

PUTTING A FACE ON MERCY & GRACE

Against the Grain – Part 2 of 8

Matthew 5:38-48

April 18, 2010

1. Mercy is choosing not to (retaliate) or (punish) even when doing so would be justified.

“But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.” – Exodus 21:23-25

“You have heard that the law says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say, ‘Do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.’” -- Matthew 5:38-39 NLT

“Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see that you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God.” – Romans 12:17-19 NLT

Mercy says, “I could hurt you, and you *deserve* it, but I won’t do it!”

2. Grace is showing (favor) or (kindness) which is not deserved.

- Grace means (giving more) than is expected.

“If someone drags you into court and sues the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.” – Matthew 5:40-42 Msg

“Our scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he’s thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don’t let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.” – Romans 12:20-21 Msg

- Grace means (loving) those who are unlovely.

“You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a

bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.” – Matt. 5:43-47 Msg

3. (God alone) can fill us with mercy and grace.

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” – Matthew 5:48

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” – Luke 6:36

“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him....” – 2 Peter 1:3 NLT

Daily Scripture Readings:

Monday: Luke 6:27-36
Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 4:10-13
Wednesday: 1 Peter 3:8-17
Thursday: Romans 12:1-21
Friday: Acts 7:54-60