

Zion Church PCA  
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AFC Elective: Shaped By Mercy

**Week 2:** What did you take away from **John 13**?

**Week 3: A Reformed Theology for Mercy Ministry**

- What is the place of mercy in the great doctrines of the Christian faith?
  - Some do not see a connection
  - When we are committed to the rich theology of the Bible we will have a heart for mercy ministry
    - Mercy ministry is furthered, not hindered by biblical theology
    - Mercy ministry lends credibility to the gospel
  - A ministry of mercy is no less than the application of the word to the deep needs of a fallen world
  
- What does Reformed Theology say about mercy ministry?
  - More simply put, what does the Bible say about ministries of mercy?
    - “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” **Luke 6:36**
    - Jesus’ example: “Do just as I have done.” **John 13:15**
  
- Tell me who your God is, and I will know what your mercy ministry looks like!
  - Your perception of God tends to drive how you treat other people
  
  - The doctrine of God (the attributes of God)
    - Mercy
      - **Titus 3:5** “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”
      - **Ephesians 2:4** “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,…”
    - Compassion
      - **James 5:11** “You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”
      - **Romans 9:15** “For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”
    - Lovingkindness
      - **Jonah 4:2** “... for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness.”
      - **Lamentations 3:22** “The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.”

- Patience
    - **I Timothy 1:16** “But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.”
  - Longsuffering
    - **Exodus 34:6** “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”
    - **Romans 9:22** “What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.”
  - Justice
    - **Deuteronomy 10:18** “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.”
    - **Psalms 9:7** “But the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice.”
- Thus, how does the character of God affect our view of mercy ministry?
    - Mercy ministry finds its source in the character of God
    - Ministries of mercy flow from the character of God
    - His character compels us to be ministers of mercy
    - Mercy ministry is a reflection of the whole being and nature of God
    - We ought to imitate him
- The doctrine of the Creation
    - Teaches us about the goodness of what God has made
      - declares the way things are supposed to be
        - the dignity of all people made in his image
          - “I was somebody once”
          - such dignity makes a claim on our mercy
            - not just male and female
              - young and old
              - rich and poor
              - born and unborn
              - black and white
    - Without the doctrine of creation, we are inclined to divide people into two groups
      - those who deserve our mercy
      - and those who don't
        - but everyone was made in the image of God
          - We all share the same inherent dignity
    - Thus, I should show mercy *as one* created in His image
    - Thus, I should show mercy *to those* created in His image
    - Calvin: the neglect of the poor is a sacrilege
      - serving those created in his image gives honor to Him

- The doctrine of Sin
  - How can the needs of a fallen world be understood without understanding depravity?
  - How can we understand our own unwillingness to show mercy without understanding our own depraved condition?
  - Explains why the world is the way it is, and why people are the way they are
    - We suffer because of own sin and because of the sins of others
      - Suffering is unique to the human plane
        - **Revelation 20:1-4**
  - Thus, the doctrine of sin explains *why* mercy is needed
- The doctrine of the Incarnation
  - Effective mercy ministry meets people where they are
  - we imitate the Son of God incarnate in his mercy towards us
- The doctrine of Salvation
  - Explains why mercy is possible
    - Hope for a fallen world
  - Jesus offered mercy in his deeds and his words
- The doctrine of the Cross
  - ... so we ought to lay down our lives for others
  - The bondage of sin can only be broken by the mercy of the cross
- The doctrine of the Resurrection
  - Mercy offers not only hope for here and now, but also hope for heaven
  - The power of the empty tomb
- The doctrine of the Ascension
  - He is seated at the right hand of god
    - praying for his people to receive mercy
    - pouring out of the Holy Spirit
    - the gifts and grace we need to do mercy ministry in word and deed
- God intends the whole saving work of Jesus Christ to come to expression in our own servant ministry
  - **Phillipians 2**
    - Illustrates a very practical point
      - be mercy minded
      - be interested in others
    - Is my life demonstrating principles of mercy, so the saving work of Jesus Christ is coming to a living demonstration?
      - Look to the mercy given to you
      - Look to the pattern of service set out by Jesus Christ
        - Serving

- Sacrificing
- The doctrine of Election
  - no one is ever saved by his own merits, only by the sovereign mercy of God
    - humbles our pride
    - teaches us to love those who seem undeserving, just like me
    - teaches us to be agents for God's mercy
      - as He has had mercy on us
- The doctrine of Justification by Faith
  - We are covered by the righteousness of Christ
    - There is hope for all of us, who cannot save ourselves
- The doctrine of Adoption
  - we are all children of God
  - we ought to bear His likeness
    - father of the fatherless, protector of widows
  - thus, there ought to be a longing in our hearts to present adoption papers to the lost
- The doctrine of Sanctification
  - changes us from the inside out
  - our present circumstances do not trump our inherent dignity
- The doctrine of Perseverance
  - mercy never gives up
  - we bear one another's weaknesses with longsuffering
- The doctrine of Glorification
  - how beautiful we will become
    - what a message for the hopeless
- The doctrine of the Final Judgement
  - To those who do justice and mercy, he will say come
    - as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me
- Therefore, the entirety of reformed theology calls us to mercy ministry