

Readings

Scripture

⁸If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. ⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- James 2:8-13 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

- Lamentation 3:22-24 (*English Standard Version*)

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Matthew 5:17-20 (*English Standard Version*)

Thy mercy, my God is the theme of my song, the joy of my heart and the boast of my tongue; Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last, Hath won my affections, and bound my soul fast.

- *Thy Mercy, My God*

Mercy is the theme of God's story. Mercy is the thread that runs through all of Scripture. Mercy is the reason for Jesus' coming. Mercy is what your desperate heart needs. Mercy is the healer your relationships need. Mercy is what gives you comfort in weakness and hope in times of trial. Mercy can do what the law is powerless to do. Mercy not only meets you in your struggle, but guarantees that someday your struggle will end. Mercy is what this sin-broken world groans for. Mercy triumphs where justice can't. If God offered us only justice, no one would run to him. It is the knowledge of his mercy that makes us honestly face ourselves and gladly run to him. And it is mercy that we will sing about and celebrate a million years into eternity...God knows who you are, where you are, and what you're facing, and in the majestic combination of divine knowledge, power, and compassion, he meets you with just the right mercies for the moment. Stop allowing yourself to assess your life in a way that is devoid of new morning mercies. Any scan of your life that doesn't include those mercies is tragically lacking in truth.

- Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*, August 14

Sermon Outline

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

James 2:8-13

True Religion

Matt Esswein

Living Under the Royal Law...

Charges Filed: Guilty of it all (*James 2:8-11*)

Judgment Given: Mercy triumphs (*James 2:12-13*)

Reflection Questions

- Think back to a time when you were shown great mercy. How did you feel when you came to grips with the mercy you had received? Why might it be a struggle for us to receive mercy?
- What are the purposes of laws in our everyday lives? What are the purposes of God's laws?
- If all people (rich & poor, male & female, all races, etc.) are saved on the same basis (belief in Jesus), on what basis are they each judged?
- While believers are not to show favoritism, does not God seem partial to widows, orphans, the poor and oppressed? Why or why not?
- Is it possible to keep this royal law of neighborly love (2:8)? Or is everyone bound to stumble at one point (2:10)? In which case is mercy or judgment called for? Why?
- Why is it true that breaking one commandment of the law makes a person accountable for the whole law? (2:10-11)
- Why do we need to speak of and sing of the mercy of the Lord each and every day?
- Could there be a greater consolation known to man than these six hope-giving words: "His mercies are new every morning"? How can we remind ourselves of this truth daily?