

Mirrored Mercy

- What does grace do? How does it change us?
- Every one of us was dead in our old way of living. We were enemies of God without hope. "*But God*" — maybe the two most impactful words in our lives — "*being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*" (Eph. 2:1-10).
- And so we all have a choice. Will we live with that forgiven debt in mind, or will we act like we didn't need it at all? Will we be the sinful woman washing Jesus' feet with our hair or Simon, who barely acknowledged Jesus' presence (Luke 7:36-50)?
- When we live with grace in mind, we'll mirror God's mercy to those around us, as Jesus said, "*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" (Luke 6:36).

Mirroring Forgiveness

- Rather than limiting our forgiveness for others, recognize the tremendous unpayable debt that God wiped clean on your account and pay that forward to others (Matt. 18:21-35). If we're unwilling to forgive, then the Lord won't be willing to forgive us!
- Pray for blessings and forgiveness for others, especially those whose wrongdoing particularly hurts or offends you. Take a cue from Stephen, who took his cue from Jesus, praying for his killers before he died, "*Lord, do not hold this sin and against them*" (Acts 7:59-60).
- **Ask Yourself:** What are the biggest barriers to my forgiveness?

Mirroring Kindness

- Like a good neighbor, are you willing to turn your compassion into action, stepping up and helping those around you in need (Luke 10:25-37)? God certainly didn't show you kindness in word only, but he was sacrificial to the utmost degree for you.
- While we can't always help everyone around us, when we do, our actions reveal our hearts — "*if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*" (1 John 3:17-18).
- **Ask Yourself:** Do I look outside my bubble and create ways to show kindness?

Mirroring Patience

- People will disappoint us and cause us frustration and sorrow. But, like Jesus, will we extend our prayerful patience — long-suffering and calm — while we wait for others to become the people we know they can be (Luke 22:31-34)?
- Our God — "*the God of endurance*" — calls us to "*bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves*" (Rom. 15:1-7). So when tense moments come, and you feel the reins slipping out of your hands, remember the patience God shows you.
- **Ask Yourself:** Am I willing to bear with others' weaknesses and failings, as God bears with mine?

Conclusion

- Settle into God's grace, and let it change you from the inside out. Mirror God's mercy into this world by forgiving others, being kind, and showing patience.
- There may be no more countercultural quality of a disciple than showing mercy in such an unloving, self-absorbed world.