**WAITING AND MERCY**

Sunday School Lesson 2

*THE WORTH OF WAITING*

Proverbs 20:22

12/5/2021

**Introduction:** In our first lesson on waiting, we examined the correlation between waiting and leadership. It should be clear to us that if the Lord is truly the one leading us, then we will have no problem waiting on Him. For our second lesson, we are now going to look at waiting and mercy. This is not just speaking of God’s mercy but also our mercy that we show toward others. We are to be a merciful people as the Lord is merciful to us. The Lord is not lacking in His mercy, but we struggle to show mercy often times. The Bible gives us the parable of the unforgiving debtor as an example of how people struggle to be merciful to others. In the parable, a man is forgiven a great debt that he owes to the king. Certainly, this king shows great mercy to man in forgiving him of his debt. Unfortunately, the man goes out and refuses to show mercy to one who owes him a much smaller debt. Being merciful is really something that should be easy for us to do; yet the flesh and the wicked heart of man often get in the way of our need to extend mercy to others. What is it that we can do to help us in this matter of being merciful? I believe the Bible shows us that if we excel in waiting on the Lord, then we will also do well in being merciful to others. Let’s take a few minutes this morning to see how waiting helps to make us a more merciful people.

1. **WAITING ON THE LORD SHOWS US THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS MERCY TOWARD US.**
2. **Notice that we are all needful of much mercy from the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 26:11; 41:4-10; 56:1; 57:1; 67:1; 86:3; 119:58; Luke 18:13).** This seems like the right place to start for this lesson outline. It should be obvious to all of us that we are in great need of the mercy of God. It’s not just that we need a little mercy. We need more mercy than what any other person could offer. The Lord is the only one who can give us all of the mercy that we need. First and foremost, we need great mercy in order to escape the damnation of Hell. We also need great mercy day to day, as we are daily deserving of death because of our sin. The psalmist understood just how badly he needed the mercy of the Lord. We see this by how often he begged for the Lord to be merciful to him. Those who needed help or healing from the Lord would often cry out for His mercy. The publican understood that he needed the mercy of the Lord. He asked for it in great sincerity. It seems that only the pharisee or religious elite lack understanding of their need for mercy. Let that not be the attitude of any of us. If it is, then we will be able to go no further in this lesson on waiting and mercy.
3. **Notice that we see the mercy of the Lord as we wait for Him to give it to us (Psalm 123:2; Isaiah 30:18; Joel 2:13-14).** We are not promised to receive the mercy of God in every situation that we might want it. Thankfully, we are absolutely promised the mercy of God in avoiding Hell if we call upon His Son as our Saviour. We don’t have to wait to find out whether He will show mercy on the believer or not. I have the full assurance of the Word of God that when I stand before the Lord, He will show mercy upon me and receive me because of my faith in His Son. When it comes to daily mercies, though, we often have to wait to see if we will receive mercy. Consider the story of David and the illness of his infant child. David pleaded with the Lord to have mercy on him and allow his child to live. Sadly, David’s child would die, as God chose not to show David additional mercy beyond that which He had already shown him in allowing him to stay as the king. We must learn to wait on the Lord in order to see the full extent of His mercy. Some are not willing to wait, so they either embrace fully their punishment or they continue in their error with no hope of receiving the Lord’s mercy.
4. **WAITING ON THE LORD SPEAKS TO THE MERCY THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR OTHERS.**
5. **Notice that others are drawn to mercy when they see us looking and waiting for it (Romans 11:31; Ephesians 2:4; Jude 1:21).** When we look and wait for the mercy of the Lord for ourselves, others will certainly be drawn to that mercy as well. The Bible tells us that the Lord is rich in mercy. Picture a wealthy man who has made it known to you that he is going to be dispensing of his wealth. As you go to collect that wealth, you find a line of others who are there waiting for it as well. What will happen when others pass by that way? Surely, they will inquire about what everyone is waiting for. Once they have discovered that you are waiting for riches to be bestowed, they are likely to join with you in that line. When we wait on the mercy of the Lord, we send a clear message to others that the mercy of the Lord is available for them as well. While the Lord will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, we also know that the Lord is not a respecter of persons.As a counter point, what message does it send when we do not wait for the Lord’s mercy? It tells others that we do not believe that He is merciful. This is not the message that we want to send to those who are lost in this world.
6. **Notice that pointing others to the Lord’s mercy is even better than giving our own mercy to them (Titus 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:2, 16-18; 2 John 1:3).** A common greeting in the New Testament is a greeting of mercy. You’ll notice though that the epistles never emphasize mercy from the apostle. The mercy that Paul wanted for Timothy was the mercy of the Lord. John wanted that same mercy for those in the church. When we speak of being merciful people, we must understand that the greatest way to be merciful is to point people to the mercy of the Lord. This does not relieve us of our own responsibility to be merciful, but it does speak to our first emphasis when it comes to mercy. The truth is that we are very unlikely to be merciful if we are not showing people the mercy of the Lord. It is His mercy that enables me to be merciful to others. Again, this is why it is so important for us to wait for His mercy. While we can tell others of His mercy, we validate that message by being willing to seek out His mercy and wait on it for our own claiming.
7. **WAITING ON THE LORD STOPS US FROM SEEKING OUR OWN RECOMPENSE.**
8. **Notice that we are commanded to wait for the Lord to require any recompense (Proverbs 20:22; Jeremiah 25:14; Romans 12:17; Hebrews 10:30).** Recompense is the compensation or reward given for loss or harm suffered. The pride of our flesh demands that we seek proper recompense from all those who have wronged us. We do not want to turn the other cheek. We do not want to show mercy. We want proper treatment. We want for others to make things right that they have wronged against us. The Lord sets us straight in His Word by making it clear that recompense belongs to Him. Vengeance belongs to Him. Judgment belongs to Him. This goes back to the prior lesson regarding the leadership of the Lord. If we are truly being led by Him, then we must allow for the recompense to be required by Him and not by us. This is very difficult for us to do, but if we are going to be merciful people, then we must allow this to take place. Additionally, we must consider the need for waiting when it comes to the Lord issuing out the recompense. He is in charge of when the recompense will be issued out.
9. **Notice that giving the recompense to the Lord presents us as merciful to the offender (1 Samuel 26:9; 2 Samuel 3:38; Isaiah 35:4; Psalm 109:20; 2 Timothy 4:14).** The amazing thing about waiting on the Lord for recompense is that it presents the believer as merciful. It takes away our action, and it places it solely on the Lord. We think of David as one who showed mercy to King Saul. Even though Saul was trying to kill David, we know that David would not harm King Saul. Do you not think that David wanted to be recompensed of Saul? Of course, he did! He chose to give it to the Lord, though. He chose to wait for the Lord to handle the matter however He saw fit. Paul had enemies who caused him trouble and sorrow. He committed these people to the Lord. He showed them mercy by not retaliating against them. Waiting on the Lord will naturally make us merciful because it takes the decision of mercy out of our hands and places it in the hands of the Lord. This is an act of mercy because we know that the Lord is always more merciful than we would or could be. Wait on the Lord and be merciful!
10. **WAITING ON THE LORD SHOULD STIR UP CHEERFULNESS IN OUR MERCY.**
11. **Notice that waiting on the Lord should cause us to be cheerful in mercy, knowing that the Lord is good in His judgments (Romans 12:8; Psalm 103:8; Proverbs 11:17).** We are not just to be merciful. We are to be cheerful in our mercy. How can we be cheerful in showing mercy to others? I believe the answer should be obvious at this point. Since we have given the matter over to the Lord, we have great joy knowing that the Lord is good. His judgments are right and perfect. There are only two possible outcomes from giving the matter to the Lord. His requirement of recompense or mercy shown will hopefully lead to repentance by the offender. This ought to be what we want. We want for the offender to experience the joy that comes from the mercy of the Lord and receiving His Son. The alternative, of course, is that the Lord will hold that person accountable for their actions. In either situation, we can be cheerful in knowing that proper judgment has been shown. Our job is only to wait for Him to handle the matter however He pleases according to His divine will and good pleasure.
12. **Notice that a lack of cheerfulness in mercy speaks to a selfish heart or an unwillingness to wait on the Lord in faith (Jonah 4:2; Hosea 12:6).** Jonah did not want the Lord to show mercy to the city of Nineveh or to any of the Assyrians. These were the sworn enemies of the Lord, and they hated the nation of Israel. It seemed unfair to him that they would be shown any mercy. This is why he did not want to go and preach. He was not afraid that they would kill him; he was afraid that they would actually listen and repent of their wickedness! Jonah was definitely not cheerful in the mercy shown to Nineveh. He had a cold heart toward these people. Additionally, he showed a lack of faith in God’s plan and waiting for it to be fulfilled. Did he think that if Nineveh repented but then later attacked Israel again that the Lord would not hold them accountable for their actions? Jonah was not willing to wait, so he did not consider that the Lord would deal with Nineveh at the same appoint. He chose to stay in discontentment.