

David's Son

Leron, isn't this the fourth time this week you've worked past your shift?" Jerome asked. "You're going to break the store."

"I'm not putting in overtime, Mr. Taylor," Leron responded. "I'm careful with my hours."

Leron, a thirty-something who'd been out of prison for the last two years, had initially struggled to find work. It seemed no one wanted to hire an ex-con. Leron had been stuck doing odd jobs and lawn work.

Then five months ago, Leron had stumbled in the auto parts store searching for spark plugs for his used lawnmower. He met the store's middle-aged manager, Jerome Taylor, a kind man who showed an interest in Leron. Leron told him about his struggles, and how he was trying to turn his life around.

"What you need is for Christ to change your life," Jerome had said, and invited Leron to church. After Leron had attended church for a few weeks, Jerome offered him a job at his auto parts store. Jerome had explained to upper management that Leron was an ex-con, but had advocated for his hiring.

"The store took a risk, hiring me," Leron said as he shelved another filter. "I'm willing to work hard in thanks."

"God made it possible," Jerome replied. "It doesn't matter what you've done; God's mercy is available for you."

1. *Is it difficult for you to ask for and receive mercy? If so, why do you think that might be?*

2. *In what ways has God expressed His compassion toward you?*

3. *How has God's mercy affected your life?*

A Man Born Blind Shows Persistent Faith

Luke 18:35–39 KJV

35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Luke 18:35–39 NIV

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

³⁸ He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jericho was located in the Jordan Valley, near the Dead Sea. In the first century, the city's population was predominantly Jewish, with a mix of Roman, Greek, and other cultures as well. Jericho had a diverse population because of its location and historical significance as one of the oldest inhabited cities of the world.

The road from Jericho was mentioned in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). Jesus taught that loving a neighbor means showing mercy. Now several chapters later, Luke tells a story that shows how Jesus practiced what He preached. He is on the road and confronted by someone who requests "mercy," the same word as appeared in the parable in Luke 10:37. Will Jesus be like the religious leaders who pass a person in need?

Instead of someone who had been robbed, like the man in Jesus' parable, Jesus encounters a man born blind—someone just sitting beside the road and begging for alms. Jesus, accompanied by His disciples and a large crowd,

comes near (Luke 18:35). The man asks what is going on, for there was probably a big commotion (v. 36). Some in the crowd told him who was passing by: “Jesus of Nazareth” (v. 37). He begins to implore Jesus, the “Son of David,” to be merciful toward him (v. 38).

His request emphasizes that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah—a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies as the rightful heir to David’s throne. He asks for “mercy” to be shown him, but he doesn’t say what he means. Under typical circumstances, he would be asking for financial help.

Some in the procession object to this man’s cries for help and admonish him to stop (v. 39). The crowd might be imagining that Jesus’ attention should not be wasted on someone who was marginalized, poor, and blind. They expect that Jesus’ mission has to be more important than answering. Does a “king” sound like the kind of person who can be hassled when He is trying to get somewhere? Despite the crowd’s attempts to silence him, the man does not stop. He keeps asking for King David’s descendant to show mercy. No one is going to prevent him from seeking Jesus’ deliverance.

The man’s persistence displays a relentless faith. In contrast to others in the crowd, he recognizes that Jesus was a source of hope and healing. Jesus does meet the outcasts, the lost, and the downcast with a display of God’s mercy.

Precisely because He is the rightful king, Jesus takes the time to show mercy. Hosea 6:6 says, “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” Even the sacrifices that God required according to the Law of Moses might be rejected, if they were given hypocritically—meaning, when a person was being unmerciful toward others. God redeemed His people through an act of mercy, and this shows that mercy is never optional. The king had a mission, and His mission was to come near this man.

- 4.** *Whom does Jesus encounter as He approached Jericho?*
- 5.** *What prompts the man to call out to Jesus?*

6. *How does the man respond to the crowd's rebuke?*

The Savior Heals the Man

Luke 18:40–43 KJV

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Luke 18:40–43 NIV

⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹“What do you want me to do for you?”

“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

⁴³ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Despite being surrounded by the large crowd, Jesus hears the man's cries and issues a command for the man to “be brought to him” (v. 40). The nearest person—possibly the same one who had just been telling him to be quiet—now has the job of leading him to Jesus.

In order to appreciate what Jesus is doing, it is helpful to look at the ways Luke has arranged events in chapter 18. Jesus told a parable about a widow who would not stop asking for justice until she received her request (Luke 18:1–8). It's a parable about persistence. Then, Jesus tells about two people who pray to God, one with pride in his heart and the other asking for mercy as a sinner (Luke 18:9–14). It's a parable about humility. Then after, Luke tells about a wealthy ruler who came to Jesus, but the ruler was unwilling to give up everything to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:18–30).

Here, Jesus demonstrates that, if it is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:24), maybe it is a little easier for someone who is poor, like the beggar before Him. This man has no authority, no possessions, no social status. His only hope was to cry out so that His king might hear him. Jesus left the wealthy young ruler sad and disappointed; that man was comfortable. But for someone as destitute and desperate as this poor man, Jesus can do something for him (Luke 18:41). His willingness to act is confirmation of His previous words, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 6:20).

The man asks that his sight would be restored. He has faith to ask the rightful king of Israel to heal him. Jesus praises the man's faith (v. 42). He can just say, "Receive your sight," and it is done. He has that kind of authority to restore what was lost.

The man does not stop coming to Jesus, but now he can follow without any help (v. 43). He knows that only God's Son would have been able to heal him. The crowd, after witnessing this event, now joins this man in praise. They too saw the power displayed through Jesus' actions.

The miraculous healing serves at least three purposes. First, the story demonstrates Jesus' care for the marginalized. Second, this incident affirms Jesus' identity as the Messiah. He proves that He has the divine authority and power to restore a person's sight, just as the words of the prophet had said (Isa. 61:1). Third, Jesus' interaction with the man shows the consequence of faith. The man's faith was persistent and unshakable. Jesus not only acknowledges but also honors that faith.

7. *How does Jesus respond to the poor man's plea for help?*

8. *Why do you think that Jesus left the rich young ruler sad, but Jesus could give this poor man what he most wanted?*

9. *How does the man respond to being healed?*

Awaiting God's Mercy

How do we await God's mercy? With confidence and joy, or with disillusionment and despair? I wish I could say that I am always confident that Jesus will show me mercy. Sometimes, I react with fear.

The evangelist Billy Graham used to say, "The wonderful news is that our Lord is a God of mercy." When we seek God's mercy, we should not focus on our own failures and mistakes. We can place our hope on the compassion of Christ. When people needed forgiveness, Jesus forgave; when people sought healing, Jesus healed; and when people died, Jesus gave life. As Deuteronomy 4:31 reminds us, "The LORD your God is a merciful God." We can anchor our faith in the unchanging character of God.

But receiving mercy is only half of our covenant with God. We also must extend compassion to others. When we show mercy to others, we not only reflect the love of God to the world, we also remind ourselves of the mercy God has shown us. We are recipients of God's boundless grace. That means we are called to "be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

You might ask yourself, "Am I like the wealthy ruler, or am I like the man in today's story?" Luke shows us that if we are too comfortable with the way the world is now, it's a lot harder to enter God's kingdom and to accept the lordship of Jesus. God is willing to meet us, wherever we come from, and Jesus does not turn away a humble request for mercy. Praise God for His mercy and for His Son, who truly embodies it!

10. *When you pray, do you ask for God's mercy? What do you say?*

11. *What is one way that God's mercy inspires you to show compassion toward others?*

12. *It what ways are you ready for the kingdom of God and to proclaim Jesus as king?*

Receive and Share!

When the blind beggar cried out to Jesus, the Lord responded with curative compassion. The man desperately wanted to see, and he believed that Jesus had the power to heal him. Like the blind beggar, we should ask for God's mercy. Moreover, we must extend compassion to others.

► *Make a commitment to place your trust in the hands of a merciful God, recalling His deep love for you and His ever-present compassion. Moreover, commit to sharing God's mercy with others who need to experience His compassion.*

KEY VERSE

And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. —Luke 18:39 KJV

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" —Luke 18:39 NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of December 23 through December 29

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Luke 4:14–21—Mercy for Those Who Suffer.
- Tue.** Luke 6:27–36—Show God's Mercy to All.
- Wed.** Micah 7:14–20—God Delights in Compassion.
- Thu.** Psalm 25:1–10—Remember Your Mercy, O Lord.
- Fri.** Psalm 25:11–22—God Relieves a Troubled Heart.
- Sat.** Luke 18:9–14—Mercy for Sinners.
- Sun.** Luke 18:35–43—Lord, Let Me See Again.