

**Pastor Mark Mikels - December
22, 2019**

“THE SPIRITUAL ‘GIFTING’ OF SHOWING MERCY”

(Romans 12:8; Matthew 9:27-30; 15:21-28; 17:14-18; 20:29-34; Luke 17:11-14)

Intro ... Today we focus our attention upon the seventh and final spiritual '**Gifting**' listed in Romans Chapter 12 ... Seven incredible motivations for Christ-Revealing, Church-Building Christian Ministry.

So far, we have examined the '**GIFTINGS**' of **Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Encouraging, Giving** and **Leading**.

Each of these conveys (as it were) a single slice of the '*Life Perspective*' of Jesus Himself.

All together, they bring the fullness of His Life into the day-to-day dynamic of a local church. All together they enable a local congregation of believers to experience and exhibit that life in the midst of our fallen, broken, sin-filled world.

Today we examine the **seventh** and final '**Gifting**' in the series - another incredibly Christ-Revealing motivation for ministry.

Here's ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' IDENTIFIED ... "Eleeo"

"Eleeo" is another of those single Greek words that requires a couple of English words for translation.

"Eleeo" is the Greek word for **mercy** but it's more than just that.

"Eleeo" focuses our attention upon the '*actions of one who is merciful.*' It's usually used in the context of a **request** from someone who is in some sort of dire trouble.

We are calling this the '**Gifting**' of "**SHOWING MERCY.**"

That's how the NIV and the KJV translate it ...

"If it is showing mercy ('eleeo') ..." (NIV)

"He that showeth mercy ('eleeo')..." (KJV)

(Romans 12:8d)

But what does that really mean ... How do we as human beings “*show mercy*” to one another? What does it mean to possess this particular ‘*spiritual gifting*’ - that is, to view all of life from the perspective of one who is ‘*gifted*’ in this way?

Here’s the definition that we will be working with this morning. It's a definition that grows out of numerous New Testament examples.

TODAY’S ‘GIFTING’ OF SHOWING MERCY DEFINED ... “Eleeo”

*“The desire and ability to fundamentally
ALTER someone’s **SITUATION** for the **BETTER**.”*

Just think about that - just picture that! One who is motivated by the ‘*Spirit-Given Gifting*’ of “**Showing Mercy**” possesses the desire and the ability to enter into the life-circumstances of a struggling human being and somehow alter those circumstances for the better!

What a marvelous life-perspective to have in any local congregation!

So ... Today's Gifting has been **identified** and **defined**.

Now the question is:

“What does it look like?”

*“What does ‘**Showing Mercy**’ look like in this fallen world?”*

Here now is ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' OF SHOWING MERCY ILLUSTRATED ...

Jesus will once again serve as our chief example.

Matthew (that tax collector we saw Jesus calling last week) will serve as our primary eye-witness reporter.

Notice in each of these examples ...

The **REALITY** of the situation encountered

The **REQUEST** that is presented

The **RESPONSE** that is given (and)

The **RESULT** that is obtained.

Illustration One: (Matthew 9:27-30) ... **THE BLIND MEN**

As Jesus went on from there, **(The Reality)**
two blind men followed him, calling out: **(The Request)**
*"Have **mercy** ('eleeo') on us, Son of David!"*

When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them: **(Jesus' Response)** *"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"*

(Their Response) *"Yes, Lord,"* they replied.

Then he touched their eyes and ... **(The Result)** their sight was restored."

Jesus showed **mercy** ...
He fundamentally changed the situation for the better!

Illustration Two: (Matthew 15:21-28) ... **THE DISTRAUGHT MOM**

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre
and Sidon. (far to the north - into Gentile territory)

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out,
*"Lord, Son of David, have **mercy** ('eleeo') on me!"*

(The Reality) *My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."*

The woman came and knelt before him. **(The Request)** *"Lord, help me!"* she said.

He replied, **(Jesus' Response)** ... *"It is not right to take
the children's bread and toss it to their (little) dogs."*

(Clarification: Jews regularly referred to these Gentiles as 'Dogs' and pictured (in their minds) the scavenger dogs that roamed the streets of any city - Jesus refers to her and her daughter as 'little dogs - family pets' ... a kind of 'play on words' maybe said with a bit of a smile on his face. She enters into the 'word play' with him - perhaps with a corresponding smile on her face.)

(Her Response) *"Yes, Lord,"* she said, *"but even the (little) dogs
eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."*

Then Jesus answered, **(Jesus' Response)**
"Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted."

And ... **(The Result)**
Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus showed **mercy** ...
He fundamentally changed the situation for the better!

Illustration Three: (Matthew 17:14-18) ... **THE DISTRAUGHT DAD**

When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him.

(The Request) *"Lord, have mercy ('eleeo') on my son,"* he said.

(The Reality) *"He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could do nothing."*

Jesus replied ... **(The Response)** *"Bring the boy here to me."*

(The Result) Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Jesus showed **mercy** -
He fundamentally changed the situation for the better!

Illustration Four: (Luke 17:11-14) ... **THE TEN LEPERS**

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village,

(The Reality) ten men who had leprosy met him.

They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, **(The Request)** *"Jesus, Master, have pity (mercy/'eleeo') on us!"*

When he saw them, he said, **(Jesus' Response)** *"Go, show yourselves to the priests."*

And as they went, **(The Result)** they were cleansed.

Jesus showed **mercy** -
He fundamentally changed the situation for the better!

Mercy was requested in each of these dire circumstances and mercy was granted every single time! One with the '*Gift of Showing Mercy*' can do nothing less! Jesus certainly couldn't and didn't!

So that's Today's '*Gift of Showing Mercy*' **Identified, Defined** and **Illustrated** ...

Here now is ...

TODAY'S KEY PHRASE ...

The Key Phrase used by the one who shows mercy is ...
*"I must **RE-ARRANGE THINGS** for the **BETTER** for them!"*

Now let's consider briefly ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' OF SHOWING MERCY REFINED ...

"If (a man's gifting) is showing mercy ('eleeo'),

let him do it with '**HILAROTES**'.

This is the Greek word from which we get our English word: "Hilarity" - almost uncontrollable happiness/gaiety.

It's a pretty common word in the Greek language generally but it's only used two times in the entire New Testament - here in this passage and in 2 Corinthians 9:7 ... where Paul uses it to describe the kind of "giver" that God loves and desires.

Both the King James and the New International Translators chose to use the same English word in both passages ... They chose the somewhat subdued word "cheerful" as their English equivalent.

Therefore, here in Romans 12, the translation becomes ...

*"If it is showing mercy, let him do it with **CHEERFULNESS**."*

Now taking a bit more of the full meaning of the word into account and seeking to amplify the passage a bit, here's the Mikels' version:

*"If a man's 'gifting' is **SHOWING MERCY**," let him do it with a **HAPPY HEART** and a **JOYFUL SPIRIT**."
(Romans 12:8d)*

So, we're not talking about laughing hysterically or getting giddy while doing our transformational deeds, but we are definitely communicating that the "doing of these transformational deeds" should be done in the context of genuine delight.

Indeed, great joy comes to the heart of the '**Merciful One**' when he is able to successfully pull off such a "re-arrangement" for someone - when he is able to successfully "alter someone's situation for the better."

Pretty powerful gifting for the local church, wouldn't you say?

"To have the desire and ability to fundamentally alter someone's situation for the better."

Oh, how much praise goes up to God in such a place!

So now, here is **Today Gifting Aligned** with the other '**Giftings**' ... When they are all functional, there are no bases left uncovered.

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' OF SHOWING MERCY ALIGNED

WITH THE OTHER GIFTINGS ...

(Note the change in wording from "**Says**" and "**Let me**" to "**Thinks**" and "**I must.**"
This change focuses attention upon the inner motivational '*stirring*'
prompted by each '**Gifting.**'

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Prophecy** thinks: "*I must TELL them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Serving** thinks: "*I must HELP them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Teaching** thinks: "*I must ENLIGHTEN them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Encouraging** thinks: "*I must ENERGIZE them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Giving** thinks: "*I must MATERIALLY ASSIST them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Leading** thinks: "*I must GUIDE them!*"

One with the '*Gifting*' of **Mercy** thinks:
"*I must RE-ARRANGE THINGS for the BETTER for them!*"

And now consider ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' OF SHOWING MERCY ALIGNED WITH THE REST OF THE BODY ...

What a blessing to have someone in the body who desires to bring members from **DISASTER** to **DELIGHT** ... Someone who finds ways to be a **TURN-AROUND AGENT** in their lives!

And now consider this ...

Final Thot ...

'SHOWING MERCY' brings a transformational
DYNAMIC to **DESPERATE** situations.

Without **MERCY** we would all eventually be **CONSUMED!**
(Lamentations 3:22)