

# Fit or Misfit? (Part 11): The Motivational Gift of Mercy

by Richard Siple

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*The sermon explores the motivational gift of mercy, its biblical foundations, characteristics, and practical applications in the church and community.*

**Duration:** 42:13

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:10-12, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:36, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 2:1-3, James 2:13

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts", "Showing Mercy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the seven motivational gifts that God has given to believers. These gifts include well-prepared sermons, practical assistance, in-depth Bible studies, personal counseling, generous financial assistance, smooth-running organization, and special outreach and concern for individuals. The speaker focuses on the gift of mercy, emphasizing the importance of showing mercy with cheerfulness. He shares a story of a woman who demonstrated mercy by hiding and helping two spies from an invading army, ultimately saving her and her family. The sermon concludes by mentioning that the next sermon will address the spiritual gifts, specifically the sign gifts.

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## Transcript

Good evening. Well, this is the last of the Motivational Gifts. There have been a number of people asking, are we going to do anything about the Spiritual Gifts, the Signed Gifts, and of course, we won't have time to do what we have done with this, taking one for each Sunday night message, but this coming Sunday night, next Sunday night, will be Baptism and Communion.

Great service, wonderful time, and I know you'll want to be part of that. Then, the following Sunday night, December 4, got it? December 4, I will bring a message entitled Signed Gifts, all right, and we'll deal with the Spiritual Gifts that are given to God's people, and I'll just have time for the one message, so we'll keep other things a little short and try to do as well as we can to cover the idea of the Spiritual Gifts and give some description of how they work, what they are. One of the problems with neglected truth, we all tend to be radicals, and we all tend to get in a ditch somewhere, so if there's something neglected, then sometimes, when it's sort of rediscovered, then people have a tendency for the pendulum to swing away over too far, so in the area of the Gifts, the Spiritual Gifts especially, sometimes there have been some extreme positions and extreme things which have frightened people away from the Signed Gifts, which is too bad, since God has given them, and they're in the church until Jesus comes, okay, so and they're

there for good purpose, and for the blessing of God, and the salvation of souls, and the strengthening of God's people, and so it's too bad for anything like that to be sort of discarded and throw out the baby with the bath water type of thing, and something especially that is a gift of the Holy Spirit of God, who is working in our lives and our redemption in this part of human history, so keep that in mind, December 4th, Sunday night, next Sunday morning, the Lord willing, I'm going to begin a series of three messages on dealing with emotional problems, and the first one will be anger, how to be good and mad, the next one will be depression, the reciprocal spiral, and deal with that, and then the third one will be fear, which by the way is not the opposite of faith, but the opposite of love, so the Lord willing, we'll go in that order for those three Sunday mornings, by that time we'll be to the 18th of December, that'll be a Christmas message on that Sunday morning, and then we're off to have Christmas with our son and his family in Ohio, so keep those things in mind, pray, and plan for those things.

Tonight, motivational gift of mercy, Romans 12, verses 6 and 8, and since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly, he who shows mercy with cheerfulness, that's interesting because normally people who show mercy do do it with cheerfulness, may not sometimes, but generally that is the case, the two sort of seem to go together, and one of the great truths that Jesus taught was about mercy, blessed are the merciful, for what?

For they shall obtain mercy, and so he had a great deal to say about that.

The invading army was encamped on the other side of the river, she could see their troops and maneuvers, sometimes the voices of officers shouting orders drifted across the water, the entire city was stiff with fear, nothing could stop this army, and they were not taking prisoners, the woman was young and beautiful, but her face was marred with sadness, all that she had ever known was about to be destroyed completely, there was also a certain excitement in her, as she contemplated her new faith in the living God, her life had suddenly been changed by this faith, and there was no doubt that it needed changing, as long as she could remember she had cared a great deal about the feelings of other people, she hated to see people suffer in any way, if someone seemed to need something, she had

or something she could do, she found it very hard to say no to them, this tenderness and compassion in a pagan society had made her an easy prey for the young men who took advantage of her, soon her reputation was such that marriage seemed out of the question, and seemed natural for her to make her living as an innkeeper, and running a house of prostitution, how often she had longed for real love, and to pour out her own love on a husband and children, sometimes she hated this softness inside of her, but finally this drive within her to be merciful was paying off, two men, strangers, had come to her door looking for lodging, food, bed for the night, of course she took them in, that was her business, she sensed something secret about them, and finally discovered they were spies from the

invading army, she should report them, but she just couldn't do it, she had hid them on the roof under the green drying there, when the soldiers came looking for them, she lied about their presence, and then let them down from her window on the wall at night, so they could escape in the darkness, the spies had made an agreement with her to save her and her family, she was to tie a scarlet cord in her window, the attack finally came, and God's people kept their word, she and her family were saved, later wonderful how God can restore, wonderful how God can give the desires of the heart, later she married an Israelite man, and bore him children, and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ, her name of course as you have guessed, was Rahab, blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy,

so what is the source of mercy, well basically of course all mercy the source is God, the mercy manifested in the life of Rahab is one of the most beautiful attributes of God himself, I love the scriptures that speak of his mercy, and I'm always using the word, I don't know if you do, but I'm always using the word, I find myself praying and saying oh God have mercy, oh God have mercy, I may be praying for our country, I may be praying for our church, I may be praying for individuals that I know are facing difficulties, or heartaches, or problems, whatever it may be, and I'm praying oh God have mercy, have mercy, please don't deal with us according to our sins, according to our iniquities, as we deserve, but deal with us in mercy, crying out to God for mercy, and it's something God loves

to give, as his heart is full of mercy, Ephesians chapter 2, if you turn there in your Bibles, Ephesians chapter 2, I'm going to begin reading with verse 1, and comment as I go, as for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, and that's all of you, right?

I said right, that's all of us, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world, and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient, saying you were under the control of Satan, you were completely wrapped up in this world, you were spiritually dead through your transgression and sin, all of us, it says all of us, all of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature, and following his desires and thoughts, like the rest we were by nature, objects of wrath, I cannot think of anything more terrifying than to be an object of God's wrath, it's a fearful thing to fall to the hands of the living God, and what an awful thing to be an object of his wrath, and yet that was a position of every

one of us before we came to Christ, but because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, and I underline it, blue line it, yellow line it, whatever you do, rich in mercy, rich in mercy, not stingy in mercy, not a little bit, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sin, it is by grace you have been saved, and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, express his kindness to us in Christ Jesus, for it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, it is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast, for we are God's workmanship, and then I think probably of all the Psalms, my favorite Psalm is Psalm

103, bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, bless the Lord O my soul, forget not all his blessings, all his benefits, who forgiveth all our iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, he crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, he has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities, for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him, this Psalm is just reeking with mercy, wonderful, the source of all mercy is the heart of God, never forget it, fill your heart with it, feed on it, stuff yourself with it, drink at that fountain till

you're full, until you slosh when you walk, God the source of mercy, this gift of mercy, this showing of mercy, fills the atmosphere with human warmth, and I wonder tonight how many of you are so fortunate as to have this gift of mercy, some of you do, I've already seen it in you, very interesting, as you know this morning, I mentioned to you the problem I had with dental surgery this week, and the pain and so forth, and as I sat out in the foyer getting ready to leave this morning, someone came and got down and started to talk to me, and their face was so full of concern and mercy, and I said to myself, aha, I know what her gift is, because everything she said and did was just full of that wonderful gift, well what's a definition of

mercy, what I'm going to do is give you a little test,

could have had it all printed, but decide just to give it this way, if you were asked to organize an ideal church with the following ministries, like I'm going to give you some ministries, but built especially around one, which one would you select, I'm going to give you seven different ministries, and if you were going to organize a church with those ministries, which one of those seven would you want to give the most emphasis to, okay, are you ready, all right, number one, well-prepared sermons to build up challenge and comfort, number two, practical assistance to each member of the church to encourage him and help him fulfill his responsibilities, number three, in-depth Bible studies, including word-by-word studies and research of the biblical settings, number four, some of you already

can see where I'm going, number four, personal counseling and encouragement for all who have needs of any kind, number five, generous programs of financial assistance to missions and other special ministries, number six, smooth running organization throughout the church, so that every phase of church life will be accomplished decently and in order, sounds like a pretty good church doesn't it, number seven, special outreach and concern for the precise and varying feelings of individuals with a readiness to meet their needs, that's the seventh one, that's mercy, the one before that was administration, the one before that was giving, the one before that was exhortation, the one before that teaching, the one before that service, the one before that prophecy.

Now let me give you tonight quickly the characteristics of mercy.

Now whenever I give these characteristics in these messages, understand nobody fits them perfectly, okay? Why is that? Because we're imperfect, right? We're in a fallen world, we're fallen beings, we're not perfect, so nobody fits perfectly, but you can sort of say, hey, by and large, that's me, all right? Number one, this is the characteristics of motivational gift of mercy. The person is functional, they like to do things. Number two, they want to meet the mental, emotional, physical needs of other people.

Number three, sensitivity to honesty in others. Number four, they can read pain in other people's eyes. Number five, they can sense when something is wrong, they can walk into a group and feel that something is wrong.

Number six, they try to create an atmosphere of cheer, hope, and love, they're peacemakers. Number seven, usually outgoing and friendly. Number eight, a woman with this gift is usually very motherly.

It's fascinating to me over the years as I've been a pastor in various churches and ministering in various situations and parts of the world, how certain people always mother me, and sometimes they're younger than me, and you don't have to be very young to be younger than me. But they still want to mother me, and I think, well, there comes mercy, just wanting to take care of me to meet my needs. Before I came to church tonight, somebody brought me by a bowl of fresh egg custard, still warm out of the oven on the way to church.

Ooh, perfect for somebody with a messed up jaw. These are wonderful people. They're good at listening to your problem, but poor at correcting or confronting you.

They're usually hospitable, very loving, attentive wives, and easygoing husbands. Often have a good sense of humor, jolly, laughs easily. My father said that the reason he laughed so easily was that he was so heavy he could neither run nor fight, but I don't think so.

They can make good secretaries for someone with a gift of administration because they will try to heal the people that the boss hurts. Absolutely, that's wonderful. I can remember one of my secretaries, I could hear her through the door on the phone with tears in her voice, comforting somebody that I wouldn't speak to because I had done all I thought I could do, and they wouldn't change.

But she couldn't, no, she couldn't do that. Would rather pray about a situation forever than deal strongly with people to correct it. Tend to be more concerned about another's emotional health than their spiritual health.

Tend to believe the best about everyone. People with problems who do not really want to change, listen, tend to use these people for pouring out their troubles, sometimes on the telephone every day of the week. Any of you fit? Think about it.

They abuse these people. Number 17, servers and mercies are really nice people to have around. 18, usually people with a childlike faith in God.

These are wonderful people and they're wonderful to have in the church. Marvelous gift of God. Some of the weaknesses of mercy, quickly, not firm, and they're a soft touch.

Find it hard to make decisions involving other people. What happens to them? They tend to give in if it's going to hurt someone. Trust their feelings as reliable when of course they're not.

They react negatively to insensitive people. They struggle with prophets and rulers because sometimes prophets and rulers are kind of firm and they find that hard to handle. Find it hard to believe the Bible doctrines of judgment and hell and could a problem with morality if they're not totally committed to Christ.

Greatest joy of those with mercy when they have met the emotional and or physical needs of others. They rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. And I thank God, even though I'm a fire and brimstone prophet, that God has changed my heart so that I can weep with people that weep and rejoice with people that rejoice, even though I don't have the gift of mercy.

Isn't that good? Aren't you glad? Yes, absolutely. Secular vocations, all kinds of places, and this is just a very brief, social workers, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, veterinarians, some people with this gift just take in every stray pet, whether it's an animal or a human. They just do.

That's all. Homemakers, foster parents. I've been amazed.

We kept a foster child once, but I've been amazed at what some of these people with this gift can do. Like, they can have a dozen foster children in their home, just love it, every bit of it, with all the problems that go with it. Isn't that wonderful? I think it is.

I think it's marvelous. Absolutely. So, musicians, yes, artists, writers, poets, all kinds of things that I haven't covered in any way, the possible vocations of these people with this motivational gift.

In Christian ministries, they can serve on a church staff, be a minister of personal care. I had a woman who was on our staff in Regina. She was working on her doctorate in psychology and counseling and was working for us halftime while she was finishing up in seminary and university.

And when we had staff meetings, like she did counseling for our women in the church, and she'd have a problem with me every so often in staff meetings because she was so merciful. And she would get a little

upset with me. But then I was the senior pastor.

So, wonderful at seniors ministries, wonderful at visitation, hospital visitation, every kind of visitation. And the telephone ministry here. You know, there's a great telephone ministry that goes on here in this church.

It's a wonderful ministry where they go right through the church directory and call everybody, talk to them, try to see how they're doing. And people with a gift of mercy are wonderful for that kind of thing. Greeters, ushers, music ministry, Christian counseling, deacons, hospitality, kitchen and church meals, all kinds of wonderful, loving ministries in the church.

Now, I want to give you some biblical examples. Are you ready? You want to get these down. First of all, Mary, the mother of Jesus, a very sensitive woman.

Luke 1, 45 to 47 says, blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished. And Mary said, my soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 2, 19, but Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

See, this is a tender hearted young woman. 34 to 35, then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against. So the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and the sword will pierce your own soul also.

Because this tender woman would see her son crucified. Mary's concerned for the feelings of a young couple being embarrassed at their wedding in John 2. Remember that? And the disciples, Jesus and the disciples have been invited to the wedding and they ran out of the, uh, of the punch, the, the, uh, by the way, I'm not going to speak in that right now, but they ran out of the wine, which was 20 water to one wine. Okay.

Anyway, they ran out of it. And, uh, and what's interesting in, I mean, Mary was not responsible, but she went right away to Jesus and said, can't you do something? This poor couple is going to be embarrassed. And this really bothered her because she had this gift of mercy and Jesus finally took care of the problem.

Mary's anguish over Jesus suffering on the cross, John 19, 25 to 27 near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loves standing nearby, he said to his mother, dear woman, here's your son. And to the disciple, here's your mother.

From that time on, his disciple took her into his home. By the way, here's an example of mercy in Jesus who had all the gifts without measure. He is dying in the most awful agony possible to a human being.

And he's taking care of his mother. Isn't that something? It's amazing. The mercy flowing out of the life of Jesus that he took care of that right there on the cross while he is dying in this terrible torture.

Uh, one, at least one of the four men who brought the paralyzed man to Jesus, huh? Here's a man who's paralyzed and they bring him. They can't get near the house hardly because of the crowd. It's full inside the crowd around the doors and windows.

And, uh, there's at least one man in that group who has a gift of mercy. And he says, we're not going to stop till we get this man to Jesus. And so they climb up the outside wall and they go down through the roof

and they let this paralyzed man down in the presence of Christ.

And he is forgiven and healed. The mercy of Jesus himself was manifested in the wedding of Cana manifested in the healing of the sick. I'm not speaking on that now tonight, but I am, I am often, uh, concerned and almost offended at the teaching that Jesus healed the sick in order to prove that he was the son of God.

That is ridiculous. In that case, many of the old Testament who healed the sick were the son of God. Huh? No, they weren't.

They were prophets. The fact that he healed people did not prove that he was son of God. No, he healed people out of compassion.

It says he saw the multitudes and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd who were harassed and scattered. And he said, I have compassion on the multitude. So he healed the sick out of the, out of the compassion and float out of his heart of mercy.

He was moved by their pain and suffering. He even raised the dead, stopped a funeral, raised the dead three times during those three years of ministry, the feeding of the thousands, you know, they said, send these people away, you know, and Jesus said, no, they'll faint by the way you feed them. And you say he fed all those people to show that he was God.

No, don't you remember that one of the prophets multiplied bread and fed people go back and read it. No, the miracles of Christ do not prove anything except the power of God on his life. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with a Holy ghost and with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed to the devil.

That's what the Bible says. That's what the Bible says. Did you hear me? I believe God, not some theologian.

And the Bible says that he went about doing good, healing all were oppressed of the devil because the Holy spirit rested on him in power. And after he had gone to heaven, Peter and Paul and others went out and healed the sick and raised the dead. That didn't prove they were the son of God.

It just proved the power of God was on their life. Right? Now you're, you're not sure whether to say right or not, are you? But you'll catch up with that if you have the desire to study it. So he fed the thousands because he had compassion on them, receiving the little children.

You know, the disciples said he's too important and too busy. He said, no, no, no. Let the little children come to me for such the kingdom of heaven.

He took them up in his arms and blessed them. And, um, I've always enjoyed as a pastor getting acquainted with the little children in the church and Jesus heart of mercy flow to the children. Remember after his resurrection and, uh, Peter said, I'm going fishing.

And some of the others said, we'll go with you. And they fished, they didn't catch anything. And they were coming back in on the Lake of Tiberius.

And there was somebody standing at the shore and they could hear the, they could smell the, the cooking fish and bread and everything. And he said, come on in, I have breakfast already for you. Just mercy, just

the gift of mercy, tenderness, compassion, his heart full of mercy, even there.

And again, the care of his mother at the cross King David said of the Lord, you have also given me the shield of your salvation. Your gentleness has made me great. The gentleness of the Lord to David, you enlarge my path under me.

So my feet did not slip many times. Those were the gift of mercy have ministered to my personal needs. So I could go on and do what God had gifted me to do.

Wonderful. Huh? Wonderful. The gift of mercy, Epaphroditus, you ever hear of Epaphroditus? He's in the new Testament.

He manifested this gift in ministry. Let me read it to you. Philippians two 25, Philippians two 25.

But I think it is necessary to send back to you says Paul Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. I love it.

You want to get a Bible description of the gift of mercy. There it is. Here's Epaphroditus.

And he's distressed because the people Paul's writing to had heard that Epaphroditus was ill and he was distressed because they were distressed for him. That's really mercy. And he said, indeed, he was ill.

He almost died, but God had mercy on him and not on him only, but also on me to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him so that when you see him again, you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give.

Paul said, just in waiting on me and pouring out the love and compassion of God on my life, this man almost died just serving me out of his heart of mercy. Wonderful. Great description of somebody with a gift of mercy.

Philippians 4.18, Paul said, I have received full payment and even more. I am amply supplied. Now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, they are fragrant offering and acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Let me give you one more because I like this woman. I never met her, but I like her. Her name is Abigail.

Remember her story? David was not yet King. Saul was still King and Saul was hunting David with an army of a thousand men. And David was fleeing from place to place, trying to stay out of his way.

And Saul was trying to kill him. And so during that time they were in a certain area where there was a man whose wife's name was Abigail. The man's name was Nabal.

And I understand that means fool, that he was a fool. And so during the time that David's men, he had 400 men that had gathered to him, soldiers. And during that time that they were in that area, they had protected this man's flocks and had never stolen one thing, a sheep or a cow or nothing.

Though they needed food, they hadn't touched it. And so finally David sent a message to this man and said, now you understand, we've kind of watched over everything for you. And my men do need some

food.

Could you send us some food? And Nabal was really angry. His wife said he was such a son of the devil that nobody could speak to him. And he flew into a rage and he sent a message back saying that he wasn't going to help every runaway slave from his master and that he wouldn't give him a thing.

And so David, one of the dark marks on his life that almost happened, but not quite because of a good woman, David said to his men, put on your sword. There won't be, there won't be one adult man left alive in that place by tomorrow morning. We're going to go clean him out.

And Abigail heard what had happened and her mercy toward this son of the devil, her mercy toward this husband who was, who was mean and ugly. She actually tried to save his life and she had been better off without him as history proved. She got to marry finally one of the finest men on earth in that day after God got him out of the way.

But he was, he was ugly. And she said, no, no, we can't have this happen. So she called in her servant and said, get some cheeses and get some raisins and get some flour and get all this stuff together and load up these donkeys and, and, and ride fast and don't stop on my account because I'm a woman.

We've got to get to him before he gets to us. And she got to David and she said to him, my Lord, I know that your soul is bound with the Lord. And I know you'll be King someday.

And when you're King, you won't want this blot on your past. So don't do this. I've brought the food.

Just don't do this. And David said, thank God for you. Thank God for you.

You have kept me this day from doing something that's wrong. I really appreciate it. And this woman's mercy had stopped David.

And she also had mercy on David and his men and brought the food that they needed. So she, she, she met their needs and she met her husband's needs, even though it was a wretch and protected his life because she had a heart that just flowed with mercy. That was her gift.

You remember what happened to Nabal? He threw a party and he got drunk. And then when he started to sober up, he found out what she had done and he had a stroke. He was so mad.

He was so angry. He had a stroke. Now I'm going to preach on how to be good and mad.

That's not the way to do it. He was so angry that he had a stroke and he laid there for 10 days, paralyzed and unconscious, and then died and went to hell. And David, the man he hated, married his beautiful wife.

There's an old saying in the old writers, the wheels of the gods grind slowly, but the grind exceeding small. Well, of course that's a pagan idea, but payday someday is God's idea, right? Why I tell you, God can take care of things. Just don't you get your fingers in it.

I think it's a wonderful example. Here's Abigail, this woman with great mercy, and because of it, God shows her mercy and changes her life dramatically by his grace. In closing, Abraham Lincoln, during the Civil War in the United States, frequently visited the hospitals and addressed cheering words to the wounded soldiers.

On one occasion, he found a young man whose legs had been amputated and who was sinking rapidly. Is there anything I can do for you? Asked Lincoln. You might write a letter to my mother, was a faint reply.

The president wrote at the youth's direction. My dearest mother, I have been shot bad, but I'm bearing up. I tried to do my duty.

They tell me I cannot recover. God bless you and father. Kiss Mary and John for me.

At the end were these words written as a postscript written by Abraham Lincoln. When the boy read through the letter to check it out once, he saw those words. He looked in astonishment at his visitor and asked, are you our president? Yes, was a quiet reply.

And now that you know that, is there anything else I can do for you? Feebly, the lad said, I guess you might hold my hand and see me through. So sitting down at the bedside, the tall gaunt man with the hardest tenders of mothers held the soldier's hand through the long night until it became cold and rigid. A great man with a gift of mercy.

Is it not a precious truth that Christ, the greatest of all rulers and Kings, the Bible says in our affliction, he was afflicted and that he is a merciful and faithful high priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Amen. Amen.

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