

## **PRESENCE THAT SHAPES MERCY**

28 September 2025

### **Summary:**

This message explores the profound connection between mercy and prayer in the Christian life. It emphasizes that true mercy flows from a deep relationship with God, cultivated through prayer. Bruce argues that without prayer, mercy becomes unsustainable activism, while prayer without mercy leads to self-absorption. The message calls believers to live from God's presence, allowing His mercy to overflow into their actions and relationships.

### **Key Points:**

- Mercy is the love of God reaching into human need, healing what is broken
- Prayer is the wellspring from which sustainable mercy flows
- The church's credibility is seen in how it shows merciful and compassionate love
- IMPACTERS are called to be a proclamation family rooted in God's presence
- The rhythm of Christian life should be presence, identity, and mission
- Mercy and prayer together create a spiritual family and sustain community
- Without prayer, even good works and mercy initiatives can collapse

### **Scripture Reference:**

- John 15:4 - "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."
- Matthew 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

### **Stories:**

- Bruce mentions St. Teresa of Calcutta insisting her sisters spend three hours in prayer before serving the poor
- A personal anecdote about buying flowers for his wife Rosemary, illustrating how cut flowers die without roots, similar to mercy without prayer
- The story of a priest who led the speaker to faith, always asking about his prayer life
- An analogy of a phone in airplane mode, representing a Christian life disconnected from prayer

**PRESENCE THAT SHAPES MERCY**  
**SMALL GROUP GUIDE**

**Opening Prayer:**

Pray the IMPACTERS prayer together as a group. Ask God to open your hearts and minds to His message and to guide your discussion.

**Key Takeaways:**

1. Mercy is not optional for Christians - it's at the heart of the Gospel.
2. Authentic mercy flows from the presence of God, not human determination.
3. Prayer is the wellspring that keeps mercy fresh, deep, and centered in Jesus.
4. IMPACTERS are called to be a proclamation family rooted in presence.
5. Mercy and prayer are interconnected - mercy draws us outward, prayer draws us inward.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How does Bruce define mercy? How is this different from common understandings of mercy?
2. Bruce states, "Without mercy, there's no Christianity. Without mercy, there's no church." Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. How have you experienced the connection between prayer and mercy in your own life?
4. Bruce emphasizes that mercy flows from presence, not human determination. What does this mean to you practically?
5. How can we cultivate a deeper prayer life that leads to authentic mercy?
6. Bruce mentions that "People will judge whether our message is true, not by our theology... but by our mercy." How have you seen this play out in your own experiences or observations?
7. What struck you about the comparison between a Christian life without prayer and a phone in airplane mode?
8. How can we balance both the spiritual and physical aspects of mercy in our outreach and service?
9. Bruce emphasizes asking "How's your prayer?" as a greeting. How would this change our interactions and community life if implemented?
10. What does it mean to you to "live from God" rather than just "do things for God"?

**Practical Applications:**

1. Commit to saying the community prayer at least 5 times a day this week.
2. Before engaging in any act of service or mercy this week, spend time in prayer first.
3. Start each day with a moment of silence and the prayer "Lord, I long for you. Be my source today."
4. Choose a Scripture verse about God's mercy to meditate on throughout the week.
5. In your daily activities, practice seeing people as "invitations" rather than "interruptions."
6. Set a reminder on your phone to pause and connect with God's presence throughout the day.
7. Share with the group next week how focusing on prayer impacted your acts of mercy.
8. Reflect on how you can make your small group a place where both prayer and mercy are central.
9. Consider how you can incorporate both spiritual and physical aspects of mercy in your next outreach or service opportunity.
10. Practice asking others about their prayer life and share openly about your own experiences and challenges.

**Closing Prayer:**

Thank God for His endless mercy towards us. Ask for His help in becoming more merciful in our daily lives and for opportunities to share His mercy with others.