

What God Requires - Mercy

by Zac Poonen

God requires us to love mercy, to be fair and just to others, and to treat them the way we want to be treated.

Duration: 1:04:01

Scripture: Proverbs 19:17, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:48, Luke 6:36, Luke 10:36-37, Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12, James 2:13

Topics: "Mercy And Justice", "Christian Perfection"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being merciful and treating others with kindness and dignity, highlighting the need to show mercy and be fair to those around us. It delves into the concept of being perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, focusing on the aspect of mercy as an area where we can strive for perfection. The message encourages listeners to be generous, preserve the dignity of others, and cultivate a spirit of mercy and righteousness in their interactions with people.

Transcript

Let's turn once again to Micah, the Old Testament and the Book of Micah and Chapter 6. And here we see the Word of the Lord concerning the Old Testament people. What does the Lord require of you, he says. That's what we were thinking of yesterday.

What does the Lord require of us? First of all, we see Saul that he wants righteousness, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. And we considered yesterday righteousness that by which we are justified and the righteousness that Christ imparts to us through which we are sanctified. But there is another aspect to it also, which is related to other people, related to mercy.

To do justly means to be fair and just to other people. That's a very important part of righteousness. Very often when people think of righteousness, they only think of personal holiness.

And if you only think of personal holiness, very soon you will be a legalist. You'll be a legalist judging all types of people around you. And even though you may not say it in so many words, you will inwardly be saying, Lord, I thank you.

I'm not like other men. I thank you. I'm not like the people in the other denominations or in the people over there or that brother there or that sister there.

If you have such thoughts coming up in your mind, you know that you're a legalist. You know you're not obeying God's command which says, judge not. To be fair to another person means to follow what is known as the golden rule, which Jesus described like this in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 12.

The way you want other people to treat you, treat them exactly like that. Matthew 7 verse 12, for this is the law and the prophets. Now, the phrase, the law and the prophets, Jesus used to refer to the whole Bible.

In those days, the Bible was only the Old Testament. And the Old Testament was called the law and the prophets. And what he was saying is, the message of the whole Bible, let me paraphrase it in verse 12, the message of the whole Bible is, treat other people the way you want them to treat you.

He said, that's all there is. You don't need to study the scriptures. Everything that God wanted Israel to learn from that, those thousand pages of the Old Testament is to treat other people the way you want them to treat you.

And that was one of the things which the law could not do. It could not make people treat other people the way they want to be treated themselves. But grace can do what the law could not do.

Remember, the Holy Spirit can do in us what the law could not do. And we've been thinking about some marks of being filled with the Holy Spirit. One of the marks is what the law could not do, the Holy Spirit does in me.

Yesterday we considered the matter of lusting. Here is another thing the law could not do. The law could not make people treat others the way they wanted to be treated themselves.

But when we are filled with the Spirit, what the law could not do, the Holy Spirit does. So you can find out whether you are filled with the Spirit or not. Do you have a great longing to treat other people the way you want them to treat you? And we've got to be very honest with ourselves here.

How do you want other people to treat you? Well, treat other people like that. In the Message Translation it says, Ask yourself, ask yourself, what do you want people to do for you? Ask yourself, what do you want people to do for you? And it says, grab the initiative and do it for them. Listen to this.

Ask yourself, what do you want people to do for you? And then grab the initiative and do it for somebody else. Would you like somebody speaking evil about you in their house behind your back? How many of you would like that? Well, don't do it to other people. I remember many years ago, the Lord taught me a lesson on this.

I was thinking about committing some responsibility to one of the brothers in one of our churches. And from past experience, I found in my experience a few years ago with him, he was very unreliable. And so I said, wow, I can't even think about that.

But the Lord said to me, that was many years ago. That was five, six years ago. Do you want people to think of you the way you were five, six years ago? Haven't you changed in five or six years? I said, yes, Lord, I have changed in five or six years for the better.

Do you want people to think of you the way you behaved five or six years ago? I said, no. Then why do you think of him the way he was five, six years ago? I got some light there. But have you found yourself doing that, that you've had one bad experience with somebody and five, six years have gone by and you

still hold that same opinion about him because you feel that you have changed, but he hasn't.

That is the height of conceit. Let me tell you, it's the height of conceit and pride to think I have changed, but he hasn't. Treat other people the way you want to be treated.

Be fair to them. I've often said this to people who employ servants in their home. How do you pay your servants? How do you pay your workers, people who work for you? Do you go strictly according to the law? Are you happy if your employer, maybe some of you work in some factory or office, and you suddenly hear that your employer gives you a bonus at the end of the year, which is not part of your pay.

You deserve only 12 months pay. You got that. In addition, you get a bonus.

Have you ever thought of giving a bonus to the servant who works for you, or you go strictly according to the law? Do to others the way you want to be treated yourself. I am absolutely convinced after 50 years of observation as a Christian, the reason why God is very hard on many of his children is because they are very hard on others. And when God is hard on you, you won't grow spiritually.

And when God is hard on you, the Bible will be like a blank book. It will be like taking a blank notebook. You can read it for half an hour a day, you'll get nothing out of it.

And no matter how long you cry for victory over sin, God will not hear you. Listen to this. God treats you the way you treat others, especially those who are lower than you in the scale, in the human scale.

That means those who are lower than you in society, those who are lower than you in the church. Maybe you're an elder. You got a position of authority in a church.

To do justly means to be fair. Shall I tell you, we have been having churches for 33 years. Shall I tell you what is one of the major sins that I have seen among our elders? Partiality.

Partiality to their favorites, to those who are close friends to them. I see that the Apostle Paul's closest co-worker was Timothy. He says about Timothy in Philippians 2, I don't have anybody like Timothy.

Everybody seeks their own. But Timothy is genuinely concerned about your welfare. He seeks the things of Christ and not the things of his own.

Keeping that in mind, and I say, Lord, I want to be like that as an elder brother. I don't want to seek my own. I don't want to seek my own comfort or convenience.

If I can do some good to somebody else, if it means discomfort and inconvenience to me, I'll do it. I will not seek my own comfort. I will not seek the comfort or convenience of eating food or sleeping or comfort in traveling or anything.

If I can do good to somebody, I want to live like that. I don't want to seek my own. I want to seek the things of Christ.

I want to be genuinely concerned about the welfare of others, their eternal welfare. I don't want their popularity. I've modeled myself after Timothy.

But to such a man like Timothy, who's got such good qualities, do you know what Paul writes to him? He says in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 21, don't do anything in a spirit of partiality. This first class servant

of God, first class, he was the best of Paul's co-workers, needed an exhortation. Do nothing in a spirit of partiality.

Don't have special friends in the congregation who, if they do something wrong, you overlook it. But if somebody else who spoke against you does the same thing, you come down hard on him. Well, God will treat you like that.

I've seen it with my own eyes. I've seen people who don't make spiritual progress because of one thing in their life, partiality. I've seen elders being partial to their own children, and I've seen elders being partial to their own certain friendly elders, and they won't be so, they'll be pretty hard on one of the other elders whom they are not so close to.

This is what hinders the building of the body of Christ. What does the Lord require of you? Be fair. If that's your close friend who did something wrong, you have to say, that's wrong, brother.

And if that was someone who disagrees with you a lot and did something right, you've got to say, well, that's right. I mean, you're not a special friend of mine, but what you say is absolutely right. Can you say that? Can you be like that? If Timothy needed that exhortation, how much more people like us, who don't even qualify for that certificate from Paul, he never seeks his own, he seeks the things of Christ, he is genuinely concerned about the welfare of others.

I take it very seriously. And I have tried from the beginning to cleanse myself, because I know partiality dwells in my flesh. If you don't recognize that, then ask God to give you light on it.

Partiality dwells in everybody's flesh. There's partiality by parents towards their children. You know, many Indian parents are partial towards boys.

They think it's a sin to have a girl child. In the West, they prefer girls. There's partiality.

They are partial towards, parents are partial towards a child who is very smart and clever. There's a lot of partiality among parents. There's a lot of partiality among elders.

What does the Lord require of you to be absolutely fair? Imagine if you're a judge sitting in a court, and you're partial towards one person just because he's your friend or he's your son. You're not fit to be a judge. And if you're not fit to be a judge in a human court, you are certainly not fit to be an elder in God's church.

I want to ask you, have you got light in areas in your life where you were not fair to somebody? You were not absolutely fair in payments, when people do work for you. Have you calculated it down to the paisa and said, okay, that's legalism. If you're a legalist like that, don't ask God for mercy.

Ask God to give you what you deserve. You know, when you treat people by paying them what they deserve, well, what is the righteous thing for God to do to you, to give you what you deserve? How should we treat people who work for us, anywhere? I'm not saying we spoil them by giving them money which they don't deserve. That's not what I mean.

But when that company gave you a bonus, did you deserve it? It is unexpected. Haven't you all got sometimes unexpected increments of your pay and unexpected promotions and sometimes an unexpected job, which even almost doubled your salary? And you were so excited about it and you praise

the Lord. Oh, how good God is.

Has your servant ever praised God that he got such a good master or that she got such a good mistress? I believe this with all my heart, that the way I treat those who are beneath me in society, God treats me. The way as an elder brother, I treat those whom I have authority over, that's the way God's going to treat me. And I want to tell you, God's treated me very well through these years.

I have never lacked financially, even though I quit my job 42 years ago, giving all my earnings, 100% of it, away to God's work in 1966. God's never forsaken me in all these years, even though I've never made my needs known to any man. I've never been in debt for 69 years.

I've been in remarkably good health all these years. I can sleep anywhere, eat anything, go anywhere. God's been good to me.

I want God to be good to me all my life. And I know there's a law. God will be good to me when I'm good to other people.

Many of your sicknesses, which you can't get rid of, it's because you're not good to other people. You're hard on them. You say, but I'm fair.

Okay, then ask God to be fair to you and give you also what you deserve. I tell you, if I get what I deserve from God, I'll go to hell. I never dare to ask God to give me what I deserve.

I say, Lord, give me what I don't deserve, your goodness and your mercy. What does the Lord require of you? To be fair and to be merciful, to love mercy, to love it, to delight, to make that person happy by giving him a bonus, giving him a little more than he expected. For after all, he's a poor person.

The person who works for you in some way, he's much poorer than you are. You earn so much more than him. It won't even, I mean, your bank account may come down from five lakhs to 4.95 lakhs or something.

That's not a big thing. But for that person, that may mean such a lot. I remember when I got married, my wife, I said to her, you know, she was a very brilliant doctor.

I've never seen her make a wrong diagnosis in all these 40 years till today. And she could have easily been the head of department in Velo or CMC, but she decided to give it up as to travel with me and to be a mother to our four children. But one of the things I told her is, see, you and I have got a profession where we can never make money, forget it, in India.

India is full of so many poor people who need to hear the gospel that I cannot think of taking money from anybody to whom I preach in India. And India is full of so many poor people who need medical help that you cannot think of practicing medicine in this country to make money. Let the other doctors do that, let the other preachers do that, but you and I can't do that.

That's what I said to her when I got married to her 40 years ago. We have to trust the Lord to take care of our children and their needs. And I believe there is a God in heaven who watches every single thing we do.

And I believe that if we are kind to others, God will be kind to us. Do you know that in 40 years, my wife and I have had almost zero medical bills? Not because she is a doctor. I mean, doctors also get sick.

Doctors' families get sick. God's been good to us in many, many ways. God's been good to our children.

I tell you the word of God is true. There is a God in heaven who watches every single thing you do. The servants who have worked in my house.

If you meet them, go and ask them. I've been kind to them. God's been very good to me.

The people who have worked for me in any capacity. None of them can rise up in the day of judgment and say that I was not good to them. It may be very selfish.

I want God to be good to me. Call it what you like. But it's a law.

And I obey. I say I want to get the benefit of these laws. For example, the Bible says if you humble yourself, you get grace.

Well, I want grace. Maybe that's a selfish thing. And if by humbling myself I can get grace, I humble myself.

Because it's good for me to get grace. I want God to treat me well. And God says I'll do that if you treat other people well.

I say sure, I'll treat other people well. I'll be kind to them. I'll be merciful to them.

I'll be absolutely fair to them. I will never take from something that which the person cannot afford. There's so much of unrighteousness in this area among Christians.

I remember once when we were here in Bangalore. My wife put a board outside the gate. To try and have a little private practice.

To earn some money for our family needs. And I think we decided to charge. This is way back in the early 70's.

Two rupees as prescription fees. To write a prescription. To examine a person and give prescription two rupees.

And when some poor person came. I'd say forget it. Don't pay anything.

Because I felt with that two rupees they could go and get some little snack for their little child. Which they would have to deprive that child of. Because they paid it to us who earned more than them.

I said forget it. We're not going to charge anything. But we knew we couldn't conduct a practice.

Because all of Bangalore would crowd to our gate. So we had to be a little more wise on that. But what I want to testify today.

Is that my wife has never earned one rupee as a doctor in 40 years. But she's served hundreds of people. And I've never taken all of you as witnesses.

I've come to your churches. I don't even take a train fare from you. God's been good to me.

Treat other people. The way you want God to treat you. What does God require of you? Be righteous.

Inwardly. But not just that. Be fair in your treatment of others.

Don't be legalistic and go by up to the rupee. Have the spirit of giving a bonus. Of doing more than is expected.

That's what it means to go the second mile. Somebody asks you to go one mile. Go two.

Don't fight with people. Treat other people. Respect their dignity.

You know for example. We used to teach people in our church. If you want to help somebody.

Financially. Some poor person. Don't go and give him money.

You rob him of his dignity as a human being. I know Christians who do that. Why do they do that? Because they haven't thought.

How would you feel. If somebody comes and gives you every month. A certain amount of money.

You get robbed of your dignity. And I would feel like that. I can't help that poor person like that.

I want to help him. But that's not the way. How can I be fair and merciful to that person.

So I told people in our church. Don't give it to him directly. Either give it to the elders.

Like they did in the early church. They laid the money at the apostles feet. And the apostles distributed it.

Otherwise very often one person may get a lot. Another person may get nothing. But apart from that.

We shouldn't rob a person of his dignity. So I said. Put the money in an envelope.

If you want to give it to this particular person. Write the person's name on it. If you don't even want the elders to know about it.

And if you want to give him every month. That's fine. But use a different color envelope.

A different color pen. Disguise your handwriting. And put a different amount each month.

And don't give it once in a month. Give it once in two weeks. And once in six weeks.

Make it irregular. So the person doesn't have a clue. It's coming from the same person.

This is how we preserve a person's dignity. Love is very inventive. Is your love inventive? Ways and means.

To preserve other people's dignity. Do you treat your wife. The way.

You want your wife to treat you. All of you who are married. Will acknowledge.

That you want your wife to respect you. To speak respectfully to you. What about the way you speak to your wife? Have you heard the story of that wife.

Who told her husband. Will you speak to me at least. Just in the way you speak to some stranger.

Who comes to the door. That's enough. Just that much will do for me.

How do you speak to a stranger. Who comes to your door. Do you at least speak to your wife.

With that type of. Kindness. And this is the one.

Who is supposed to be your life partner. Who said. That only the wife.

Is to respect the husband. Where does it say. That I must respect and honor my wife.

I know there are verses that say. The wife must honor her husband. You know.

If you look for a verse in the bible. You will find it. If you don't want to find it.

You won't find it. I look for verses. And I found some amazing verses.

I discovered that one of the great differences. Between the old covenant. And the new covenant was.

What was only a percentage. Or partial in the old covenant. Was total in the new covenant.

Example. In the old covenant. It was one day in seven.

Which was to be a sabbath for God. Today. I will tell you honestly.

Every day is a sabbath for me. Because I am in the new covenant. There is no special day for me.

The Lord says keep the sabbath day. Holy to Israel. Which day am I supposed to be holy.

Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Every day. That's the difference in the new covenant.

What was one in seven. In a week. Is now seven in seven.

In the new covenant. Now here is about the tithe. Deuteronomy 14 in the living bible says.

God teaches you to tithe. To teach you to put him first. That's the purpose of the tithe.

Is to teach you to put God first. That means you got your crops. And by the way.

The old testament tithe was never money. Please remember this. The old testament tithe was never money.

It was grain. Jesus spoke about that tithing. Dill and mint and cumin.

It was always grain. They were farmers all of them. They were not factory workers.

And when they got that massive crop. Because God had blessed them. God said I want you to acknowledge.

That I was the one who gave you these crops. And I have set apart one tribe in twelve. To do my work in the temple.

You must take that ten percent. And give it to those Levites. Food, grain.

Because they got to eat too. They are not farming. Because they are serving me in the temple.

One tenth was God's. And do you know that in the old covenant. With the other ninety percent.

They had a few other offerings also. And maybe came to fifteen percent. But the other eighty five percent.

They could do what they liked. It was theirs. But what was ten percent of fifteen percent in the old covenant.

Became a hundred percent in the new covenant. Jesus said if you don't forsake all that you have. You cannot be my disciple.

It wasn't ten percent. Don't you believe these lying pastors. Who tell you you got to give ten percent to God.

And live with the ninety percent yourself. It's a lie. You got to give a hundred percent to God.

It's all God's. In the old testament. There was a law in Leviticus 19.

Which said. One of the laws. One way you show your respect for me.

And fear of me. God says. Is.

That you honor. The white haired person. The grey haired person.

You shall stand up. When a grey haired person comes. Thus you prove.

That you fear me. God was teaching younger people. To respect older people.

It was a mark of the fear of God. How did those. Young Israelites.

Show their fear of God. Many ways. But one of those ways was.

Now if you don't know where that verse is. Let me show it to you. Because we live in a day.

When people don't know how to respect older people. And I want to tell you. This is an old testament law.

Leviticus 19 and verse 32. You shall rise up. Before the grey haired.

And honor. The aged person. And thus.

You shall prove your fear of God. Because I am the Lord. So how did a young Israeli.

Prove his fear of God. By respecting. Someone who was older than him.

Respecting his parents. Speaking respectfully to his father. And mother.

And speaking respectfully. To brothers who were much older than him. You know.

You wouldn't find an Israeli. Sitting cross legged there. When an older person walked into the room.

They'd get up. That was the way they showed. Not respect for the aged.

I fear God. Read the verse. That's how you prove.

That you fear God. That was in the old testament. You prove your fear of God.

By respecting an older person. I'm sorry to say. That in Christendom today.

Even that old covenant. Fear of God is not there. Among our young people.

It's pathetic. And where the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. No wonder we have a bunch of young people.

Growing up in our churches. Who don't have wisdom. God is my witness.

That I have always. All my life. Sought to respect.

And honor people who are older than me. Even if he's a poor person. A beggar.

I've always decided. That I would speak respectfully to that person. And I want to testify.

It's gone well with me. Honor your father and mother. You young people.

It will go well with you. I honored my father and mother. It's gone well with me.

I sat in churches when I was a young man. Where the elders were not necessarily godly people. Not great examples.

But the Bible taught me to honor the elders. And I respected those elders. Who were not great examples.

I want to testify. It has gone well with me. It has.

I've had many many servants of God. Stay in my house. I've always respected them.

Honored them. Given them the best. Through the years.

Because they served God. It's gone well with me. I want to say to you young people.

There is a God in heaven. Who gives us exactly. In the same way as we treat others.

In the same measure Jesus said. That you measure out to others. You will get it back.

Press down running over. And I've got it. Press down running over.

You wouldn't believe it. If I tell you the stories. I'll tell you one day in heaven.

We'll have plenty of time to talk about it. But it's absolutely amazing. What God's done for me through the years.

In every area. Spiritually, physically, health wise, financially. You name it.

The laws of God are true. But what is in the new covenant. In the old covenant it was honor the older person.

I told you. It was only one day in seven. Ten percent of your income.

Honor the older person. That's how you prove your fear of God. What does it say in the new testament.

Let's turn to 1 Peter chapter 2. In 1 Peter chapter 2. And verse 17. This is the new covenant standard. What was partial in the old covenant.

Becomes total in the new covenant. Verse 17. Have you got it? 1 Peter 2 17.

Honor all people. And. That is how you prove your fear of God.

It's right there in that verse. Honor all people. And let me paraphrase it.

That's how you prove your fear of God. This is not Leviticus 19. This is 1 Peter 2. We are in the new covenant brother.

That's why I say you got to honor your wife. That's why you got to honor younger people. How many of you young people.

Here in our churches. Can say that I speak rudely to you. I may be busy.

And say I can't talk to you right now. Because I got something else on. But I've never been rude.

Can you tell me that I've been rude to you. I've spoken firmly from the pulpit. But when I've spoken to you personally.

Have I been rude. Or arrogant. Even to you young people.

I fear God. And I've learned to honor all people. I've learned to honor my children.

It doesn't matter if they are my children. When my children were small. I said Lord today they are my children.

I want them to grow up to become my brothers. In Christ. Today all four of them.

Are my brothers in Christ. They are not just my children. But one way I would honor them.

Just one way. I discipline my children. According to scripture.

I didn't always do it perfectly. I made many a mistake. And I've asked forgiveness.

For my children. For the times I have punished them wrongly. I wept before God.

When I punished them in anger. But. I'll tell you how I tried to honor my children.

Even when they were small. That I would not punish them. When guests were there.

If there were guests in the house. And I punished them publicly. I would be giving them a double punishment.

First of all. First of all I'd be punishing them. And secondly I'd be taking away their dignity.

Don't you think a five year old. Has got a little dignity about him. Or her.

Yes. Even a five year old has got a boundary. Don't go into that boundary.

Robbing him of his dignity. As a child. I would wait till the guests go away.

And then. Say okay now we got to settle accounts. For what happened three hours ago.
Sometimes. Like God forgave Nineveh. I would say okay forget it.
I would say yet forty days. But Nineveh will perish. And then say okay forget it.
I got an example in the Old Testament. About changing your mind about punishment. So.
But what I want to say is. I'm saying this. I'm not boasting my brothers.
I've done a hundred and one. A million wrong things in my life. But I can say.
I have tried to follow these laws. And I want to say to you. As a testimony.
If you honor God. He will honor you. You treat other people well.
God will treat you exceptionally well. You be good to others. Don't be stingy and tight fisted.
When it comes to. Giving to God. And helping other people.
Don't be tight fisted and stingy. Because then God will be very. Tight fisted and stingy towards you.
If you're getting only a few drops. And spoonfuls of grace. In your life.
To overcome sin. To meet your needs. Ask yourself why.
Maybe that's how you're giving to other people. You're giving with a dropper. To other people.
And God's also using a dropper. When he gives you something. You're giving small teaspoons.
You look for the smallest teaspoon in the house. To give somebody something. And God is looking for the
smallest teaspoon in heaven.
To give you something. Sometimes he has to make special small teaspoons for you. Because you're so
stingy and miserly.
Don't be like that. Don't be afraid. That if you're large hearted towards others.
You'll suffer. I remember when. You know the decisions my wife and I took.
When we were starting to serve God. That we would really seek. To serve the poor.
And the reason was. Because the bible says. God has chosen the poor of the world.
Rich in faith. Well I said Lord if you have chosen the poor of the world. Rich in faith.
I want to choose them too. And I saw that all the great preachers in India. Would conduct their meetings.
Only in the cities. In the big cities. Because that's where all the money people are.
So I said Lord. Who's going to preach to the people in the villages? I'll go. Send me.
And the Lord sent me. And that's why we have most of our churches today in the villages. God's good.

And I remember. My dad was a God fearing person. And you know.
He encouraged me. To join the Navy as a young man. Hoping that one day I'd be the Admiral of the Navy.
And one day when I wrote to him. At the age of 24. Saying I've resigned.
I'm going to serve the Lord. He wasn't upset. He said I'm happy my son.
To serve the Lord is the greatest thing. And then he saw me. Traveling here and there.
To many many countries. Preaching the Gospel. And he was so delighted.
And then one day he saw me. In 1975. Checking all that.
And sitting with 7 or 8 people in my house. Finishing with all this. Worldwide ministry.
And he said. What are you doing? And then he said. You're going to find it difficult financially.
Your children are in school now. Wait till they have to go to college. And you'll find it really tough.
It's expensive to send a child to college. I said. Dad.
If I don't seek the Kingdom of God first. Now I'll find it difficult. Even when they are in school.
Do you think God will make your children suffer? Because you were large hearted. To poor people. Is it possible? Impossible.
Today I can testify. My father never lived to see it. I don't know whether they can see from heaven.
He is in heaven today. And if he can see it, he can see it. But my children didn't suffer.
You treat other people well. I know God will treat you well. David said in Psalm 37 verse 25.
I'm an old man today. I'm nearly 70 years old. He said.
But I've never seen a righteous man forsaken till today. I've never seen his seed. Begging for bread.
That means his children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. He said. I've never seen them begging for bread.
If the father, the grandfather was a righteous man. Boy, it goes well with his children. And his grandchildren.
And his children. Not only financially and health wise. But spiritually too.
That is the testimony we are to be. We are good to others. We are merciful to others.
We are kind and good. We seek to be generous. And help others who are.
Not. Who don't have as much as we have. Why did that rich man in the story of rich man and Lazarus.
Why did he go to hell? Because there was his brother. Lazarus was his brother. Do you know that? They were both children of Abraham.

That's why he was his brother. In Israel. Everybody was a brother and sister.

Just like in the church. We are brothers and sisters. Israel was like the church.

Everybody was a child of Jehovah. I mean a part of God's people. They were not children.

But they were part of God's people. And that Lazarus was a child of Abraham. He didn't have as much as this rich man.

And he didn't treat his brother well. How did he become so rich? God was good to him. He could have been paralyzed.

He could have been a mental idiot. And he wouldn't have made money. Don't forget my brothers and sisters.

If God has been good to you. And given you money. It's because God gave you health.

God gave you intelligence. God gave you parents. Who enabled you to study.

And God enabled you to earn money. Give all the credit to God. And there's a verse in Proverbs.

Which says. He who gives to the poor. Lends unto the Lord.

He who gives to the poor. Lends money to the Lord. And that which he has given.

Will be repaid him. I'll never forget the story I heard of George Muller. We heard of him earlier today.

From whatever. He was in his late 20's. When he committed himself to the Lord.

And by the way. He was a pretty godless, reckless young man. Before that.

Wild young man. And he got converted in his 20's. And he lived for maybe 60.

Or more years. And he looked after the orphans. The poor.

And he. Would give even from his own pocket. To their needs.

Not only the money that came into the orphanage. And. He had only one daughter.

Only one child. And when he was dying. He called his daughter and said.

He said. My girl. I haven't saved up any money for you.

Because what I had. I gave for these orphans. I gave it to the Lord.

I gave it to these orphans. But listen my girl. There is a verse in the Old Testament.

Which says. He who gives to the poor. Lends to the Lord.

And that which he has given will be repaid him. So. My girl.

Long after I am dead and gone. Any time in your life. You are in need.

Go to God and say Lord. You remember my father lent you some money. Can you please give me some of that.

I will never forget it. Those are not his exact words. But that was the message.

If you don't believe it. Prove it in your life. He who gives to the poor.

Lends to the Lord. And that which he has given will be repaid him. That is the principle.

On which we have built our churches. For 33 years. In 33 years.

In all our 40, 50 churches. All of them. We have never once.

Passed a bag around or a bucket around. To collect money. Never.

We have never taken a collection once. Not because we have got millionaires. Look around.

Who is the millionaire around here? Look at their clothes. Go and look at their houses. Who is the millionaire? I mean they may have prospered.

Because God has blessed them. But if you knew how they were. When they started many years ago.

You would be quite surprised. I know many people sitting here. I know what they lived in when they started life.

I know what sort of house I lived in. When I started life. As a married person.

We have only kept a box. Why is it that we have conferences? We have about 7 or 8 conferences. A year.

And here we have 650. In some places in Tamil Nadu. We have 1500 people.

From our churches at a conference. Two, two and a half days. We don't charge them one rupee.

For food, accommodation. Nothing. Because many of them.

Spend so much money just to travel. To come to the meeting. I know some people who come to the Bangalore conference.

Who save up money. A whole year. Just to bring their family here.

Those who live in Bangalore. I don't know how much they give. But I know that those people.

Who sacrifice so much and come. Get a greater blessing. Than those.

For whom it costs nothing. To come to a conference. Just cross the street and come.

Well I hope you are giving to the Lord in other ways. But what we have seen through the years. We have never sent a report of our work.

Anywhere. No photographs, nothing. We have only been kind to the poor.

We have been merciful. We have loved mercy. And God has been exceptionally good to us.

In our churches. And all of you know it. Many of you are elders.

Many of you are in our churches. And you know this is true. Why is that? What principle have we been following? Jesus once told.

When he saw 5000 men. And many women and children. He said.

Give them something to eat. And Philip started calculating. He said.

Boy it is going to cost a lot of money to feed these people. Best is send them away. Let them go and get their own food.

Forget about them. And Jesus said one word. No.

Give them their food. I have heard that word. Don't charge them.

Give them their food. And Jesus who multiplied. Five loaves.

2000 years ago. He has multiplied our money. In a poor country like India.

I will tell you. You know. In the early days.

When I used to go down to the village churches. And they had these huge conferences. With 1500 people.

They couldn't possibly. Cover the cost of all that. We would help them from the Bangalore church.

And that would cover the cost. And now. In the last few years.

Even when I go down. To a poor church like Nanilam. They have a conference with 1500 people.

At the end of the time. I ask the elders. Have you got enough? I always ask them.

Have you got enough to cover the cost of the conference? Can we give you something? No brother. We got enough. You got plenty.

There is going to be something left over. You see what God has done. You honor God.

He honors you. Be kind to others. God will be good to you.

In the measure in which you are merciful to others. God will be merciful to you. And God exposes the hypocrisy.

And the self righteousness. Of people in various situations. Jesus once told a story.

In Luke chapter 10. About the good Samaritan. You know.

He said you got to love your neighbor as yourself. You got to treat other people. The way you want to be treated.

You got to be fair. And you got to be merciful and kind. To others.

And one man it says. He wanted to justify himself. That was the reason.

Luke 10.29. The man who asked him a question. A religious scholar. Verse 25.

He wanted to justify himself. Because he was a stingy miser. And being a stingy miser.

Usually stingy misers. Want to justify themselves. And they say.

Who is my neighbor? He was a religious scholar. But he was a pretty miserable man. How many of you know spelling? Can you tell me the spelling.

The first five letters. Of the word miserable. The first five letters.

Okay. You got it. That's what this guy was.

And he. Wanted to justify himself. Who is my neighbor? And the Lord said.

I'll tell you a story. There was a man who was beaten up. On the way from Jerusalem to Jericho.

And he fell among the robbers. And by chance a priest came by. And the priest was being tested by God.

This is the guy who studied the scriptures. This is the guy who read the scriptures. Which says you love your neighbor as yourself.

He saw the man. What did he do? He didn't do anything. Can you sin by doing nothing? He didn't go and kick him.

He didn't go and spit on him. He just saw something interesting. On the other side of the road.

And walked by. And then a Levite came by. He is another guy who read the scriptures.

He also saw something interesting. He was sitting on the other side of the road at that particular time. And walked by.

They were being tested. This was their brother. Don't forget that.

This is not like any person lying on the roads in India. No, I'm not talking about that. This was their brother.

The child of Abraham. I'm sure they had an argument. Well, you shouldn't be going from Jerusalem to Jericho.

You should be going towards Jerusalem. Why aren't you going to the temple? You go away from the temple. You deserve to be beaten up by the robbers.

There is always a justification. To find fault with somebody. And they walked by.

And then there was a Samaritan. The Samaritan belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. That's the equivalent.

In those days. The Jews despised the Samaritans. These are the denominational people.

Who don't have any light. And that person. Went and picked up this poor person.

And took care of him. And put him on his donkey. And took money out from this total stranger.

And paid the innkeeper. And said, I'll come back and check up on him. And then Jesus said.

Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor? Verse 36. And the man said in verse 37. You see the word mercy there? The one who showed mercy towards him.

And Jesus said. Go and do the same. That's a word that comes.

Ringin' down through the centuries. Go and do the same. Let us do good to all men.

But especially to the household of faith. And the household of faith. In India is a pretty large community.

With many many poor people. Seek to do good. Seek to encourage them.

Seek to bless them. I don't mean just financially. You know.

I'm always scared of this word. When it comes to helping people financially. We've been very careful.

In helping people financially. Because first of all. We don't want to be charged.

That we are converting people through money. We don't do that. But we also don't want.

People to be drawn to us for money. We have to be extremely wise. I'll tell you honestly.

After 30 years. One of the most difficult things. I have found to do.

Is how to give money to poor people. It's a very very very very difficult thing. I don't know how to do it properly.

But this is the word I'm scared of. In Luke 22. Jesus said.

Verse 25. Listen to this. The kings of the Gentiles.

Lord it over people. And those who have authority over them. Are called benefactors.

Do you know the meaning of benefactor? It's different from servant. A servant is a poor person. A benefactor is a king.

A rich person. A benefactor is a man who says. Ah.

Here you are. A little money. And you.

Here is a little money for you. And you. Yes.

You need a little money. That's not the way we are to give. He is a benefactor.

Don't be a benefactor. That means don't make. When you give.

Not just money. When you serve somebody in any way. Don't make that person feel small.

And you so big. I tell you. A lot of Christians do like that.

When you serve others. I don't mean just giving them money. When you serve others in any way.

Preserve his dignity. As a human being. Maybe he has fallen in difficult circumstances.

But preserve. He has got a dignity as a human being. Preserve it.

I am always very careful about that. Even our children. You know I have been in some of our churches.

Where a mother will bring their 13 year old son to me. It actually happened. Oh brother Zach.

Pray for this son of mine. He is so rebellious. He doesn't study properly.

And he is getting the third rank instead of the first rank. And what all things they complain to me about. And pray for him.

You know. I feel like praying for the mother. Not for that boy.

And I certainly don't pray for that boy. I think with a mother like this. No wonder this boy is like this.

You will never get me to pray for your rebellious children. You get me to pray for you. Because you don't treat your children with dignity.

Imagine humiliating that 13 year old in front of me. A much older servant of God. Humiliating that child.

Don't ever do it. Don't even humiliate a 3 year old. I have heard children.

I have heard parents sometimes. Talk about their grown up children. You know what.

My little child did some stupid thing when he was 2 years old. Do you think when he is 25 years old. He wants to hear the stupid thing he did when he was 2 years old.

You also did some stupid things when you were 2 years old. Your mother is not alive to tell it. That's all.

Preserve their dignity. We have made mistakes. We have made mistakes.

I know I have sometimes been foolish. Sometimes. You know.

My wife and I joke all the time. I pull her leg a lot. She has grown a little taller.

As I kept pulling. But. Sometimes I have made the mistake of pulling her leg in public.

And I shouldn't have done it. That was. We got to preserve the dignity of our lives.

I am not speaking as one who never made a mistake. I am not throwing stones at anybody. Because I am not without sin.

I have made mistakes. But I have learned from my mistakes. I am trying to do it better.

Dear brothers. Preserve the dignity of others. Your children.

Others in the church. If you know something bad about someone. Let it die with you.

Why do you want to go and tell other people about it. There are many people about whom I know certain things. I don't tell other people about it.

Not even my wife knows about those things. I want to preserve the dignity of people. Be good to others.

And God will be good to you. What does God require of you? To be merciful. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. You know that verse. The last verse of Matthew 5. But he doesn't tell us in what area we are to be perfect in Matthew 5. We can't be perfect in holiness.

We can't be perfect in love. We can't be perfect in goodness. But yet he said be perfect.

He never said you will be perfect. One day in heaven. No.

Matthew 5.48 is clear. Be perfect. As your heavenly father is perfect.

And I took his word seriously. And I said Lord explain to me. What does it mean? And the Lord led me to compare Scripture with Scripture.

When I compared Scripture with Scripture. And read the same Sermon on the Mount. In Luke's Gospel chapter 6. I saw.

That what Jesus said there was. Luke 6.36. The same sentence was put in other words there. Be merciful.

As your father is merciful. Ah. Then I understood.

There is one area. Where I can be perfect. Like my heavenly father.

Here on this earth. And that is mercy. If ten people hurt me.

And I have forgiven all ten. I got a hundred out of a hundred. I am perfect.

You can't get more than a hundred out of a hundred. If ten people hate me. And I love them.

I got a hundred out of a hundred. If I love nine of them. I got only ninety.

I am not perfect. There is one area where you can be perfect on this earth. Let's pursue that.

Be merciful to those brothers of yours. Who try your patience. In your church.

You know sometimes. When I. See some brother. Always doing something wrong.

In one particular area. And it irritates me. Haven't you found that? That.

Something that your wife is always doing. That irritates you. Or something that your husband is always doing.

That irritates you. You don't have to tell me now. But you know there is something.

Something. Which bothers you. And you know what.

The Lord spoke to me. He. That brother doesn't have light on it.

That's why he is doing it all the time. He is a good brother. But it's what we call his blind spot.

So be merciful to him. Because. If he has a blind spot.

Then. You must be having a blind spot too. But your blind spot.
Is not in the same area. It is in another area. Which you can't see.
And that poor brother has had to bear with you. In that area for so many times. Aha.
That makes it easy. For me to have mercy on that person. If you find that in some area.
Your wife is always. Irritating you by something. Which maybe you told her.
Many times. And she still doesn't change. That is a blind spot.
And from that you can deduce. Like a good Sherlock Holmes detective. That you also have a blind spot.
Where you are also irritating your wife. You say I am not aware of it. Exactly.
You are not aware of it. Because it's your blind spot. That's the light I got.
That if other people have blind spots. I must be having mine. Oh.
And that poor person. Has had to bear with my blind spot. For so many years.
And he has never even mentioned it to me. How kind of him. Do you know how kind your brothers in your church have been.
Some of you elders. You hit them left, right and center. Every Sunday with those verses from the pulpit.
And they sit there. Trying to duck with all these verses. All these stones.
Being flung at you. You don't even give them helmets to wear. While you are flinging all these verses at them.
And they duck. There they come next Sunday. Hoping that there will be some pastries and chocolates.
No. It's stones again. And they have come Sunday after Sunday.
After Sunday. After Sunday. Don't you think you should give them a few marks.
For still coming to your church. Even though you are throwing stones at them every Sunday. I have learned one thing.
That even when I ask. Elders to encourage people. They still throw stones at them.
In trying to encourage them. A stone doesn't encourage people brother. I will tell you something.
I am not without sin. I have done it myself. And that's why I can be merciful.
But I have got light on it. And I will tell you one way I have got light on it. Thank God for tape recorders.
I used to listen to my own message. Many times. I have listened to my own message on a tape.
Say Lord. Show me. Where I can say that better.
Where I can do it better. I thank God for tape recorders for myself. I said Lord.

The Lord said to me many times. You can say the same thing more gently. And I have learned.

I mean. I haven't learned fully. Because I started out from way down at the bottom.

Much lower than all of you. And being very hard on people. But because of my ministry.

Because most of the time I get so fed up. With all these Babylonian customs and traditions. I see in Christendom.

Fighting Babylon. Fighting Babylon. You tend to become a little hard after a while.

Even though you don't want to. Otherwise we would never have been able to build churches. My ministry has basically been the bulldozer ministry.

You know. Come along with a bulldozer into churches. And level the ground with all these old structures.

That have no place in the new covenant church. It's not been a very pleasant ministry. But you can't build a new covenant church.

Unless you first come with a bulldozer. All the nice painters and all can come later on. And do the touching up.

But you got to get the bulldozer first. And when you work with a bulldozer. You tend to be a bit rough.

And I have had to learn. And one way I have learned. Is by listening to my own message.

It's on tape. And I have heard it. I still listen to my messages.

And say Lord how can I do it better? I mean a lot of people may appreciate. But what do you say? Lord what do you say about this? And the Lord says. You don't have to say it like that.

Some of you who think that. You are great elder brothers. And you are preaching prophetic words.

And you are such a blessing to everybody. Please humble yourself. It may not be true.

It may not be true. You have got such a high conceited. Inflated opinion about your own spirituality.

And your ministry. I would encourage you. Listen to yourself.

And see whether you are blessing people. Be merciful to others. Cultivate this quality.

Because God is good. To those who are merciful to others. Pursue righteousness.

And mercy. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

Help us to respond. When you are near. That the word.

That is sown. Will produce fruit. In all of our lives.

We humbly ask. In Jesus name. Amen.

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