reality that there is a certain plan in motion and that it is going according to schedule. But we see it even more clearly when we look at the literal translation, which would say something like, "when the days were fulfilled for him to be taken up." All the time he spent in the area of Galilee—healing the sick, teaching about God's Kingdom, preaching the good news, calling his disciples—it was all fulfilled.
 - As we have been following Jesus in his ministry from one place to another, from one person's request for healing to another, it may not seem like Jesus is following a certain schedule or itinerary. I know there are planners among us here, that even when you go to a holiday destination, you have your whole trip planned and mapped out: on this day, you will visit these spots, and on that day, you will go eat at those restaurants. So, Jesus might not seem like that kind of a planner, but verse 51 tells us that he has been on a divine schedule and itinerary. In fact, from eternity past, to his miraculous birth, to this moment in time in verse 51 and until he reaches his final destination in Jerusalem, Jesus is steadfastly on schedule.
 - And now, because Jesus had fulfilled everything he needed to do so far in his ministry in Galilee, he would now continue on, specifically to Jerusalem. "To set his face to go to Jerusalem" means that Jesus firmly made the decision to go, that he was absolutely set on going, that he resolved to go to Jerusalem and refused to change his mind.¹ And we have to be clear that Jesus didn't

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 359.

set his face to go to Jerusalem because it was the capital city of Israel or because it was a nice place to visit, like he used to do as a young boy with his family. Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem because that is where, according to God's sovereign will, he was destined to be "taken up."

- "Taken up" here refers to Jesus' ascension. Jerusalem will be the final destination of Jesus' ministry on earth, where he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). So, we could say that Jesus was looking forward to the glory of heaven, looking forward to the joy of being rightfully seated at the right hand of the throne of God as the Son of God.
 - But, we know in God's Word, that Jesus's divine schedule and itinerary would lead to the cross. Before the glory of heaven, Jesus had to face the shame of the cross (Hebrews 12:2). Before being highly exalted and given the name above every other name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, Jesus had to obey the Father's will to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8-10).
- This is why Jesus needed to set his face toward Jerusalem. He needed to be resolved because his journey to his ascension would be terrible and agonizing. He had the greatest horrors of earth planned for him: Jesus would be betrayed by one of his own apostles for a bag of money. He would be unjustly arrested, put on trial, and unjustly condemned as a criminal. He would be tortured, beaten, and mocked with a crown of thorns. He would then be nailed to a cross among sinners and evildoers, and killed though he was innocent.
 - And knowing all that was coming for him, Jesus was desperately in prayer in the garden before these horrors would soon become a reality. He was praying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me." But Jesus remained resolved. He refused to change his mind, because with the very next breath he prayed, "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). And like a lamb that is led to the slaughter is silent, Jesus did not open his mouth. He did not retaliate as he was pierced for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-7). None of this was by accident. None of this caught Jesus by surprise. He knew the cross was coming and he was all the more resolved to go to endure the suffering and shame of the cross. All for the sake of sinners to be saved.
- So as we understand that this is the precious, tender mercy that Jesus offers to sinners (Luke 1:78), how do we personally receive it? How does Jesus' mercy become personal for each one of us here today?
 - We receive it only by faith, simply as we confess that we are the very unworthy, wicked sinners that Jesus was resolved to die for. We receive the kindness and compassion of Jesus in repentance of our sins, without trying to hide our sin, without trying to justify ourselves, without trying to earn his mercy.
 - Rather, being secured in Jesus' mercy, we make efforts to discern how sinful we are. Being secure in Jesus' mercy, we ask for and invite accountability into our lives from brothers and sisters who can pray for our specific sin struggles and who can gently call us out on those sins. This is why sing (His Mercy Is More),
 - "What patience would wait as we constantly roam
 What Father, so tender, is calling us home
 He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor
 Our sins they are many, His mercy is more
 Praise the Lord!"
 - And then as we discover what sin remains in our hearts, confessing we are "the weakest, the vilest, the poor," we all the more we can cry out confidently to God, saying, "Lord, this is my hidden sin (Psalm 32:3-4). This is my secret sin (Psalm 90:8). Have mercy on me, O God (Psalm 51:1)! Have mercy on me." As we cry out for mercy in repentance over and over again, we can be fully assured with great hope that he will cover us with his sweet mercy over and over again. All because Jesus became sin when he knew no sin, and because Jesus was crushed under God's wrath in our place. By faith, repent and receive the mercy of Jesus Christ.

- This is how we overcome the temptation to think that God is dealing harshly with us, especially when we are struggling in our personal issues and we find our hearts growing bitter against God and his people. As we preach the gospel to ourselves again, as we remember the good news for ourselves again, we repent our sins and we receive more of God's kindness and compassion that can melt out cold, bitter hearts, hardened by our sin.

- So, first, we see Jesus' mercy in how he resolved to die for sinners. Second...

II. Jesus reached out to those who were avoided by others (vv.52-53)

- In his mercy, Jesus reached out to Samaritans who were hated and shown no mercy by any other Jew.

Luke 9:52-53 (ESV)

⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

- As Jesus begins his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, there are two interesting details. The first interesting detail is in verse 52, where he sends people ahead of him to the first designated stop. We don't know who exactly was sent, but whoever they were, they were sent as "messengers," which gives us a clue to what is happening here. Messengers have the responsibility to make an announcement or deliver a message on behalf of the one who sent them. And the purpose for these messengers was "to make preparations for Jesus."² It may have been physical preparations for food and housing for Jesus but it seems to be more than just that.
- I understand these preparations to be more personal and a matter of the heart. Just like how Jesus would send out seventy-two disciples ahead of him later on in Luke 10, Jesus seems to have sent his messengers to this village, to prepare and have the Samaritans ready to receive Jesus. This most likely involved explaining who Jesus is, explaining the good news he has been preaching, and inviting the Samaritans to receive Jesus. This would have been extremely difficult to do, knowing the background conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews, which leads us to the second interesting detail.

Show picture "Galilee to Jerusalem.jpeg"



- The second interesting detail is the fact that the first stop Jesus wants to make is at a village of Samaritans. He is going where no other Jew would go, bringing along other Jews with him.
- Now, if we are considering the shortest route possible from Galilee to Jerusalem, then it would make sense that Jesus is going through Samaria. If you take a look at this map, the sea of Galilee is on the top right corner in the north, and Jerusalem is at the bottom. In the middle, there is Samaria (circled in purple). So, if Jesus and the disciples typed in Jerusalem into their Google

² The following interpretation is better understood when "to make preparations" is translated as "to cause to be ready, to make ready, to prepare," according to Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 682. Also, the purpose of preparing for "him" (singular) as opposed to "them" (plural) further supports this interpretation.

maps, it would show three possible routes that they could take to go from Galilee to Jerusalem. The white colored path in the middle is the fastest, most direct route, taking about three days to travel by foot.

- But, to be clear, Jesus is not going into Samaria just because he wants to go straight to Jerusalem right away. He enters into Jerusalem 10 chapters later (Luke 19:28-41), taking weeks and months before the appointed time of his crucifixion. As far as we know, going into Samaria was not a matter of quickly passing through.
- Still, it is strange that Jesus wants to directly enter this particular village of Samaritans. Jews would normally avoid this route in order to avoid Samaria. They would rather take roundabout ways either to the east, which meant they had to cross the Jordan River twice, or take the route to the west, which added even more days to the trip. But, Jews were willing to take these routes to avoid the risk of meeting Samaritans entirely.

Luke 9:52-53 (ESV)

⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

- Why all this trouble? It's because Jews had no mercy for Samaritans and did not interact with them (John 4:9). The Samaritans were a mixed race because of Jews who had intermarried with a foreign pagan nation (the Assyrians). And as a result, they were led astray. They mixed their worship of God with religious practices of pagan worship and foreign "lowercase 'g'" gods (2 Kings 17:33-34, 40-41).
- Samaritans were a divergent sect of Judaism who had their own views of the Messiah and their own view of worship. And they claimed that their mountain, Mount Gerizim, was the place of true worship of God. If you remember the conversation that Jesus had at an earlier time with a Samaritan woman at the well, in John 4, this is the very issue that the woman was bringing up, saying: "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship" (John 4:20). This was a serious issue for both sides.
 - It was serious enough that Jews saw Samaritans as unclean sinners and hated them so much that calling someone a Samaritan was like a curse word for a Jew. When Jews became so angry with Jesus, that's what they called him, "You... Samaritan!" (John 8:48). Jews would avoid Samaritans at all costs.
 - On the other side, the issue was serious enough that Samaritans wanted nothing to do with Jews as well. And it is no surprise that in verse 53, as Jesus drew closer to the village, the Samaritans did not receive him. They rejected him. It was the same reason they would reject any Jew: Samaritans denied Jerusalem as the place of worship so they did not receive Jesus because he was a Jew and he wanted to go to Jerusalem.
- So we have to wonder: if everybody, including Jesus, knew he would be rejected, why would this Samaritan village be the first stop? I see two reasons:
 - First, Jesus is unlike any other Jew. Jesus showed mercy to this village of Samaritans. In fact, unlike any other person, Jesus showed mercy to people that were hated and avoided by society. He would sit with them, eat with them and spend time with the people the world would consider as "the weakest, the vilest, the poor." Jesus honored children (Luke 9:47), Jesus uplifted women (Luke 8:2-3). Jesus reclined at table with sinners, he was merciful with sinners, receiving them into his life and entering into theirs (Luke 7:39-40, 15:2).
 - Second, Jesus desires his disciples to learn his mercy. This interaction would not benefit the Samaritans for now, but it seems it was for the benefit of his disciples. Through the messengers he sent ahead to the village, yes, Jesus was extending his mercy to the Samaritans, but he was also including his disciples in his mercy to the Samaritans, teaching them how to be merciful to a people that everyone else hated and avoided.
 - This is important for all of us as Jesus' disciples to understand, because who do we naturally choose to show mercy too? We choose to be merciful, kind and compassionate to those most

similar to us, to those in our circle of friends, to those who show mercy to us. When it's comfortable for us to show mercy, when it's beneficial for us to show mercy, we will be merciful. But this kind of mercy is terribly flawed. We see true mercy in Jesus as he was merciful to all kinds of people, especially to those who were undeserving but in desperate need of mercy from him. And the world would be transformed when his disciples would learn the mercy of Jesus and carry it to the lost.

- So, even though he was rejected at this point in time, we see Jesus continue to extend his mercy through his disciples that he would send after his ascension. He said to them, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). And we know that the gospel eventually reaches Samaria through disciples like Philip, where even in the face of persecution and the threat to his own life, he brought the mercy of Jesus to the people who were hated and avoided (Acts 8:4–8).
 - We saw this during our Evangelism sermon series but it is important for us to address again here. If we find ourselves unmotivated and discouraged in our evangelism, in our responsibility to proclaim the gospel and persuade others to put their trust in Jesus, we must seek to experience more of God's mercy for undeserving sinners like us. God's mercy moves us to faithfully carry out his mission and to persevere in our efforts in evangelism as his messengers. He has sent us to go tell and bring his mercy to the lost.
 - Who are the people God has placed in your life who are shown no mercy, who are avoided by others and even hated by others? Only by experiencing the depths of God's mercy, can we as God's people go to them: to willingly, patiently, gently, compassionately go to those who have not yet received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. May we be moved by God's mercy for those who especially reject Jesus, because they will never be able to experience the depth of his mercy apart from him. May we as recipients of mercy, go mercifully and tell of Jesus' mercy to those who have never experienced such mercy before.
- So, we saw how Jesus reached out to those who were avoided by others. Lastly, we see...

III. Jesus rebuked his disciples for not being merciful (vv.54-56)

- In his mercy, Jesus rebuked his disciples who called for immediate judgment for he delayed judgment until his second coming.

Luke 9:54-56 (ESV)

⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ And they went on to another village.³

- While we today are learning the lesson of Jesus' mercy from this situation, James and John at this point have clearly missed out. In verse 54, somehow they saw "it" which is the rejection of Jesus by the Samaritans. So, it seems that Jesus and the rest of the disciples caught up to the messengers that were sent ahead of them. As they are getting closer, and the village now in their sight, James and John saw how they were not receiving Jesus. And right away, their reaction is merciless. Their reaction is revenge and destruction. Jesus had called these two brothers, "the Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17) and we get a glimpse of why this was their nickname. They're volatile, temperamental, and so angry in this situation.
 - One one hand, their reaction is understandable. Remember that these two brothers, along with Peter, were the ones with the privilege to see the transfiguration of Jesus. They had a literal mountaintop experience with Jesus. They witnessed the fullness of Jesus' glory. And the lesson there was that Jesus is the glory of God, and that Jesus is greater than any prophet as God the Son, even greater than Elijah. And if you know the stories of Elijah in the Old Testament, he was the prophet known for calling down fire from heaven, multiple times. The first time was when Elijah proved to the false prophets that the God of Israel is the one true God. He set up an altar

³ Some manuscripts have additional phrases included in verses 55-56. Because these phrases are not seen in all of the oldest manuscripts of scripture, they are generally noted in most translations as a footnote, like in the ESV. Therefore, they will not be considered in this sermon.

for sacrifice and to add to the drama, he ordered jars and jars of water to be poured over the altar until it was drenched. And then he prayed to God and God sent fire from heaven that completely burned up the offering and the altar, evening consuming all the water around it (1 Kings 18:38).

- The second time is another dramatic story (2 Kings 1) in the same area of Samaria. There was an evil king, Ahab. And he sent soldiers in three squads of fifty soldiers each to capture Elijah. When the first squad commanded Ahab to come down with them, Elijah said, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” And that’s exactly what happened. Fire from heaven consumed them. So King Ahab sent a second squad of fifty soldiers. Again, they commanded Elijah to come down. And again, Elijah said, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty. And again, fire from heaven consumed the soldiers. King Ahab sent a third squad of soldiers. But this time, the captain fell on his knees and begged Elijah, “Please, would you come with us? Please we don’t want to die.”
- So James and John, remembering that Jesus is greater than Elijah, were thinking Jesus could easily send fire from heaven to consume anyone who would reject him. Coming down the mountain from the transfiguration, they saw Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem not as a journey of mercy. They saw his journey as a victorious march of their Savior King to overtake Jerusalem. So, on one hand they were really loyal servants of King Jesus, and they really hated the Samaritans even more now for rejecting their king, so in their minds, any rebel, any enemy of Jesus should be punished. And so, they were offended on behalf of Jesus. This would be the case with anyone who we love so much. If someone offended my wife, my kids, my church, my closest friends, I would be personally offended. I would take the offense personally even if I wasn’t there to see it happening. So, all the more, with James and John, the Sons of Thunder, their reaction was understandable. That’s why they ask Jesus, “Lord, do you want this?”
- But on the other hand, their reaction is ridiculous. Because the rest of their question is, “Do you want us to tell fire to come down?” They seem to still be on their obsession to be the greatest from the verses before, still on their power trip. They could not even cast out a demon from a boy previously and they were rebuked by Jesus for their deficient faith. And now, in their anger, they somehow think they have the power to tell fire to come down from heaven? There is no way they could even think that they could do this, except when they were so driven by pride and hatred to wish for the destruction of this entire village of Samaritans.
 - It is clear here that they still had a completely different picture of the journey to Jerusalem than what Jesus had in mind. Jesus had in mind a journey of mercy and compassion. James and John had in mind a merciless massacre. They were thinking this was a victorious march to the holy city, and they would conquer and destroy whoever gets in their way. Jesus was resolved to go die on the cross. James and John were resolved to set fire to this village. This is like declaring, “Accept Jesus, or I’ll kill you!” This is not mercy, this is not evangelism, this is merciless terrorism.
 - James and John claim to know the agenda of heaven. They think the agenda of heaven is to literally consume, burn and destroy enemies of the King. This is how every other earthly kingdom operates to be the greatest by the way of war or by the way of force or power. But not so with the kingdom of God. Our King, Jesus Christ, operates with mercy. His agenda is mercy. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn back from evil ways and live (Ezekiel 33:10–11). Jesus came to seek and save the lost, to call sinners to repentance—not destroy them. Jesus is the Christ, the King, who would suffer many things and be rejected, and be killed—and only on the third day will the King be raised from the dead and then raised to glory (cf. Luke 9:22). True servants of Jesus must be aligned with his agenda of mercy. James and John still don’t understand at this point, so what does Jesus do?
- In verse 55, it says, “He turned and rebuked them.” With his eyes fixed upon their eyes, he corrected them to learn his mercy. Because in mercy, Jesus would delay his judgment. It would not be immediate like how the disciples demanded. Judgment was not immediate because Jesus took on the punishment for our sins upon himself at the cross. Judgment would come after the cross, after his resurrection, after his disciples were commissioned to go into all the world to

preach the gospel. After this, there will come a day when Jesus will return from heaven, the same way he was lifted up in heaven. And when he returns in his second coming, then he will come to judge. He will judge each soul in his heavenly courtroom. And only those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ will be judged righteous and enter into eternal life.

- We have to make sure we understand this, that judgment is still coming. So, for those who have not yet put your trust in Jesus Christ, with the mercy of Jesus, I plead with you to believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior today. Because God's Word says, he is patient with us now. It says that now is the favorable time, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). God's Word also warns us that the Lord's delay in judgment has a time limit. We are warned that the day of judgment will come like a thief, and each will be judged by fire (2 Peter 3:9–10). And for those without faith in Christ will stand helpless in judgment because none of our good works are worthy of God's glory. And for sinners who remain under the wrath of God, only the eternal fire of hell and an eternity of torment awaits for them. So, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God; For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Co 5:20–21). This is our merciful plea to you today.
- Now, for those who say you believe in Jesus, for brothers and sisters in Christ, we must also take heed to God's Word because here is also a warning for us. Because we cannot say we are a disciple of Jesus but then turn and not live with mercy. I hope we see that there is no such thing as a merciless Christian. Disciples of Christ must be merciful toward others for that is how Jesus has dealt with us. Jesus' mercy transforms us from our merciless posture to a merciful one. And when Jesus returns, we too will be judged for how we lived out our faith. And God's Word says that we will be judged without mercy if we have not shown mercy to others (James 2:13).
 - If we continue to hold bitterness and contempt in our hearts against others, we are not in a safe place. And I will personally confess that loving those who have hurt me or my family, forgiving those who have sinned against me, dealing with them with tenderness and compassion are extremely difficult things. We sin our selfishness when we deal with our own sin, and we beg for mercy. But when we deal with other sinners and those who have sinned against us, we demand judgment. There is no way to expect mercy for ourselves and somehow not extend mercy to others. And so we as disciples must take this warning for mercy seriously as well, repenting of our mercilessness and seek the mercy of Jesus.
- As we strive to deal mercifully with others, we remember that when God deals with sinners, he addresses us with perfect mercy and perfect justice. We persevere in prayer, praying to God, "forgive us as we forgive those who have sinned against us." And may we experience how the gospel melts away judgmentalism, melts away self-righteousness, melts away harsh, forceful demands we make upon others. It melts away condemnation and guilt.
 - I have been praying that our church will be the context where learn be merciful toward others. May we help one another become more gentle, compassionate, slow to judge and quick to see our own sinfulness. As a spiritual family, may we be not be characterized as a people carrying baggage and keeping a record of wrongs, only to soon burst in anger like James and John. Rather, may we be characterized by mercy of Jesus.
 - Mercy is not only important in the context of conflict. Mercy is required for us to actually build up our church family. Without mercy, we will not be able to love one another or support one another in each other's suffering.

Life Application:

1) Reflect on the mercy of Jesus to die for undeserving sinners.

2) Repent of the ways I have not been merciful toward others in my life even after receiving mercy from God. Repent to receive mercy again.

3) Rejoice in God's abundant mercies that are new every morning.

The One Thing:

*Receive the mercy Jesus offers
and be merciful like him toward others.*

For TGR: Can we all stand together as we close?

For JKT: I'll close us out in prayer before P.Eric comes up to lead us in response.

Potential Closing songs:
His Mercy Is More