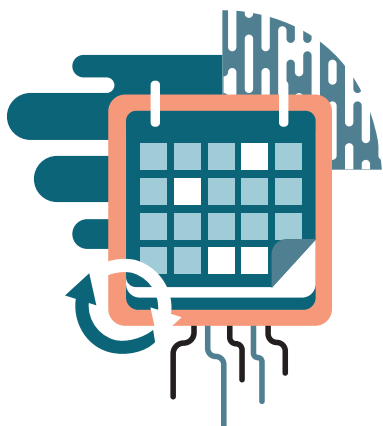


Daily Devotions



Day 1

Luke 17:11-13

Every Christian has received, as Luke 1:78 says, the tender mercy of God. Paul says God is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4). He isn't stingy. He doesn't ration His mercy to save enough for a rainy day. No, God is pouring out His mercy on us even right now. It never ends. You can use up all you need today; there will be more in the morning (Lam. 3:23).

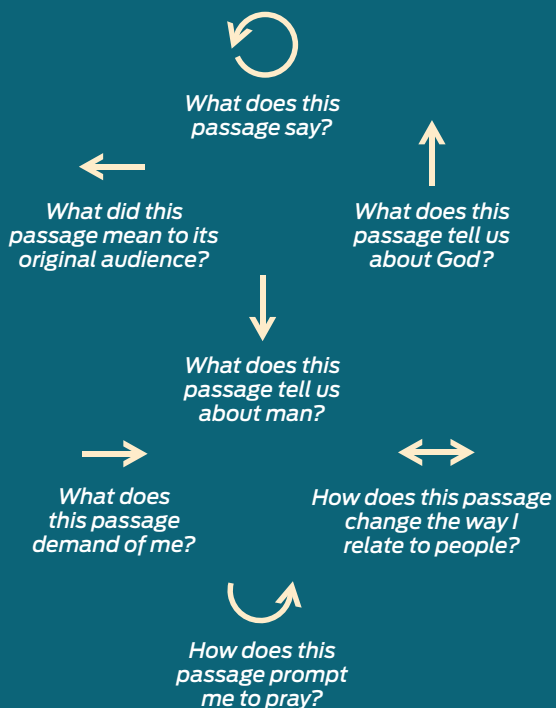
But what exactly is God's mercy? Another word for it—one we're more familiar with—is compassion. God's mercy is God's compassion, and His compassion is His mercy. God's mercy is His compassionate care for us—springing from, as Paul says in Ephesians 2:4, “his great love that he had for us.”

God's mercy is His never-ending love for us, the undeserving. Looking upon us in our sin, God chose to forgive us in His Son. His mercy brought us near. We need a love like that—a love that's near. Distant love, no matter how sincere, cannot change us. All life-changing love must be close. The love of God is that kind of love—an all-encompassing, all-sufficient, all-surpassing love. And it's ours because of His mercy.

That's what the lepers cried out to Jesus to receive. And He came near to give it to them.

How does God's merciful nearness change the way you live today?

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Luke 17:14-16

“And while they were going, they were cleansed.” Imagine the joy. Imagine looking down at ruined skin and seeing it healed. Imagine looking at the men beside you to find faces not disfigured but whole. Cleansed!

Every Christian has experienced the same kind of cleansing at the level of the heart. By Christ’s blood, our sin is washed away. As we walk in the light with Jesus, we find moment-by-moment cleansing by His grace (1 John 1:7). The Christian life could be summed up in one word: “Cleansed!”

The lepers cleansing came at an interesting time: “while they were going.” Going was obeying. A leper would go to a priest so that the priest could determine if the disease was healed or not. These men knew before Jesus came they were as sick as ever. But when He told them to go, they went, trusting that in the going—sometime between now and then—they would be healed. And they were.

Trusting Jesus comes before the healing. It’s while we’re going that we realize all that Jesus has done under the skin.

How does trusting Jesus for healing change your outlook today?

Luke 17:17-19

What is saving faith? It is comprised of three things, at least. First, we must believe the right things about the true God. The leper believed that Jesus was worthy of worship. So he not only cried out for mercy at the beginning but returned in worship at the end of his healing. He believed Jesus was more than a magician. He knew that God was present in Jesus to grant salvation.

Second, saving faith is an assurance that what we believe is true. The leper not only acknowledged who Jesus was, he also truly believed in Him. He fell facedown not before an idea of Jesus but before the person of Jesus. His knowledge didn’t stay at the surface level. It affected His worship.

Third, the leper acknowledged the personal implications of faith in Jesus. He returned in worship to Jesus not only because he knew the right things and accepted the truth of those ideas, but because he trusted Jesus and relied upon Him. His newfound wellness led him to fall down at Jesus’ feet. His mind, will, body, and affections all pointed toward Jesus.

Saving faith is just that—looking to the whole Christ for your whole need, and knowing He alone can save.

How does salvation by faith set Christianity apart from all other religions and worldviews?

Luke 7:20-21

God's kingdom is different than the Pharisees expected. They were looking for a military and political revolution. Jesus was a meek and humble king. They wanted a strong arm of justice, burying his enemies beneath his feet. Jesus won through weakness, dying upon the cross. The kingdom did not come in observable ways. It came like a treasure in a field so many passed over. It came quietly but triumphantly. It wasn't visible all at once. No one could spot it coming on the horizon. But it came truly and powerfully.

God wins over the long haul. History bends toward His glory. In the end, of all the kingdoms of the earth, only God's will remain strong and sure, filled with those too weak for the kingdoms of this world but just perfect for God's. Those like the leper will be there, standing in a glorified body never to contract disease or experience death again. He who was cast out in this world was brought into God's. No one notices that because weakness doesn't win in this world. But in God's kingdom, it's the only way inside. His is the only kingdom where the last are first. No wonder no one notices.

How does knowing God accepts the weak into His kingdom free you to live before Him now?

Luke 17:22-37

Who would have thought the way God would win would be through rejection and suffering? How could the all-holy God above subject Himself to the horrors of crucifixion? Nonetheless, God planned to conquer this world through the cross. When God came down in Jesus Christ, the mission was set, the path was determined, the Son of Man came to die at the hands of His own people.

It should not surprise us that to save our life we must lose it. God's kingdom is an upside-down one where losing is winning, dying is living, and suffering leads to salvation.

It may look today like God's kingdom is losing, as if no one even knows it's here. But do not fear. The Son of Man is coming again. We don't know when it will be, but we know as sure as Jesus came once that He will also come again. And when He comes, His kingdom will reign forever and ever, and that rejection and suffering that was His once will be His enemy's forever.

How does knowing that Jesus was rejected and suffered help you understand the way God's kingdom is at work in this world?