

## Mercy Ministries

This morning we will refer to **Acts** as our biblical “family photo” album to be able to determine what the church is to look and sound like in the area of mercy ministries so that we might be able to examine ourselves and so be conformed to God’s original intention for us.

What is mercy ministry?

Definitions from Webster’s: Mercy means “*a compassionate treatment of those in distress.*”

Ministry means “*an activity through which something is accomplished.*”

Mercy Ministries is God’s *compassionate treatment of those in distress*

**Ezek. 34:11-16 = Luke 1:68-79 = Ephesians 2:4 = 1 Peter 1:3 = Luke 4: 18-19**

From **Luke 4: 18-19** we learn five things about mercy ministries=

the ***power of mercy ministries*** is from the Holy Spirit

the ***content of mercy ministries*** is the Gospel

the ***recipients of mercy ministries*** are the needy

the ***effect of mercy ministries*** is *release, recovery and freedom*

the ***purpose of mercy ministries*** is the proclamation of the grace of God

After His resurrection, Jesus commanded us to “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...*”.

The disciples were to go into the world with words and deeds of mercy as the proclamation of the gospel and we today are the rich recipients of God’s mercy ministry

The purpose and impact of Mercy ministries in the book of **Acts**:

The disciples in Acts immediately moved into their world with the gospel as they ministered to the needs of others as they shared the gospel in words of testimony and in deeds of mercy, by sharing their food, their goods, their homes, their money and their time.

**Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37 | 6:1-3**

The result of mercy ministries:

**Matt. 14: 13**

This passage shows us three results of mercy ministries:

the people are **fed**, the disciples are **fed** and they were **protected**.

1. DEEDS OF MERCY DISPLAY the *heart of God's* compassionate love=**Rom. 2:4**
2. DEEDS OF MERCY MATURE AND STRENGTHEN the church
3. DEEDS OF MERCY PROTECT the church =**Heb. 13:16**

The necessity of mercy ministries:

*Mercy ministries is not an option; it is THE command of the Gospel.*

*Mercy ministries is the very heart of God reaching the hearts of sinners and strengthening the hearts of believers.*

*By going into all the world, we are using the power of the gospel to attack the works of the devil such as bondage to sin, disease, poverty, racism, wars, etc.*

*So often we believe that if we can "get away from all of that" that we will be insulated and protected, BUT THAT IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH:*

*⇒ Darkness is not a static state but an active malevolent power and it must be opposed directly and continually through the power of the gospel in the form of mercy ministry*

⊗ THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH SHOWS THAT THE DARKNESS WILL ENTER THE CHURCH IF WE TURN OUR BACKS ON THE NEEDS OF THE NEEDY, EITHER WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE CHURCH.

WE MUST BRING THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE WORLD AND THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH MERCY MINISTRIES.

Let's remember these admonitions from Scripture:

**James 1:27 = 1 John 3:17 = James 2:14-17**

*Today God still wants to reach the world with the Gospel through Mercy ministries.*

However, in doing so we must remember that the purpose of mercy ministries *is the promulgation of the gospel for the display of God's glory as God moves in mercy in the lives of men and women.*

*The gospel is to be the central focus, content and activity of mercy ministries not the needs of*

man.

Today the church and the gospel have increasingly become the objects of ridicule and therefore, **God is seen to be unimpressive at best and unimportant or non-existent at worst.**

Why?

*The modern church has been failing to accomplish its purpose=*

*the manifestation of God's righteousness and power through the impact of mercy ministries where the gospel is seen in word and deed, in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and in power by its effect upon people and circumstances.*

*Look at the response to mercy ministry in the first century=*

†The people were AMAZED BY GOD= *to be filled with wonder : to be astounded*= **Luke 9:43**

†They were filled with AWE ABOUT GOD=*an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder that is inspired by authority or by the sacred or sublime*=**Matt. 9:8**

†They BELIEVED GOD= *to accept as true, genuine, or real* =**John 4:39**

†They WORSHIPED GOD= *reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power*=**Matt. 14:32**

†They experienced the OH OF GOD=*the feeling of wonder*=**Acts 3:10**

Are we experiencing these results today?

The recipients of Mercy Ministries:

*How do we feel when we hear about the problems in our cities?*

*How do we feel about the needs and conditions of all those people?*

*What do we feel when we think about the city of New Orleans?*

*How would we feel if God were to ask us to reach out and minister to those people out there?*

Let's compare our attitudes and motives to Jesus.

**Matt. 9:36 =Matt. 23:37 =Luke 19:10 =John 3:16-17**

## WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF MERCY MINISTRIES?

Everyone who is in need of God's mercy, both in the church and out of the church.

those who have physical needs;

Health needs, both physical and emotional

Financial needs

Relationship needs

those who have spiritual needs=the saved and unsaved

the young and the old=the elderly, widows, orphans;

those who live in nice places and those who live in bad conditions;

those of every race and gender;

sinners and saints alike.

We should consider that every human is the object of the gospel through mercy ministries.

The open door policy:

*The questions before us today is:*

*Does the Lord want to restore mercy ministries here at LCC so that they will have the same impact that the early church experienced?*

Questions for us to ask ourselves about our personal and corporate pursuit of mercy ministries:

1. Have we drifted from our call to mercy ministries?
2. Have we been too preoccupied with our own activities and problems to the neglect of the needs of those in the church and those "out there"?
3. How does **1 John 3:17** apply to us=*But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*
4. How willing are we to actively embrace and participate in mercy ministries?

God is desiring to open the doors of LCC to this area and to the rest of the world as He will take proclaim the gospel through mercy ministries.

Let's be God's fellow workers in reaching the lost as each one of us embraces mercy ministries as God opens the doors of our hearts to the needs of others so that the doors of their hearts will be open to the gospel;

†LETS' BE GOD'S DOOR OPENERS, NOT DOOR STOPPERS.†