

Note: The following message will be shared by Reverend Caleb Kim this Sunday, September 27, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and our community on Zoom.

Title: We All Need God's Mercy—Remember Me (The Miracle of Mercy Series 1)

Have you ever received unexpected kindness in your life? I am sure that all of us have experienced warm-heartedness in one way or another. I also believe that we all have provided it for others in various ways.

According to the Bible, mercy can be defined as “undeserved forgiveness and unearned kindness,” freely given to us by the grace of God. When we receive undeserved forgiveness from someone, we experience a reflection of God's mercy. When we show kindness to someone who may not deserve it, we become merciful people. Whether we realize it or not, we all need God's mercy every single moment of our lives.

In fact, everything we have and enjoy is rooted in God's mercy. Think about this for a moment: the very air we breathe is a sign that God is merciful. The water we drink is a sign that God is merciful. Everything on this planet flows from the mercy of God. Spiritually speaking, we would not even be alive today if God had not extended His mercy to us. Once again, we all desperately need God's mercy, because none of us is perfect.

Today, we begin a new sermon series titled The Miracle of Mercy. Over the next five Sundays, including today, we will explore the miracles of God's mercy in Scripture. As we study these passages leading up to the First Sunday in Advent, our prayer is that we will listen to Jesus' merciful voice, experience His grace in our hearts, and share His love with everyone both in our congregation and in our community.

In our Gospel readings this morning, we meet two groups of people who urgently need God's mercy. Each individual in both groups was transformed—not by the rigid demands of the law, but by the grace of Jesus.

The first person in the Gospel of John was a woman caught in adultery. She was dragged before Jesus by the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. We might expect religious leaders to show pastoral care and love to a humiliated soul accused of wrongdoing. Instead, they used this woman as a political weapon to trap Jesus and find an accusation against Him.

Please understand: the original purpose of God's law was to provide righteous guidance for holy living. Unfortunately, by this time, some religious leaders had lost the true spirit of the law, using it as a trap to criticize Jesus and His ministry. According to the civic law of Moses at that time, a person caught in adultery was subject to stoning. The religious leaders placed the woman directly in front of the crowd and asked Jesus whether they should stone her or set her free.

They thought they had trapped Him. If Jesus told the crowd to stone her, the people would be shocked by His lack of mercy. If He told them to set her free, the leaders would accuse Him of breaking God's Law. If I were in that situation, I wouldn't have known what to do!

So, what did Jesus do? He stooped down and began to write something on the ground with His finger. Then He stood up and declared: "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). I believe that as Jesus spoke those words, He was praying that the Holy Spirit would convict the hearts of everyone present. In this single statement, Jesus perfectly held together God's righteousness and God's love. God's righteousness was upheld because sin was not excused; yet God's love was revealed because Jesus came not to condemn, but to offer His life to save us.

When the crowd heard Jesus' words, starting with the oldest, they began to slip away one by one until no one was left. I don't know about you; but the longer I walk with the Lord, the more I realize my own inadequacy apart from the strength of Almighty God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The more I reflect on my own heart, the more aware I am of my need for forgiveness and grace from the Triune Lord. That awareness puts me right there in the crowd—dropping my stone and walking away. I pray that God will help all of us recognize our deep daily need for His mercy.

Spiritually speaking, we can all see ourselves in this story. Many of us remember our sermon series on Spiritual Recovery, where we explored the roadmap to freedom through the Twelve Steps and the Beatitudes. During that series, we acknowledged that all of us struggle with dependencies, hang-ups, or habits that hold us back. As James 3:2 reminds us, "We all stumble in many ways."

Let us ask ourselves honestly: Have we ever stumbled with our words—saying something in haste that we later regretted? Have we ever stumbled in our thoughts or actions—doing things we know do not reflect our identity as children of God? Have we ever struggled with recurring patterns or secret sins, fearing that someone might find out? From my many years of pastoral ministry, I have learned one truth: every single

one of us struggles with hidden shortcomings or shortfalls, and we are often terrified that others will discover them.

Look at what happened when the crowd scattered. Only two people remained: the accused woman and Jesus. Jesus, the only truly sinless person there, had every moral right to judge her—yet He did not. Instead, He looked at her and asked if anyone was left to condemn her. She replied, “No one, sir.” I believe when she answered this divine question, she repented of her sin and recognized Jesus as the Merciful Saviour. Jesus delivered these life-changing words to her: “Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). What an amazingly graceful statement! Jesus did not condemn her due to her sin, but He cleansed it and commanded her to live according to the Spirit, instead of according to the flesh. Christ’s merciful new direction encouraged her to begin a sacred journey of life with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Before we move on to the next story, we need to understand the important distinction regarding “judgment.” In daily life, we must exercise discernment—making practical choices about right and wrong, or serving on a jury to uphold justice. But the “judgment” prohibited in Scripture is harsh, self-righteous condemnation that often destroys others.

I am reminded of a story about a father riding the subway with his three young children... That story reminds us that we rarely see the whole picture. As the saying goes, “We can judge what people do, but we cannot judge why they do it.” Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” If we struggle to fully understand even our own hearts, how can we presume to pass ultimate judgment on others? Jesus calls us to put down our stones of criticism and leave judgment in the hands of God.

This brings us to our second Scripture reading today, from the Gospel of Luke, where we meet two criminals crucified alongside Jesus. Neither legal punishment nor earthly prisons had changed their hearts. Yet, in their final hours, as they hung on their crosses, a dramatic contrast took place. One criminal mocked Jesus, but the other looked at Him and saw a completely innocent man suffering for the sins of the world.

Witnessing Jesus’ grace on the cross, the second criminal recalled the core message of the Gospel: “Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). Turning to the other criminal, he said, “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41). He openly confessed his wrongdoings, turned to Jesus, and offered what might be the shortest, most powerful salvation prayer in history: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Do we notice the humility in those two words? “Remember me.” He knew

he didn't deserve forgiveness and grace from anyone. He simply threw himself completely on the mercy of Christ, asking not to be forgotten.

How did Jesus respond? "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Do we also recognize that Jesus didn't say "someday" or "after a long period of waiting." He said, "Today." Paradise is ultimately being in the presence of our merciful Savior—anywhere, in any circumstance, and at any time.

What does this mean for us today? For many people, including myself, the greatest underlying fear in life is the fear of death and standing before God. As Psalm 23 reminds us, we will all walk through the valley of the shadow of death—it is an unavoidable reality of human life. But here is the glorious Good News: we do not have to fear! When we repent of our sins, trust in Christ, and throw ourselves on His mercy, He promises to be with us. Our Good Shepherd guides us with His rod and staff, carrying us safely through life and into eternal life. When we humbly cry out, "Jesus, remember me," He answers with overwhelming grace and love. He forgives our past, guides our present, and secures our future in the Kingdom of God.

As we begin this sermon series on The Miracle of Mercy, let us acknowledge our deep need for God's mercy. Whether we realize it or not, our primary struggle is not with the people around us—even those who may have hurt us. Our primary need is on the inside. We need to ask God to forgive our critical thoughts and harsh words, and to thank Him for the supreme example of grace and love set by Jesus on the cross.

Over the next five weeks, our prayer—Remember Me—is that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with God's mercy, softening our spirits and shaping us into people of compassion. May we, as the body of Christ, reflect His love to our community—recovering the gentle, caring character of our Savior and sharing His divine grace with everyone we meet. Amen.

**In this sermon I have used thoughts and material from Rick Warren's Series—The Miracle of Mercy—and various messages texted on John 8: 1-11 & Luke 23: 39-43.*