Faith Matters

Daily Devotional - Friday, August 3, 2018 - A Call to Be Merciful

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Luke 6:31-36

It's common today to have a simplistic view of Jesus. This can be true even of believers if they aren't sufficiently familiar with Scripture. Many Christians who passionately claim, "I just want to love like Jesus" have no idea what that entails.

One thing Christ requires of His followers is selfless love for those who mistreat them, and He gives the following reason, based on God's character: "For He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35). In essence, Jesus is telling us to have the same mercy for others that God has for us.

Mercy is not simply feeling pity; it means acting with compassion. Instead of just sympathizing with us, God did something about our desperate condition—He sent His Son to save us from sin and its horrendous consequences. Although we can't save anybody by showing mercy, we can demonstrate God's kindness to others despite their treatment of us.

Being merciful to those who don't deserve it is contrary to our natural inclinations and is possible only through the power of God's Spirit within us. What we naturally want is justice. To extend mercy seems to say the offense against us wasn't very bad—but this is a misunderstanding of the word's meaning, because where no wrong has been committed, there's

no need for mercy.

When you are merciful, you are giving to others what God has given to you. And aren't you glad that He doesn't immediately deal out retribution for every sin you commit? So remember, God wants you to trust Him with all your hurts. And He also wants you to treat others (even your enemies) as you want to be treated—with mercy

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