

1. Introduction

- a. This is a story of mercy shown towards an enemy.
 - i. Saul has marched out with 3,000 men to kill David
 - ii. David is hiding in the wilderness—he was driven out of his home to endure trials
 - iii. David and Abishai go into Saul's camp and see him sleeping in the middle of it
 - iv. Saul had the spear near his head and Abishai offers to swiftly kill him (v. 8)
 - v. David says not to destroy him
- b. David shows immense mercy and forgiveness towards the very person is out to "get him" so to speak
- c. What does it mean to show mercy to those who have wronged you?

2. The Start to Mercy (seeing others as made in God's image)

- a. Saul has been rejected and is envious. He tries to kill David. David becomes a fugitive. He's on the run.
- b. David has him in the moment of ultimate weakness. Saul is exposed. But David holds back—why?
 - i. David gives a theological answer. He can't touch the Lords anointed (v. 11)
 - ii. David knew Saul was chosen once. He spares him because he knows that Saul deserves a chance to redeem himself.
 - iii. David recognizes God's role in Saul's life and that Saul's life has intrinsic value of sorts
 1. We are all made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)
 2. What does that mean? In the very least it means we are neighbors with everyone.
 3. They must be protected. Everyone has a sacred dignity.
 4. We are to do good to all not because of their merits but because of their image.
 5. What's your image? Do you see that in others?
 - a. Lewis, The Weight of Glory "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

3. The Cost of Mercy (paying down the debt of our enemies)

- a. David has a chance to strike his enemy.
- b. But David offers three very different outcomes (v 10)
 - i. He ultimately knows that only God knows what Saul deserves.
 - ii. You don't know what they deserve. God does.
 - iii. David allows for the mercy of God to trump his own sense of power.
- c. David at this point of his life knows he is only alive by mercy (Jonathan protecting him from Saul). So he knows he had to have mercy.

4. The Power for Mercy (taking our self out of the throne of judgement)

- a. David says "my lord o king" (v. 17)
 - i. This was amazing! David was the anointed one now, but he calls Saul the anointed
 - ii. David was the one wronged and driven to the wilderness and yet he shows mercy in the time of his enemy's weakness!!
 - iii. He abdicated even when he has the power over his enemy.
 - iv. He could have exercised his military and kingly power.
 - v. David was putting himself at risk by not seizing the chance to get rid of his enemy.
- b. David shows mercy, but it's still cognizant of the reality of the situation
 - i. Did Saul get away with it? Did he get off free and easy? No. David doesn't just let it go.

1. He takes the spear. He goes to a high place. He calls down. He, in essence, says that he could have killed him. But he didn't.
 2. And in v. 18, he holds Saul to task (basically: "What have I done that you would try to kill me?")
 3. David acknowledges the situation, he doesn't just blindly ignore the murderous intentions of Saul
- c. And Saul is sorry (v. 21). But what makes him sorry?
- i. Being exposed? No. Being proven wrong? No. Being scolded by David? No
 1. What makes him sorry and repentant is when he sees that someone has made his life "precious" in his eyes (v. 21)
 - ii. Notice: David is still holding the spear—he still could get back at Saul, but he withholds and this is what makes Saul truly sorry: The mercy of David.
 - iii. Saul is melted by the aggressive love of David. Why did he say David was "his son" when David was no such thing?
 1. What makes someone melt like that toward you?
 - a. When you know someone else has looked at you and found your life "precious" in His eyes
 - b. Isaiah 53: 4-6 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.
 - iv. David didn't strike back
 1. Someone else didn't strike back when they could
 - a. 1 Peter: and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats,
 - v. David was driven to the wilderness and tested
 1. Someone else was driven to the wilderness and tested
 - a. Matthew 4
 - vi. David entrusted ultimate judgement to God while still recognizing the severity of the situation
 1. Someone else would come and entrust God ultimately to forgive the very people who were killing him
- d. Jesus was the real anointed one—the true King
- i. He forgives his enemies (You and me--His enemies by our nature warring with God)
 - ii. You only forgive in as much as you know you've been forgiven.
 - iii. You only see others' lives as precious in your eyes if you know that your life, not by achievements, but by grace alone is precious in HIS eyes!

5. Conclusion

- a. What does this do to you and I when we know Jesus sees us through and through and still considers us precious enough to die for us?
- b. It should make you a more forgiving person because you see the beauty God has pronounced on you as well as those who seek to do you harm
- c. Elie Weisel, Holocaust survivor: "We must not see any person as an abstraction. Instead, we must see in every person a universe with its own secrets, with its own treasures, with its own sources of anguish, and with some measure of triumph."
- d. What gives you this amazing power? To forgive, to see people "with some measure of triumph?"
 - i. God doesn't see you as an abstraction—he sees you as something precious enough to die for
 - ii. God doesn't turn away from your sin and wrongdoing—he confronts it head on. How? By giving up his Son
 - iii. You and I, in order to be forgiving people, have to know the measure to which we were first forgiven