
Mercy

D&C 99:3

In this revelation calling John Murdock to serve a mission to the eastern states, the Lord revealed, “And who receiveth you as a little child, receiveth my kingdom: and blessed are they, for they shall obtain mercy” (D&C 99:3).

Mercy is defined as “the compassionate treatment of a person greater than what is deserved.”¹ The ultimate example of receiving such compassion is the atonement of Jesus Christ. Through the atonement, the Savior satisfied the law of justice when He took our place and suffered the penalty for our sins and transgressions. Because of the selfless act of the atonement, if we come unto Him and repent of our sins, we will return to live with our Father in Heaven, or as Alma taught, “Justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved” (Alma 42:24).

Forgiveness of sin is not the only gift of mercy:

We are recipients of divine mercy when Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers, when we receive guidance from the Holy Ghost, and when we are healed from sickness through priesthood power. Although all such blessings come as results of our obedience, we could never receive them through our efforts alone. They are merciful gifts from a loving and compassionate Father.²

In speaking with His disciples, Jesus Christ commanded: “Be ye ... merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36). One way we can be merciful is in our relationships with others. This is particularly important with those whose shortcomings we know.

¹ “Mercy,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

² “Mercy,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

President Thomas S. Monson, in his general conference address in April 2005, told the story of neighbors in Salt Lake City, Utah, who knew the shortcomings of their paperboy but failed to show mercy:

Several years ago we had a young paperboy who didn't always deliver the paper in the manner intended. Instead of getting the paper on the porch, he sometimes accidentally threw it into the bushes or even close to the street. Some on his paper route decided to start a petition of complaint. One day a delegation came to our home and asked my wife, Frances, to sign the petition. She declined, saying, "Why, he's just a little boy, and the papers are so heavy for him. I would never be critical of him, for he tries his best." The petition, however, was signed by many of the others on the paper route and sent to the boy's supervisors.

Not many days afterward, I came home from work and found Frances in tears. When she was finally able to talk, she told me that she had just learned that the body of the little paperboy had been found in his garage, where he had taken his own life. Apparently the criticism heaped upon him had been too much for him to bear. How grateful we were that we had not joined in that criticism. What a vivid lesson this has always been regarding the importance of being nonjudgmental and treating everyone with kindness.

The Savior should be our example. As is recorded of Him, He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He "went about doing good, ... for God was with him."³

³ Thomas S. Monson, "Constant Truths for Changing Times," *Ensign*, May 2005.