

## Merciful and Compassionate

**See the study** “Jesus Christ is full of Mercy, Compassion, Longsuffering, Forbearing, and Forgiveness.” for many scriptures on this subject.

A merciful person has a willingness to forgive

Other words associated with being merciful are compassionate, longsuffering, forbearance, judging righteously, and not being vengeful.

A compassionate person is sympathetic and shows pity. It inclines to be helpful or merciful

An example of being merciful is to go forth and preach the Gospel to help bring about repentance for it is the repentant who obtain mercy.

Being compassionate **is helping those who cannot help themselves** such as the Saviour healing a blind or disabled person. Another example is having our ancestors released from the Spirit prison by performing Temple ordinances for them

**Matthew 5:7:** “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” See 3 Nephi 12:7

**Matthew 23:23:** “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have **omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:** these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

**Luke 6:35-36:** “But love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and [to] the evil. **Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.**”

**Alma 41:14:** “Therefore, my son, **see that you are merciful unto your brethren;** deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, **ye shall have mercy restored unto you again;** ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again.

**Micah 6:8:** “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

**Proverbs 11:17:** “The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.”

### Mercy cannot rob Justice

**Alma 42:21-25:** “And if there was no law given, if men sinned what could justice do, or mercy either, for they would have no claim upon the creature? But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; **which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the**

**punishment**; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God. But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the Atonement; and the Atonement bringeth to pass the Resurrection of the dead; and the Resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into His presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the Law and Justice. **For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands**, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved. **What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit.** If so, God would cease to be God.”

**Mosiah 2:38-39:** “Therefore **if that man repenteth not**, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, **the demands of divine justice** do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever. And now I say unto you, **that mercy hath no claim on that man**; therefore his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment.”

### **Mercy is shown on the condition of repentance**

**Alma 12:33-34:** “But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid) saying: **If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you**, through mine Only Begotten Son; Therefore, **whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy** through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest.”

**Alma 32:13:** “Whosoever repenteth shall find mercy; and he that findeth mercy and endureth to the end the same shall be saved

**Alma 34:15-18:** “And thus He shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on His name; **this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice**, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, **while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice**; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the Great and Eternal Plan of Redemption. Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon His Holy Name, that He would have mercy upon you; Yea, cry unto Him for mercy; for He is Mighty to Save.”

**Alma 42:13:** “Therefore, according to justice, the Plan of Redemption could not be brought about, **only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice.** Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God.”

**Alma 42:31:** "...declare the word with truth and soberness, **that thou mayest bring souls unto repentance, that the great Plan of Mercy may have claim upon them.** And may God grant unto you even according to my words.

**Ether 11:8:** "And the people began **to repent of their iniquity**; and inasmuch as they did the Lord did have mercy on them."

### **Other Conditions upon which mercy are granted**

**D&C 54:6:** "But blessed are they who have kept the covenant and observed the commandment, for they shall obtain mercy."

**D&C 61:2:** "Behold, verily thus saith the Lord unto you, O ye elders of my church, who are assembled upon this spot, whose sins are now forgiven you, for I, the Lord, forgive sins, and **am merciful unto those who confess their sins with humble hearts.**"

**D&C 76:5:** "For thus saith the Lord--I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end."

**D&C 99:3:** "And who receiveth you as a little child, receiveth my kingdom; and blessed are they, for they shall obtain mercy."

**Deuteronomy 7:9:** "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations"

**Psalms 103:17-18:** "**But the mercy of the Lord [is] from Everlasting to Everlasting upon them that fear him**, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

**2 Kings 13:23:** "And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ....."

**Luke 1:50:** "And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation."

**Alma 32:22:** "And now, behold, I say unto you, and I would that ye should remember, that **God is merciful unto all who believe on his name**; therefore he desireth, in the first place, that ye should believe, yea, even on his word."

**Psalms 86:5:** "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

### **Mercy and Compassion are companions.**

**D&C 88:40:** "For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; **mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own**; justice continueth its course and claimeth its own; judgment

goeth before the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne and governeth and executeth all things. also Ether 1:35

**Mosiah 15:9:** “Having ascended into Heaven, **having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice;** having broken the bands of death, taken upon Himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.”

**Micah 7:18-19:** “Who [is] a God like unto thee; that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? **He retaineth not his anger forever because He delighteth [in] mercy.** He will turn again; He will have compassion upon us.”

## Compassion

### The need to show compassion through forgiveness

**Matthew 18:32-33:** “Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?”

### Examples of how Jesus showed compassion

**3 Nephi 17:6-7:** “And He said unto them: Behold, my bowels are **filled with compassion** towards you. Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither.”

**Mark 6:34:** “And Jesus when He came out, saw much people, **and was moved with compassion toward them,** because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things.” See Mark 5:19; Matthew 18:33

**Luke 7:13:** “And when the Lord saw her, **He had compassion on her,** and said unto her, “weep not.”

**Mark 1:40-42:** “And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. **And Jesus, moved with compassion,** put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.”

**Matthew 14:14:** “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick.”

**Matthew 20: 32-34:** “And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, ‘What will ye that I shall do unto you?’ They say unto him, ‘Lord, that our eyes may be opened.’ **So Jesus had compassion on them,** and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.”

## Other scriptures on compassion

**Alma 27:4-5:** “Now when Ammon and his brethren saw this work of destruction among those whom they so dearly beloved, and among those who had so dearly beloved them—for they were treated as though they were angels sent from God to save them from everlasting destruction—therefore, when Ammon and his brethren saw this great work of destruction, **they were moved with compassion**, and they said unto the king: Let us gather together this people of the Lord...”

**1 Peter 3:8-9:** “Finally, be ye all of one mind, **having compassion one of another**, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing:”

**1 John 3:17:** “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

**Jude 1:21-22:** “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference.”

**Luke 15:17-20:** “**And when he came to himself**, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, ‘Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, (repentance) And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.’ And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, **his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.**”

**Zechariah 7:8-10:** “And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, **and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother**: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.”

## Looking after the poor, needy and afflicted is part of having compassion

**D&C 52:40:** “And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple.”

See the study “Scriptures on Helping the Poor and Needy-A Test of Discipleship”

## A story of mercy and compassion

**Luke 10:30-37:** “And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: **and when he saw him, he had compassion on him**, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, **and took care of him**. And on the morrow when he

departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, **He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.**”

## Quotes

**President Gordon B Hinckley** Ensign April 1990

I plead for a stronger spirit of compassion in all of our relationships, a stronger element of mercy, **for the promise is sure that if we are merciful we shall obtain mercy.**

Mercy is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The degree to which each of us is able to extend it **becomes an expression of the reality of our discipleship** under Him who is our Lord and Master.

I remind you that it was He who said, “Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matt. 5:39.)

It was He who said, “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.” (Matt. 5:40.)

It was He who said, “And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” (Matt. 5:41.)

It was He who said, “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” (Matt. 5:42.)

It was He who said to the woman taken in sin:

“Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ...

“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (John 8:10–11.)

It was He who, while hanging on the cross in dreadful agony, cried out, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34.)

**He, the Son of the everlasting Father, was the epitome of mercy. His ministry was one of compassion toward the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the victims of injustice and man’s inhumanity to man.** His sacrifice on the cross was an unparalleled act of mercy in behalf of all humanity.

How great a thing is mercy. Most often it is quiet and unassuming. It receives few headlines. It is the antithesis of vengeance and hatred, of greed and offensive egotism. As Portia says in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice:

The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:  
... it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, ...  
But mercy is above the sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute of God himself.

If cultivated among all men, it would put an end to the atrocities of war. For all too many years now we have watched the conflict that has gone on in Northern Ireland. Surely those who have been closest to it and most affected by it must be weary of it. **An outpouring of mercy on both sides would overcome the corrosive hatred that has existed and festered for so long.** It is time for each side to act with greater compassion toward the other. I am confident that as surely as this happens, those who are merciful will find the mercy for which they hunger.

Of all the wars that have afflicted the United States, none was so costly in suffering and death, none so filled with venom and hatred as was the American Civil War. There are few more touching scenes in history than that of April 9, 1865, at Appomattox, Virginia, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant. General Grant wrote a brief statement of terms under which the soldiers of the South were free to return to their homes with their personal side-arms, their private horses, and baggage. There was no recrimination, no demand for reparations, no apologies required or punishment given. This has gone down in the chronicles of war as a great and magnificent act of mercy.....

And there are still those, not a few, who without compassion “grind the faces of the poor.”  
(Isa. 3:15.)

Our generation is afflicted with critics in the media who think they do a great and clever thing in mercilessly attacking men and women in public office and in other positions of leadership. They are prone to take a line or a paragraph out of context and pursue their prey like a swarm of killer bees. They lash out with invective and snide innuendo against those who have no effective way of fighting back or who, in the spirit of the teachings of the Master, prefer to turn the other cheek and go forward with their lives.

The plight of the homeless is a repudiation of the greatness of our nation. I commend most warmly those who with a compelling spirit of kindness reach out to those in distress, regardless of whom they might be, to help and assist, to feed and provide for, to nurture and to bless. As these extend mercy, I am confident that the God of heaven will bless them, and their posterity after them, with His own mercy. **I am satisfied that these who impart so generously will not lack in their own store**, but that there will be food on their tables and a roof over their heads. **One cannot be merciful to others without receiving a harvest of mercy in return.**

In that same vein the Lord in modern revelation has enjoined us: “Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.” (D&C 81:5.) And again: “Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings.” (D&C 108:7.)

I am confident that a time will come for each of us when, whether because of sickness or infirmity, of poverty or distress, of oppressive measures against us by man or nature, we shall wish for mercy. **And if, through our lives, we have granted mercy to others, we shall obtain it for ourselves.”**

#### **President Dieter F Uchtdorf**

“We all depend on the Savior; none of us can be saved without Him. Christ’s Atonement is infinite and eternal. Forgiveness for our sins comes with conditions. We must repent, and we must be willing to forgive others. Jesus taught: “Forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not ... [stands] condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin”<sup>3</sup> and “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

We must recognize that we are all imperfect—that we are beggars before God. Haven’t we all, at one time or another, meekly approached the mercy seat and pleaded for grace? Haven’t we wished with all the energy of our souls for mercy—to be forgiven for the mistakes we have made and the sins we have committed?

**Because we all depend on the mercy of God, how can we deny to others any measure of the grace we so desperately desire for ourselves?** My beloved brothers and sisters, should we not forgive as we wish to be forgiven?”

My dear brothers and sisters, consider the following questions as a self-test:

Do you harbor a grudge against someone else?

Do you gossip, even when what you say may be true?

Do you exclude, push away, or punish others because of something they have done?

Do you secretly envy another?

Do you wish to cause harm to someone?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may want to apply the two-word sermon from earlier: stop it!

In a world of accusations and unfriendliness, it is easy to gather and cast stones. But before we do so, let us remember the words of the One who is our Master and model: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.”[12](#)

Brothers and sisters, let us put down our stones.

Let us be kind.

Let us forgive.

Let us talk peacefully with each other.

Let the love of God fill our hearts.

“Let us do good unto all men.”[13](#)

The Savior promised: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. ... For with the same measure that [you use] it shall be measured to you again.”[14](#)

Shouldn't this promise be enough to always focus our efforts on acts of kindness, forgiveness, and charity instead of on any negative behavior?

Let us, as disciples of Jesus Christ, return good for evil.[15](#) Let us not seek revenge or allow our wrath to overcome us.

“For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. ...

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”[16](#)

Remember: in the end, it is the merciful who obtain mercy.[17](#)

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, wherever we may be, let us be known as a people who “have love one to another.”[18](#)

Love One Another

Brothers and sisters, there is enough heartache and sorrow in this life without our adding to it through our own stubbornness, bitterness, and resentment.

We are not perfect.

The people around us are not perfect.[19](#) People do things that annoy, disappoint, and anger. In this mortal life it will always be that way.

Nevertheless, we must let go of our grievances. Part of the purpose of mortality is to learn how to let go of such things. That is the Lord's way.

Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive.

Lay your burden at the Savior's feet. Let go of judgment. Allow Christ's Atonement to change and heal your heart. Love one another. Forgive one another.

**The merciful will obtain mercy.** April 2012 Ensign