

I Am Most Like Jesus When...

Discussion Guide

Week of March 12 - **"I Am Merciful"**

**Scripture verse: Luke 22:1-6 / John 13:18-30 / 18:1-11 /
Mark 14:43-50 / Matthew 5:7**

LOOKING BACK:

Last week we saw how Jesus looks on us as we are engulfed in sin of all kinds, and he still LOVES us. He showed that love by becoming a servant and meeting our need for a Savior, and He demonstrated it to his disciples by washing their feet... the job of a lowly servant, not of God's Son. Jesus demonstrated that loving acts of service begin at home, with those you love most.

Where did you see an opportunity to serve someone else? What did you do last week to serve this person?

Select one of your group members in advance to pray for your group tonight. Consider asking someone who did not speak out at last week's meeting. Coach them in praying by saying, "Will you pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide our group as we learn from God's word." Ask the Lord for boldness within the group to speak out about what the Holy Spirit is revealing to them."

OPENING QUESTION: Take a few moments to discuss the difference between justice and mercy. What are some offenses for which we think we should be given a break from

punishment? What are some offenses for which justice should not be overlooked?

LOOKING UP:

Before reading the definitions below... first allow the group to define the 3 terms. After they offer their answers... review the terms together:

Mercy - not receiving a punishment that is earned/deserved.

Grace - receiving a gift you did not earn or deserve (Salvation)

Justice - just behavior or treatment; righteousness, rightfulness, lawfulness, equitableness

These terms will help shape your view of today's study. As we will read Jesus walked through the night of his betrayal, from his final Passover meal right up to the time of his arrest. He always knew full well what was going to happen to him. He was also fully aware he had the power to change anything about these events that he chose. More remarkably, he stayed the course to fulfill everything that was written in the Old Testament about Him.

How are these actions a reflection of mercy?

Since there are multiple Scripture passages tonight, have 4 members ready to read the following passage: Luke 22:1-6; John 13:18-30; John 18:1-11 and Mark 14:43-50.

READ PASSAGE:

Answer the first 2 questions
in the center

1. What stood out to you most?
2. What was challenging or hard to understand?
3. What does this teach us about people?
4. What does this teach us about God?

RE-READ SAME PASSAGE

out of another bible
translation then answer the
last 2 questions

LOOKING FORWARD:

WRAP UP: How did Jesus respond to Judas despite his foreknowledge of betrayal? He gave him what he also gave the world... mercy instead of punishment and retaliation. That was what he taught and modeled throughout his life. That's also his challenge to his church.

Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy."

Have you been withholding mercy from anyone? Are you holding any grudges against someone that needs to be released? Are you treating anyone poorly because of a past offense?

Pray audibly for the Holy Spirit to bring to mind anyone that you have been withholding mercy. Then ask Jesus to give you the courage and confidence (perhaps with someone else coming along to support you) to go and extend mercy and forgiveness.

Following the prayer, spend 1-2 minutes in silence listening to what the Holy Spirit says to your heart. Decide how you will go and meet with that person to offer forgiveness this week.

Recognize that Jesus is calling you to be merciful, to withhold the punishment you feel they rightly deserve and to walk in harmony with them. Our God is a God of second chances, and he wants his people to offer others second chances as well. So, go and make things right with the offender this week.

NOTE: