

3.11.12

## Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

“One can quickly be misled to think that the process of showing mercy begins with us. That, however, is not the case. It is God who is merciful and gracious, first and foremost, and the people of God are who they are because they have personally received God’s mercy.” ~R. B. Gardner

Several years ago, I deeply struggled with believing God had forgiven me over a past sin. I would read verses like, “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10) “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God . . .” (1 Peter 2:9) “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved . . .” (Colossians 3:12) I would read them and just couldn’t accept that God had forgiven me. I didn’t understand that He could see me as holy, and I guess I believed that Jesus had died for everyone except me. Eventually, God opened my eyes through Beth Moore’s “Believing God” Bible study. It was in those pages that I learned to believe God when He told me something in His Word. It was during those weeks that I began to understand forgiveness, mercy and grace.

When Dan taught through Matthew 18:21-35, I realized I am a lot like the unmerciful servant. Even after personally experiencing so much mercy, I don’t always give it to others. I frequently show judgment instead of compassion. I give criticism instead of encouragement. And it’s usually to the people that are closest to me – my family.

When Jesus came, He showed us the perfect example of forgiveness, mercy, and grace. These are things I could never demonstrate on my own. They’re not in my nature. But even when I mess up, God lavishes me with love and continues to bless. Thinking about *Radical*, I believe part of the reason we are told to read Scripture is to remind us about these truths. It is to deeply plant them in our heart. Let’s continue to let God’s Word and the work Jesus did on the cross continue to change us. As it does, we will want to share that with others.

### Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Once I’ve experienced God’s mercy, can I share it with others?

Am I merciful? What does that look like in real life?

Dan said, “Mercy costs something.” What does it cost?

Why does healing begin with forgiveness? What does healing end with mercy?

There needs to be a balance of justice and mercy. We usually seek justice and forget mercy. Where am I on the continuum?

Jesus teaches in Matthew 18:17 that I am to treat someone that has sinned against me as a pagan or a tax collector. How did Jesus treat pagans and tax collectors?

Think about the story Dan told about watching the playback of my life and having a “blackout” during the times I sinned. How does it feel to know God knows all my deep dark secrets and yet forgives me?

Receive . Ask . Give – Do I understand and accept God’s mercy? Do I need to ask someone for mercy? To whom do I need to give mercy?

Dan suggested that if I haven’t cried over my sin, I may not understand mercy. Do I agree?

Can I give mercy unconditionally?

***This month’s memory verse:*** *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2Pe 1:3 TNIV)*

***Additional Verses:*** *Luke 23:34, 46, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 18:15-35*

**Reminders:**

3.18 The Gathering at SHU at 10am “The Journey to the Cross”

3.25 The Gathering at SHU at 10am “The Journey to the Cross”

4.1 The Gathering at SHU at 10am “The Journey to the Cross”

***Radical Reminder:***

I will pray for the entire world.

I will read through the entire Word.

I will sacrifice my money for a specific purpose.

I will spend time in another context.

I will commit my life to a multiplying community.

How am I doing in each of these areas?