



On the wings of mercy

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Can we think of a single wrong committed toward us that would be greater than those committed toward Christ Jesus? Yet look at what his attitude and actions were in response to the many indignities and injustices he received. He demanded no apology from his offenders but rather forgave them, healed them, prayed for them. When Jesus was on the cross, his attitude was not one of condemnation but of mercy. He said of those who crucified him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."¹ What mercy was exemplified by Jesus, and what a powerful example he set for us all when we are wronged!

How could Jesus be merciful in the face of such wrongs? What gave him spiritual poise and freedom from anger? Wasn't it that he steadfastly identified man as the image of God, and understood that evil is always impersonal, no part of God's man? Jesus responded with mercy because his vision of man was clear. It was spiritual.

This spiritual view of man and of the role that mercy plays in human affairs was certainly reflected in the Master's teachings. The attitude of mercy is clearly woven into the Beatitudes and throughout the Sermon on the Mount. In the face of such wrongs as aggression, cursing, and hating, the response of mercy through loving, blessing, and praying is put forth as the answer.

In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, the mercy of the father was wonderfully expressed through his actions toward his errant son.² The father had no harsh words for his son, no self-righteousness or criticism. His response to his son was resplendent with the love that lifts off the error and recognizes man's inherent goodness and purity.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus why he associated with those who had committed wrongs, namely publicans and sinners, part of his answer was, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."³

Jesus instructed his followers, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."⁴ But how are we to be merciful when the wrong committed seems so wrong, when we feel betrayed, lied to, deceived? Our thoughts may be filled with the aggressive clamor of self-righteousness, condemnation, anger, hate, to be expressed in words and actions. But what aggressively argues for retaliation is the carnal mind seeking acceptance as real identity and power. The Bible states, "We have the mind of Christ."⁵ With this "mind of Christ"—the divine Mind, which man reflects as God's likeness—we are divinely empowered to dismiss the insistent lies of the carnal mind and to cherish mercifully the true identity of one another as perfect. If our Father-Mother God is merciful, as Jesus stated, then it's natural for us to express this attribute.

The fact that God is merciful, though, does not mean that He sees man doing wrong and then decides to be lenient with him. On the contrary, God never sees man as less than the way He created him—His spiritual, perfect likeness, doing good. God's mercy expresses His nature as infinite Love, as divine Principle, which forever embraces man and the whole of creation as perfectly good, excluding from them everything ungodlike. Wrongdoing brings its own punishment because it separates us, in belief, from the very Principle of our being, which is the only source of harmony. It would separate us from infinite good. Divine mercy forever saves through divine law, through destroying the carnal elements of thought that would deny God's allness and man's actual, Godlike nature.

Mary Baker Eddy instructs, "Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love—the kingdom of heaven—reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear."⁶ To let mercy reign within us is to express compassion and tenderness in our relationships with each other. The wrong that someone does is really not a part of his or her true nature as God's man. Mercy makes the separation. It separates the error from our concept of the person and sees that goodness identifies every individual. Then we do not contribute to division, but instead express the activity of the Christ, which unifies. Seeing the inherent goodness of man, we can respond in a way that doesn't fasten the wrong on someone but rather opens the way for actions in line with the Christ, opens the way for healing and peace.

Being merciful in the face of wrongs also means that we are coming to understand that people and circumstances do not truly govern our life, but that divine Principle alone is in charge of our being. When Pontius Pilate said to Jesus, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" the Master responded, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me,

except it were given thee from above."⁴ He understood that God alone determined his experience. It was governed not by human will, envy, human mistakes, or hatred but solely by divine Principle. His life was the embodiment of God's law, the expression of its pure intent. Therefore he could not be a victim and placed no blame on his persecutors.

Jesus responded with mercy because his vision of man was clear. It was spiritual. The role mercy plays in human affairs was reflected in the Master's teachings.

When we're faced with wrongs, reactions of anger and hate often have their basis in the false assumption that a person has the power to govern our life, causing it to be adversely affected. But an act of mercy can instead come forth if we consistently understand that no person holds our life in his or her hands. Divine Principle alone is in charge. It is all-encompassing in its jurisdiction, with blessings enough for all.

As we follow the example of Christ Jesus, relationships that seemed strained because of actions expressed by another can come under the embracing wings of mercy. I had such an experience. Through the process of getting some insurance estimates for the repair of my car, it was found that repair work done some years ago had not been done properly. Because of this the entire back side of the car was rusting. The previous repair work had been costly, and the thought that it hadn't even been done correctly made me feel that I had been wronged and was the victim of dishonesty or oversight. But my newfound understanding of mercy prevailed, and I saw that dishonesty and carelessness are not qualities of the real man, the man of God's creating. I refused to be mesmerized into believing that error identified man, and held to the spiritual fact that goodness identifies him. In the final analysis, no wrong is ever real; good alone is real, because God, good, is the only cause. I saw too that the repairman who had done the work did not have jurisdiction over my experience—divine Principle alone was in charge. It was omnipresent and omnipotent, and all identities were inseparable from that divine Principle and acting in accord with its direction.

So when I called the repairman and explained the situation to him, I felt no anger, no disappointment, no hate, just a calm sense of mercy. When I brought the car to him to look at it, he said that so much time had passed that even if the car had had the manufacturer's warranty, it would

have expired. He went on to say, however, that he would make good on all the work that was done poorly. He agreed to fix the car completely even though this would take several days. This agreement was worked out in just a few minutes. There was no self-justification on anyone's part, no desire to inflict criticism, no self-righteousness, no anger, and no apology demanded. Just mercy, a willingness to see the goodness of man, a willingness to help and to save, expressed by us both. A great wave of peace washed over me as we shook hands in agreement.

What a power for peace and harmony the living of mercy is in our lives, in our communities, and in the affairs of the world. The Bible states that God's "tender mercies are over all his works."⁸ Because man is God's likeness, it's natural for us to express mercy toward all with whom we come in contact. A great blessing is held for us and for mankind as we go about our way on the wings of mercy!

¹ [Luke 23:34.](#)↑

² See Luke 15:20–24.↑

³ [Matt. 9:13.](#)↑

⁴ [Luke 6:36.](#)↑

⁵ [I Cor. 2:16.](#)↑

⁶ [Science and Health, p. 248.](#)↑

⁷ [John 19:10, 11.](#)↑

⁸ [Ps. 145:9.](#)↑