

Greek Word Studies:

Merciful (1655) (eleemon from eleos = mercy) (Click for in depth study of eleos) refers to one who is actively compassionate or one who is benevolently merciful involving thought and action. It reflects being concerned about people in their need. One might say they are "mercy full"! The idea is that they possess a compassionate heart leading one to acts of mercy, the purpose of which is to relieve the suffering and misery of the object of that compassion. It sometimes meant giving money to a needy person. As referring to believers eleemon refers not merely to those who express acts of mercifulness, but who have this attribute as a result of the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Eleemon is used only here and in Hebrews 2:17-note (but used 20 times in the Septuagint or LXX, mostly referring to the compassion of God, the uses in Proverbs referring to men: Ex 22:27, 34:6, 2Chr 30:9, Neh 9:17, 31, Ps 88:15, 103:8, 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8; Pr 11:17; 19:11; 20:6; 28:22; Jer 3:12; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2)

â€œBlessed are the mercy fullâ€• (those "full" of mercy)

Believers deserve hell but because of God's mercy and forgiveness receive heaven!

The basic idea of eleemon is "to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable." Here the essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery. From this we make the important distinction between mercy and grace. Grace is shown to the undeserving; mercy is compassion to the miserable. Thus the synonym for mercy is compassion

Mercy is not simply feeling compassion but exists when something is done to alleviate distress. This is nicely illustrated in the Old Testament by the "mercy seat" in the holy of holies. This was the place where the Lord God accepted the propitiatory (satisfactory) sacrifice to atone for the nationâ€™s sins, once each year on the "Day of Atonement" (see Lev 16:2,13, 14, 15). Here at the mercy seat God was moved with pity and compassion for the sinful people, and took action to reconcile them to himself through accepting the blood of a goat in their stead. (See also notes on God's Attribute of Mercy).

AN "IMPOSSIBLE" MERCY

In Lamentations (see Lam 3:19, 20, 21, 22, 23 "His compassions [mercies] never fail. They are new every morning") we see the Lordâ€™s mercies being new each morning. And who does He demonstrate such bountiful mercies to? Toward His undeserving, rebellious, stiff necked chosen people! This observation helps us to understand the character of the mercy Jesus is calling for in those who claim to be citizens of His Kingdom. It is an "impossible" mercy (for the natural man) and is only "Him-possible" (supernatural in the Spirit controlled regenerate man or woman).

In short, being merciful is a characteristic that demands of us a disposition of heart and life that is contrary to human nature. Indeed a merciful heart is a characteristic Jesus says of a citizen of the Kingdom, one who has received a supernatural "heart transplant" (Ezekiel 36:25, 26, 27, 2Co 5:17 - notice how Ezek 36:27 enables one to be mercy filled). This Beatitude then begs the question from all who would profess Christ as Savior - Does the demonstration or lack of demonstration of mercy affirm us or condemn us (respectively)?

Merciful means â€œfull of mercy.â€• Just as a graceful person is one full of grace, the merciful person is the one who is full of the fountain of mercy, who is full of God. Mercy moves the merciful to bestow mercy. The merciful man is the man who is full of love, and who loves with the love of God. He is the man in whose life the cross has done a transforming work to conform him to Jesus Christ; that which is not a natural characteristic of his life becomes the character and pattern of his life. But just as the Lord tells his people to be holy because he is holy, he also calls for his people to reflect his mercy. Sometime we want to hide from the Bibleâ€™s description of Christians as merciful. It is a characteristic that demands of us a disposition of heart and life that is contrary to human nature.

Ray Pritchard explains that mercy includes three elements...

1. â€œI see the needâ€•â€•thatâ€™s recognition.
2. â€œI am moved by the needâ€•â€•thatâ€™s motivation.
3. â€œI move to meet the needâ€•â€•thatâ€™s action.

Having a feeling of sorrow over someone's bad situation I now want to try to do something about it. Mercy is more than a feeling, but not less than that. Mercy begins with simple recognition that someone is hurting around you. But mere seeing or feeling isn't mercy. Mercy moves from feeling to action. It is active compassion for those in need.

Tasker explains,

"The merciful are those who are conscious that they are themselves the unworthy recipients of God's mercy, and that but for the grace of God they would be not only sinners, but condemned sinners."

William Barclay noted the Hebrew word (hesed) for "merciful" has the idea of

"the ability to get right inside the other person's skin until we can see things with his eyes, think things with his mind, and feel things with his feelings."

Leon Morris observes

"These are people who show by their habitual merciful deeds that they have responded to God's love and are living by His grace. They will receive mercy on the last day."

Nothing proves that we have been forgiven (received God's mercy) better than our own readiness to forgive (dispense God's mercy)!

The point is that Jesus is referring to those who as their lifestyle demonstrate mercy. Their life is not one of an occasional show of mercy but a continually inclination to show mercy. (Sermon on Matthew 5:7)

Mercy is love in action.

And still wherever mercy shares
Her bread with sorrow, want and sin
And love the beggar's feast prepares,
The Uninvited Guest comes in.

Unheard, because our ears are dull,
Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
He walks our earth, the Wonderful,
And all good deeds are done to Him.

The Uninvited Guest is Jesus

Mercy serves as a constant reminder that we are living under God's mercy, as spiritual paupers (Mt 5:3) daily in need of His great mercy, and only able to call ourselves "Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven" because the King has emptied Himself of His royal prerogatives and in mercy has stooped to meet our need through the provision of His life, death, resurrection and sending of His Spirit. Beloved, mercy known will result in mercy shown. Ask God to show you who and how you can be merciful to this day, this week, this year...He will be faithful to show you...and then you won't miss the blessing of basking in His overflow of mercy in your life...for the King's command contains His promise...

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38, cf Deut 15:10, Proverbs 28:27 [remember giving will not always be money but sometimes an even more valuable commodity, your time, as you demonstrate mercy received to one who is needy], Eccl 11:1, 2, Galatians 6:7) (Download InstaVerse the nifty, easy to load, simple to use Bible Verse pop up tool that will make it easy to read every cross reference in this study quickly, in context and in the Version you prefer but only KJV is free)

FOR THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY: hoti autoi eleethesontai. (3PFPI): (Hosea 1:6; 2:1,23; Romans 11:30; 1Corinthians 7:25; 2Corinthians 4:1; 1Timothy 1:13,16; 2Timothy 1:16, 17, 18; Hebrews 4:16; 6:10; James 2:13; 1Peter 2:10)

As you hope for mercy, show mercy.

-Spurgeon

For - Always pause and ponder this instructive term of explanation.

Spurgeon notes...

They forgive, and they are forgiven. They judge charitably, and they shall not be condemned. They help the needy, and they shall be helped in their need. What we are to others, God will be to us. Some have to labour hard with their niggardliness in order to be kind; but the blessing lies not only in doing a merciful act, but in being merciful in disposition. Followers of Jesus must be men of mercy; for they have found mercy, and mercy has found them. As we look for "mercy of the Lord in that day ", we must show mercy in this day. (The Gospel of the Kingdom: A Popular Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew)

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http://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew_57.htm#Merciful