

Why God Calls Us to Be 'Vessels of Mercy'

We are called to be vessels of mercy.

"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the *vessels of mercy*, which He had prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom. 9:22-24, author's emphasis).

Definitions

Mercy—this word means two main things:

1. Kindness expressed toward those who are hurting, damaged or deprived.
2. Compassion shown to the guilty, usually when judgment is deserved.

Vessels—All human beings are referred to as vessels. A vessel is an object purposefully designed to be filled some kind of substance.

Mercy Is a Divine Attribute

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai to get the 10 commandments the second time, God proclaimed His name before Moses, and mercy was the first descriptive word used (Ex. 34:6-7).

God's representative throne on earth was called "the mercy seat" (the lid to the ark of the covenant which, thankfully, was just a little higher than the law).

Merciful names are applied to God in Scripture: "Father of mercies" (2 Cor. 1:3b), "God of my mercy" (Ps. 59:10a, KJV).

Merciful High Priest

“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17, NKJV).

Propitiation is satisfaction for the demands of justice.

How Much Mercy Is Available?

“The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 103:17; see also Ps. 103:11).

Mercy and Glory Go Together

At the dedication of Solomon’s temple, the priests sang, “His mercy endures forever,” and the glory of the Lord filled the sanctuary.

Now Give It Away; Mercy Triumphs

“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13).

For more of Mike Shreve’s teaching on this topic, listen to this episode of *Discover Your Spiritual Identity*. {eoa}