

# The Merciful Savior

Luke 9:51-56

01-22-2017

# Outline

- Prologue – A little history
- The Merciful God of the Old Testament and New
- The Setting
- God's Tender Mercies
  - The approaching mercy
  - The magnanimous mercy
- Epilogue

# Prologue – A Little History

- After Solomon, the Northern tribes turned away from God
  - No Godly King...from Jeroboam to Hoshea; not one.
  - Assyria conquered Israel (Samaria) and deported the population – 2 Ki 17:1-6
- Assyria imported other people into Samaria – 17:24-41
  - They brought their own gods with them – 17:24, 29-31
  - They asked for priests of Samaria's God and added Him – 17:25-28
  - Eventually served YHWH alone, but with some alterations – cf. Jn 4:7-42

# Samaria and Judah

- When Judean exiles returned from Babylon, Samaritans offered help in rebuilding the Temple – Ezra 4:1-2
  - Because they were not of Israel, the Jews rejected their offer
  - The Samaritans became their enemies – 4:3ff.; Neh 4:1-2
- The Samaritans corrupted the Jewish faith
  - They rejected all but the Pentateuch
  - They built their own temple on Mt Gerizim
  - They forbade worship in Jerusalem
  - They would not give hospitality to anyone travelling to Jerusalem to worship
- Apocryphal reference – “the stupid people living at Shechem” – Ecclesiasticus 50:25-26
- Jewish leaders insult of Jesus – “[you] Samaritan” – Jn 8:48

# The Merciful God of the Old Testament & New

- Many people believe the God of the New Testament is either:
  - Not the same god as in the Old Testament, or
  - So strongly influenced by His Son, Jesus...that He became a God of Love instead of a God of Retribution
- Mercy and Truth are magnified according to His name – Ps 138:2; Pr 3:2
  - God is Truth – Ps 31:5; Is 65:16
  - Yet mercy is also linked with justice – Hos 12:6; Zech 7:9
- Elisha and the Aramean mercy – 2 Ki 6:11-23

# The Merciful God of the Old Testament & New

- David spoke of God's attitude toward the merciful one – Ps 41:1; 86:15
- Solomon recognized the benefits of mercy – Pr 11:17
- God offered mercy to Nebuchadnezzar – Dan 4:27
- Zechariah (John's father) rehearsed God's mercies – Lk 1:78
- Jesus promised blessing to the merciful ones – Mt 5:7
- To show mercy is to imitate God – Eph 5:1*f*.
- Paul called God the “Father of mercies” – 2 Cor 1:3; cf. Eph 2:4
- Hebrews calls Jesus as a “merciful...High Priest” – Heb 2:17

# Christians and Mercy

- We are commanded to show mercy, just as God does – Lk 6:36
- Failure to show mercy earns God's judgment – James 2:13; cf. Lk 6:37
- The Father of the Prodigal demonstrated great mercy – Lk 15:11*ff.*

# The Setting

- Matthew focuses upon Jesus' fulfilment of the Jewish hopes
- Luke focuses upon the mercies of God toward all people in Jesus
  - Most Excellent Theophilus
  - Jesus the Kinsman Redeemer of ALL peoples – going back to Adam
  - Stories of ministry outside of Israel
- The record has focused upon His identity as the Son of God
  - His ministry to this point has focused upon Galilee
- Now, it uniquely focuses upon the journey to Jerusalem – 9:51-19:27
  - Only John focuses on Judean ministry portions – Jn 7-11
- The lesson on humility is followed by a long lesson on mercy -> even to the death



God's Tender Mercies

# The Approaching Mercy – 9:51

- “When the days,” – an indefinite period of time has passed
  - Focus changes from the **COMING** of Jesus to the **GOING** of Jesus – cf. 9:21, 44
    - He will make brief visits to Galilee (17:11-37) but now the focus is upon what is to come
- From the mount of exaltation to the valley of humiliation
- Jesus takes some time before arriving
- “Approaching,” συμπλερόω, sumpleroo, to be fulfilled, completed
  - The cross was the plan...the time was ordained by God – cf. 13:31-33; Jn 7:8, 30; 8:20
  - Jesus reminded the disciples of Emmaus of God’s plan – Mt 26:54, 56; Lk 22:37; 24:44
  - Peter informed the crowds of the fulfillment of God’s plan – Ac 3:18, cf., 13:27

# The Approaching Mercy

- “Ascension,” αναλέμψις, lifting up
  - Some limit it to the cross – cf., Jn 3:14
  - The noun only appears here in the NT
  - The related verb form αναλαμβάνω, analambano, to ascend, to be lifted up, is used to describe the ascension of Christ into heaven – Ac 1:2, 11, 22; 1 Tim 3:16
  - Jesus seems to be focusing upon the entirety of being lifted up and taken up
- “determined,” στερίζω, sterizo, something that is fixed, immovable, firmly established; resolve
  - Jesus considered it *joy*. – cf. Heb 12:2; cf. Php 2:9-11
- Jesus was on a mission of mercy to Jerusalem...to die and redeem us from sin and eternal Hell, the punishment we deserve – Jude 21

# The Magnanimous Mercy

- Not only did Luke focus upon Jesus love for all ethnic groups, but also for all types of people within those groups
  - Women, prostitutes, outcasts (including lepers), the demon-possessed, even tax collectors
- Travel always presents opportunity for memorable events
  - Jesus chose an unusual route for a Jew
  - First day – rejection (because you are going to Jerusalem)
  - Did I forget to mention? – Maccabean ruler, John Hyrcanus, destroyed the temple at Samaria (c. 113 BC)
  - The temple had not yet been rebuilt

# The Magnanimous Mercy

- The “Sons of Thunder” (James and John, Mk 3:17)... “Shall we call down fire from heaven on them?”
  - This sounds familiar...Elijah and King Ahaziah of Samaria... - 2 Ki 1:9-16
- Jesus rebuked them – to desire the destruction of those who reject the Gospel is not consistent with God’s offer of mercy – Lk 9:55*f*.
  - Textual problem – bracketed portion is not in manuscripts prior to 100+/- AD
  - Scribal notes worked their way into the text of later manuscripts as a matter of explaining Jesus’ rebuke from other comments Jesus made – cf., Lk 19:10; Jn 12:47; Jn 3:17
- Jesus grants mercy to ignorant sinners who repent – 1 Tim 1:13

# The Magnanimous Mercy

- The Samaritans did not reject Jesus because of who He claimed to be, but only because He was traveling to Jerusalem
  - Mercy is the right response to those who do not know of the truth
- Mercy is withdrawn in the face of fixed and persistent hostility toward the Gospel
  - Remember when Jesus sent the disciples out... - Lk 10:10-12
    - "...It will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city."
  - Remember Jesus rebuke at Bethsaida? – 10:13-15
- The Lord's offer of mercy came again to these people through Philip and Peter and John – Ac 8:6-8,25

# Epilogue

- Christians are not to compromise the truth or tolerate sin, but rather are to show mercy to the lost...as Jesus did
- When Christians (so-called) wield temporal judgment, the results are disastrous: Inquisition, execution of witches, persecutions of the Anabaptists by Reformed Protestants and Catholics, etc.
- The Church must confront sin and call for repentance, but the final judgment belongs to God
  - See the Wheat and the Tares – Mt 13:24-30
  - See Jesus' indictment of the Jewish leaders – Mt 23:1-3
- We serve God, who delights in mercy – Micah 7:18
  - And in merciful Christians – 2 Cor 1:4; cf., 4:1,12