



**Then and Now – Merciful
Sermon Discussion Questions – May 22, 2022**

Scripture Passages:

2 Corinthians 4:1 (NIV) Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NIV) ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

Matthew 20:29-34 (NIV)

²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

...³² Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³³ “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

³⁴ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV) ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NIV) We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

2 Corinthians 4:10-11 (NIV) ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, **so that** the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, **so that** his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

Warm Up

This week Pastor Justine's message talked about mercy. What are some images that come to your mind when you think of the word mercy and why?

Discussion

- 1) Toward the beginning of the message, Pastor Justine made this statement: When things get painful or uncertain. When we face challenges or get tired we question God's calling. And ultimately, the question we are wrestling with is this one, "Is it really worth it?"
Can you think of some experiences where you've found yourself asking, is it worth it? If so what were those like? What do you do when you find yourself asking that question?
- 2) Toward the beginning of this message, Pastor Justine shared this definition of merciful: God is merciful – God helps those who are hurting.
What are some stories you can think of where God has shown mercy? These may be examples from scripture, from your life, or from the life of someone you know.
- 3) Read 2 Corinthians 4:1, and 2 Corinthians 4:8-9.
What stands out to you from these verses? Looking at verses 8 and 9 how might reading these verses impact your view of God's mercy? How does having Jesus impact the way we see the list in verses 8 and 9?
- 4) Toward the beginning of her message, Pastor Justine made this statement:
The middle of our suffering is where the mercy of God is on fullest display.
How have you seen this reality in your life or in the life of someone else?
- 5) Throughout the message, Justine talked about 3 ways that we experience the mercy of Jesus:
 - We experience the mercy of Jesus through the presence of Jesus.
 - We experience the mercy of Jesus through the promise of eternity with Jesus.
 - We experience the mercy of Jesus through joining the mission of Jesus.As you read through these statements which of these fills you with the most hope and why? Which is most difficult to relate to and why?
- 6) Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Now read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.
What hope does Paul give us in chapter 4 verses 16-18? How do Paul's statements from 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 impact our understanding of what he says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18? What else stands out to you as you read these verses?
- 7) Toward the end of her message, Pastor Justine shared this quote from Timothy Keller:
Which
And Jesus took away the only kind of suffering that can really destroy you: that is being cast away from God. He took that so that now all suffering that comes into your life will only make

you great. A lump of coal under pressure becomes a diamond. And the suffering of a person in Christ only turns you into somebody gorgeous.

Jesus Christ suffered, not so that we would never suffer but so that when we suffer we would be like him. His suffering led to glory...

And if you know that that glory is coming, you can handle suffering, too.

What are some of your reactions to this quote? How might this quote impact our understanding of mercy?

8) Read 2 Corinthians 4:10-11.

How does Paul talk about the mission of Jesus in these verses? How might having this perspective impact the way we face everyday challenges and suffering?

9) Toward the end of her message, Pastor Justine gave this example of a fill in the blank statement:

If _____ is this difficult, is it worth it?

What are some ways you could fill in the blank?

Next Steps:

While I'm walking through the weight of a season of grief, change, and challenge, God is reminding me that His life is being revealed in me and that I can lean into a God who is merciful. He's reminding me that he is one who helps those who are hurting – not by removing my circumstance but by giving me the privilege of walking in his presence.

So I want to share this short list of questions I've been wrestling with as I try to live this out, and I hope they help you as well.

Presence: How am I making space and time to be with Jesus and to grow in my awareness of his presence?

Promise: What practical steps can I take to draw my perspective back to the eternal?

Mission: When was the last time I thought about the life of Jesus being revealed in me? How might that change the way I live in my current circumstance?

As you look at the questions above, which ones challenge you the most? Choose one of these questions to answer this week and take one step to raise your awareness of God's mercy in that area.