

Trinity Lutheran Church 9-25-16
 Norman, OK. www.tlcnorman.org
 “One Family –
 Church, School, Campus Ministry”



Emphasis	Greek	Hebrew	Latin
 WITNESS	μαρτυρία (<i>martyria</i>)	תְּעִידָה	testimonium
 MERCY	διακονία (<i>diakonia</i>)	רְחֻמִים	ministerium
 LIFE TOGETHER	κοινωνία (<i>koinōnia</i>)	חַיִּים יחד	communio, societas

Lesson 2 - MERCY

When Christians see someone in need, they don't ignore that person. Rather, Christians have compassion, going to their neighbor and helping him or her. Whenever people came up to Jesus and said *Kyrie eleison* (“Lord, have mercy!”), Jesus had compassion on them. Jesus fed, healed, and consoled those in need, proclaiming to them that the kingdom of God was near. Like Jesus, Christians hear their neighbors’ cries with compassion and respond by providing for them. Usually, the Greek word *diakonía* is translated as “service” or “ministry.” Service and ministry are abstract terms that do not describe specific kinds of service or ministry. However, when associated with mercy, *diakonía* describes a specific work more concretely. Being rooted in the forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for us on the cross, mercy means feeding the poor, taking care of the sick, and caring for orphans and widows. *Diakonía*, then, is caring for our neighbor in concrete and effective ways because of what Jesus has done for them—and for us. Filled with Christ’s love and Spirit, Christians serve their neighbor mercifully.

The Love

Read 1 John 3:16–18.

21. While love can be a noun or a verb, in this epistle, love is also a person. Who is “the love” according to John?
22. Today, love is often associated with strong emotional feelings, which wax or wane depending on the situation. In contrast, in what concrete way did Jesus demonstrate His love for us?

Neighbor in Need

In his *Lectures on the First Epistle of John*, Luther writes:

If one must die for the brethren, there is far greater reason to expend one's goods. If I have goods and do not expend them, do not give food, drink, clothing, etc.; that is, if I am greedy . . . , I am not a Christian. But today there is a great outcry that those who have learned to know Christ scrape together more money than others, so that God could now let His wrath be seen. Thus God is merciful. Yet He is not idle. He does not let sinners go unpunished. To the humble, who fear Him, He is merciful. It is foolish and godless on the part of some to have understood this as referring to extreme need. Furthermore, there are several degrees of love: an enemy must not be offended, a brother must be helped, a member of one's household must be supported. You know Christ's commandment concerning love for one's enemies. But you owe more to a brother who loves you in return. He who has nothing to live on should be aided. If he deceives us, what then? He must be aided again. But you owe most to those who are yours. “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,” says 1 Tim. 5:8. It is a common rule that he who has goods and yet is not moved does not have love. (AE30:278)

23. The expectation of love and compassion is that a brother lay down his life for another, especially in the service of proclaiming the Gospel to him. How does recognizing that the Christian is called to lay down his life in service of the proclamation of the Gospel to another make it easier to care for the neighbor in his bodily needs?
24. How are we to demonstrate our love for an enemy, our brother in need, and family members?
25. The Law in 1 John 3:17 condemns those who do not help their neighbor. The Law does not have the power to change lives. What motivates or empowers the Christian to show love to a neighbor in need?

SPLÁNCHNA (compassion) in the Gospels

Matthew 9:36–38 Sheep without a shepherd
Matthew 14:13–21 Jesus feeds five thousand
Matthew 15:32–39 Jesus feeds four thousand
Matthew 18:23–35 Unmerciful servant
Matthew 20:29–34 Two blind men
Mark 1:40–45 Cleansing of the leper
Mark 6:30–44 Jesus feeds five thousand
Mark 8:1–10 Jesus feeds four thousand
Mark 9:14–29 Casting out of deaf and mute spirit
Luke 7:11–17 Jesus raises a widow’s son
Luke 10:29–37 Good Samaritan
Luke 15:11–21 Prodigal son

In 1 John 3:17, the Greek word *splánchna* is used. Originally, *splánchna* meant the internal organs of an animal used in ritual sacrifice. In ancient Greek temples, these internal organs would be “read” in order to “tell the future.” *Splánchna* is onomatopoeic, meaning it sounds similar to what it means. When the internal organs were removed and thrown to the ground, they made a “splat,” hence *splánchna*. By the New Testament era, the word *splánchna* had become associated with compassion or mercy. Our English phrases “butterflies in the stomach” and “gut reaction” convey somewhat how our emotions affect our bodies.

26. Read Mark 1:40–45. In view of the explanation above, when Jesus sees the leper, what is the first thing He does?
27. When Jesus sees a person in need, He does not simply feel sorry for him and move on. What does Jesus do?
28. What can we learn from how Jesus approaches those in need?

Jesus the Servant

Compassion, service, and mercy begin with Jesus. The Lord came to redeem the entire person, body and soul. The ailments of the body—even death—are the result of sin. Jesus forgives sins and shows compassion on those who are in physical need. In His earthly ministry, Jesus healed the lame, made the blind to see, and raised the dead. He undid the effects of sin both by forgiving and healing. Living forgiven in Christ, we also have compassion first on those nearest to us and then on others as we encounter them in our day-to-day lives. Read Mark 10:45 and Matthew 25:34–40.

29. How does Jesus come to serve us?
30. How do we serve Jesus?

In Closing

Encourage participants to begin the following activities:

- Thank and praise Jesus for serving us and being our ransom.
- Pray to see the opportunities to serve the Lord by showing mercy to our neighbor.

- Recognize that in worship the Lord comes to serve us, while we serve the Lord primarily as we live our day-to-day lives in service to our neighbor.

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:9 to prepare for the next session

Pray: Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen”
(*LSB Altar Book*, p. 585).

