

The Acceptable School Year of the Lord Mercy Teaching

By Vernard T. Gant

On several occasions when Jesus acted on behalf of those in need the scriptures state that His acts were precipitated by “compassion.” The Greek word for compassion is *splagchnízomai* derived from *splágchnon* which is often translated “bowel.” It means to feel deeply from within. This word was also used to describe the motivation of a Samaritan when he came upon a person who was left in a debilitating condition by others.

*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had **compassion**.* (Luke 10:33 NKJV)

Unlike the two religious individuals who left the person in the same shape in which they found him, the Samaritan “had compassion” which Jesus went on to describe as mercy. Mercy stems from the heart and is the ultimate expression of love.

Mercy is to be distinguished from pity. Pity is sorrow or sadness toward others in undesirable conditions. It is basically feeling sorry for the individual. Mercy is pity in action. It is what moved God to give His Son on behalf of fallen humanity. It is His highest requirement for His people in their relationship to others.

*He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love **mercy**, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:8)

And its parallel in the New Testament:

*For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and **mercy** and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.* (Matthew 23:23)

Jesus had little to say about protecting and/or promoting the advantages of the already advantaged. He stated that when acts are done for those who have the wherewithal to reciprocate it carries no benefit either to the recipient or the giver. On the other hand, One of His closing arguments was when acts are done on behalf of those who cannot repay it carries eternal benefits.

Then He also said to him who invited Him, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. “And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:12-14 NKJV)

There is a natural tendency toward the advantaged, even in education. Well behaved children, supportive parents, students who are highly educable are appealing to and desirable by any educator. To have a classroom populated by children who don't need mercy would be a dream

school year. Mercy, on the other hand, propels God's educators toward children who are disadvantaged. It is what compelled Christ to do what he did for people who were blind, crippled, hungry, demonized, sick, and rejected. It would not be a stretch to imagine that if Jesus came as a teacher today He would probably introduce Himself accordingly:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me for He has anointed me to teach poor children. He has sent me to heal brokenhearted children; to proclaim liberty to captive children; and recovery of sight to blind children; and to set at liberty children who are oppressed.

He would proclaim this as:

the acceptable school year of the Lord.

He would also challenge His fellow educators that when they give an education, not to invite children who are well served, but those who are underserved—the needy, the cripple, the lame, and the blind (Luke 14:13). The others He would say will most likely fare well without them. He would follow up the challenge with the promise that those who serve the underserved will be blessed (Luke 14:14). Why? Because they show mercy.