

Gospel-Driven Mercy Ministry

Corydon Baptist Church

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Outline and Overview:

1) Is Mercy Ministry *really* that important? According to God . . . YES!

- a) Deuteronomy 15:7-9; Proverbs 14:31 (Matthew 25:40); Psalm 72:12-14; Isaiah 58:6-7, 10; Ezekiel 16:49; Jeremiah 22:16; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-19

2) What is biblical mercy ministry? What should it look like in real life?

- a) What is the *motivation* behind biblical mercy ministry?
 - i) The cross, which reveals three important things:
 - (1) God is a God of grace
 - (2) God is a God of truth
 - (3) Jesus is King
- b) What are the *means* by which it is accomplished?
 - i) Providing for the needy (Titus 3:14; 1 John 3:16-18)
 - ii) Protecting the vulnerable (Isaiah 11:4; Isaiah 1:16-17)
 - iii) Purifying the ungodly (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - iv) EmPowering the weak (Isaiah 61:1-3 → 61:4)
- c) What is the *aim* (the goals) for biblical mercy ministry?
 - i) Humility (compare Luke 6:20 and Matthew 5:3)
 - ii) Order (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)
 - iii) Work (1 Thessalonians 3:10)
 - iv) Service (Acts 20:35; Ephesians 4:28)

3) Why aren't we really good at mercy ministry already?

- a) Weak, narrow understanding of the cross
- b) Greed and selfishness (Mark 10:21)
- c) Pride (Deuteronomy 8:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Samuel 2:7)
- d) Ignorance (John 1:14)
- e) Busyness
- f) Fear
- g) Cynicism and discouragement (Galatians 6:9)

4) How can we follow Jesus in caring for the poor?

- a) Book recommendations:
 - i) *Ministries of Mercy* by Tim Keller
 - ii) *Restorers of Hope* by Amy Sherman
 - iii) *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* by Charles Roesel

Sermon Manuscript

- 1) Pray
 - a) ^{NAU} **Romans 8:29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
 - i) Father, make good on this promise!
- 2) Introduction
 - a) Preaching through Core Values
 - i) Core-Values are those items that we as a church have said that we are committed to doing.
 - ii) These are the things that are precious to us as a people:
 - (1) Regenerate Church Membership
 - (2) Authentic Worship
 - (3) Christ-Centered Preaching and Teaching
 - (4) Expectant Evangelism
 - (5) Genuine Community
 - (6) All-Encompassing Prayer
 - (7) Enduring Families
 - (8) Gospel-Focused Mercy Ministry
 - iii) This morning—“Gospel-Focused Mercy Ministry”
 - (1) Let me briefly introduce it—Mercy Ministry is about:
 - (a) **Providing real help to those in need from a heart of real love**
 - (i) Using any advantage we have for those at a disadvantage.
 - (ii) Using any strength we have for those who are weak.
 - (iii) Sharing any wealth we have with those who are poor.
 - (b) Jesus said (in Luke 4:18): “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me:
 - (i) To proclaim good news to the poor
 - (ii) To proclaim liberty to the captives
 - (iii) To proclaim the recovering of sight to the blind
 - (iv) To set at liberty those who are oppressed
 - (c) Jesus loved and helped the poor.
 - (i) If Jesus is our King, we will follow Him in loving and helping the poor.
 - b) This morning I would like to introduce you to biblical mercy ministry.
 - i) Encourage people to take notes (esp. the Food Ministry folks).
 - ii) My goals are simple:
 - (1) Make you aware of God’s call upon your life care for the poor.
 - (2) Introduce what biblical ministry to the poor (a.k.a. “mercy ministry”) includes.
 - (3) Expose those things in your life that prevent you from caring for the poor.
 - (4) Motivate and encourage you to change so that you will live a life of sacrificial service to the poor.
 - iii) I would like to guide our time together by answering 4 key questions:
 - (1) Is Mercy Ministry *really* that important?
 - (2) What is biblical mercy ministry? What should it look like in real life?
 - (3) Why aren’t we really good at mercy ministry already?
 - (4) How can we follow Jesus in caring for the poor?

Is Mercy Ministry *really* that important? I mean...come on...does it really deserve a place along side evangelism, worship, prayer, and preaching?

- 1) Imagine with me for a second that you were on a committee that helped to examine recent seminary graduates to help prepare them for ministry.
 - a) Let's say that you were able to examine their doctrine carefully.
 - b) Let's say that you were aware that they already had several years of preaching experience.
 - c) And let's say that you were only allowed to give them one piece of encouragement before you turned them loose in the ministry.
 - i) You only get one piece of advice—so you had better make it good. . .
 - (1) So, what would it be?
 - (a) Personal devotion?
 - (b) Moral purity?
 - (c) Missions?
 - (d) Evangelism?
 - (e) Leadership?
 - (f) People skills?
 - d) Now, I want to shock you with the advice the apostles in a similar situation.
 - i) Please open you Bible to Galatians 2
 - (1) The great Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to protect the church from false doctrine.
 - (2) Paul had planted the church in Galatia.
 - (3) But after he left, a group of teachers came in to the church and began to contradict what Paul had been preaching and teaching.
 - (4) It seems that the false teachers were calling Paul's authority into question by implying that he was not a true apostle because he was not one the original 12 disciples.
 - (5) Paul spends the first two chapters of the letter defending his authority as an apostle.
 - (6) Tells the church about the time that Jesus came to him personally and gave him the gospel that he was preaching.
 - (a) He makes it a point to say that he was never taught the gospel by another mere man—instead, he was taught directly by Jesus Christ.
 - (b) He wants to show that he was not a disciple of Jesus' disciples—instead, he had equal authority because he too was disciplined by Jesus Christ.
 - (i) Gal 2:6-9
 - (ii) Now look at v. 10—
 1. Jesus disciples give him one piece of advice—they only asked one thing of Paul—and look at what it was—“remember the poor.”
 - a. It seems that the poverty among Christians was high in Jerusalem.
 - i. We can see that their plight was near to the heart of the disciples.

- ii. We can also see from v10 that the plight of the poor was also near to the heart of Paul.
 - iii. v10
 - iv. Caring for the poor was not new to Paul.
 - v. It is very likely (Acts 11:30) that Paul and Barabbas were in town for the purpose of bringing money they had already raised for the poor to Jerusalem.
 - vi. Paul and the other disciples were committed to caring for the poor.
2. So, let me ask you a question, “How is it that the first thing on the disciple’s list of priorities after doctrine and preaching is too often not even on our radar screen?”
- a. Do you think we might need to rethink our priorities?**
- 2) The fact that mercy ministry was at the top of the disciples’ priority list but very, very low on ours ought to be enough to make us think. BUT just in case, I want to take you on a quick journey through the Bible to see that the reason mercy ministry ought to matter so much to us is because it matters so much to God!
- a) ^{NAU} **Deuteronomy 15:7-9**—If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need *in* whatever he lacks.
 - b) ^{ESV} **Proverbs 14:31** Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.
 - i) Reminds me of: ^{NAU} **Matthew 25:40** "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of them, you did it to Me.'
 - (1) Jesus identifies with the poor.
 - c) ^{NAU} **Psalms 72:12-14** [A prophecy about Jesus] For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, The afflicted also, and him who has no helper. ¹³ He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save. ¹⁴ He will rescue their life from oppression and violence, And **their blood will be precious in his sight**;
 - i) Jesus loves the poor.
 - d) ^{NAU} **Isaiah 58:6-7, 10** Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? . . . ¹⁰ And if you **give yourself to the hungry** And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom *will become* like midday.
 - e) ^{NAU} **Ezekiel 16:49** "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but **she did not help the poor and needy**.
 - f) ^{NAU} **Jeremiah 22:16** God speaking of Hezekiah said, “He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; Then it was well. Is not that what it means to know Me?” Declares the LORD.
 - g) ^{NAU} **James 1:27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.
 - h) ^{NAU} **1 John 3:16-19** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and

sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. ¹⁹ We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.

- i) Do you need more evidence?
- ii) Does mercy ministry matter to God?

(1) So, *is Mercy Ministry really that important?* According to the God, the answer is an astounding, “YES!”

What is biblical mercy ministry? What should it look like in real life?

- 1) I want to organize our thoughts in this way:
 - a) What is the *motivation* behind biblical mercy ministry?
 - b) What are the *means* by which it is accomplished?
 - c) What is the *aim* (the goals) for biblical mercy ministry?

What is the motivation behind biblical mercy ministry?

- 1) Simply put, the motivation behind biblical mercy ministry is the cross of Jesus Christ.
 - a) The cross reveals three important things:
 - i) God is a God of grace
 - ii) God is a God of truth
 - iii) Jesus is King
 - (1) These truths must be the driving force behind everything we do—including mercy ministry.
 - (a) Let’s show you what I mean:
 - (i) **God is a God of grace.**
 - 1. We must never get over this!
 - a. 2 Cor 8:9—
 - b. Jesus left the perfect pleasures and prestige of heaven to come to earth as a man.
 - i. Not just a man, but a poor man.
 - ii. He was born in poverty (Luke tells us that His family could not afford to make the normal sacrifice of a lamb after Jesus was born, but they had to sacrifice 2 little pigeons).
 - iii. He came to identify with the needy.
 - iv. He came to identify with the sinful.
 - v. He became a man—not so that He could rescue the righteous, but so that He could rescue His enemies!
 - vi. He took their guilt—that they might enjoy the benefits of His innocence.
 - vii. He took their poverty—that they might inherit His riches.
 - viii. He took their sin—that they might enjoy His perfection.
 - ix. He took God’s wrath—that His people might enjoy God’s lavish lovingkindness.
 - c. That is grace! (Somebody say, “Amen!”)
 - i. That is amazing grace!

- d. And when we get it—guess what, we too will live lives of grace.
 - i. When we see the needy, we will be reminded—I too was needy!
 - ii. When we see the helpless, we will be reminded—I too was helpless!
 - iii. When we see the lazy, we will be reminded—I too was worthless!
 - iv. But Jesus came—and He helped me!
 - v. Jesus came—and He changed me!
 - vi. Jesus came—and He rescued me!
 - vii. Now, friend, let me help you!
 - viii. Let me show you the power of grace!
 - ix. Let me show you my Savior!
 - x. MM will flows naturally from a cross-centered heart.
 - xi. ^{NAU} **Jeremiah 22:16** "He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; Then it was well. Is not that what it means to know Me?" Declares the LORD.
- (b) The cross also shows us that **God is a God of truth:**
 - (i) We must never get the impression that God is kind to sinners because He does not care about sin.
 - 1. The cross is proof that God absolutely despises all rebellion, immorality, lies, and idolatry.
 - 2. He hates human pride.
 - 3. He hates greed.
 - 4. He hates lust.
 - a. He doesn't just overlook it.
 - i. He killed His Son to satisfy His holy anger against it!**
 - (ii) Do you see how these truths must shape our ministry to the poor?
 - 1. Some people are poor because of their own sin:
 - a. Some people are poor because they refuse to work.
 - b. Some people are poor because they waste their money.
 - c. Some people are poor because they worship drugs and alcohol.
 - i. We can't overlook this stuff.
 - ii. We can't help fund destructive, rebellious lifestyles.
 - iii. We must be loving and courageous enough to confront sinful lifestyles.
 - (iii) Can you see this marriage between grace and truth on the cross?
 - 1. This marriage between grace and truth must characterize our mercy ministry.
- (c) The third thing we learn on the cross is that **Jesus is King.**
 - (i) The reason that we have poverty and oppression and substance abuse and laziness and single mothers and widows is because of human sin and Satanic oppression.
 - (ii) Jesus in John 12 calls Satan "the ruler of this world" and Jesus says that on the cross, the ruler of this world would be cast down.
 - (iii) A new king has come—to set all creation free from the grip of Satan.

1. Mercy ministry is kingdom business.
 2. Good mercy ministry gives people a taste of the kingdom to come.
 3. Good mercy ministry proclaims the good news that Satan's reign is over—and now Jesus is establishing his rule.
 - a. Do you see?
 - b. Do you get it?
 - c. Good mercy ministry is evangelistic to the core!
 - i. [Not-so-good mercy ministry uses “love” as a sort of “bait” for a disconnected presentation of the gospel].
- b) So that is the motivation for mercy ministry is the cross that shows that
- i) God is a God of grace and truth and that Jesus is King.

What are the means by which it is accomplished?

- 1) I believe that God gives us 4 main aspects of biblical mercy ministry:
 - a) Our mercy should:
 - i) Provide for the needy
 - ii) Protect the vulnerable
 - iii) Purify the ungodly
 - iv) EmPower the weak
 - b) Provide for the needy**
 - i) Meeting basic needs for food, water, shelter, medical care
 - (1) ^{NAU} **Titus 3:14** Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.
 - (a) James tells us that if we love God, we ought to love those made in His image.
 - (b) ^{NAU} **1 John 3:16-18** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
 - (i) There are pressing needs all around us.
 1. There are pressing needs in this church.
 2. There are pressing needs in inner city Louisville.
 3. There are pressing needs in Africa.
 - a. When we see needs, if we have a way to help, we ought to.
 - c) Protect the vulnerable**
 - i) We live in a world that is hard on the weak.
 - (1) If you don't believe it, turn on the TV.
 - (a) With enough money and connections you can get off the hook for almost anything.
 - (i) Do I even need to mention Scooter Libby?
 - (ii) It happens everyday.
 - (b) If you can afford a good lawyer, your chances of success are greatly multiplied. If you can't . . . well . . . tough luck.
 - ii) ^{NAU} **Isaiah 11:4** But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

- (1) Was Jesus a protector of the weak?
- (2) Did Jesus stand in the gap for the woman who was about to be stoned?
- (3) Does Jesus stand in the gap for sinners about to be cast into hell?
 - (a) ^{NAU} **Isaiah 1:16-17** Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.
- iii) Let me just give you a couple of examples of areas where God's people need to stand in the gap for the vulnerable:
 - (1) Abortion
 - (2) Scams on the elderly
 - (3) Stand against the lottery because it preys on the poor
 - (4) Children in poverty
 - (5) Prejudice
 - (6) Darfur
 - (7) Immigrants to this country
 - (a) This is a hot button issue—but Christians needs to think about immigration with the cross in mind.
 - (i) God's people are called to help the alien (over and over the Bible commands us to “show love for the alien” (Deut 10:19)).
 - (ii) If you are hard-hearted to immigrants, you invite you to listen to the commandment in Eph 2:12, 19
 - 1. ^{NAU} **Ephesians 2:12** *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
 - 2. ^{NAU} **Ephesians 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
- d) **Purify the ungodly**
 - i) The ultimate goal in mercy ministry is to make disciples.
 - ii) Many of the root problems with those in poverty are spiritual.
 - (1) Many poor people are enslaved to sins like laziness, alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual immorality, or an attitude of entitlement.
 - (2) This should not surprise us—we are all sinners—our poison might be different, but the need for a new heart is the same.
 - (a) We don't withhold gospel ministry from those who are sinful do we?
 - (i) “I am not going to preach the gospel to you—you are sinful.”
 - 1. Ridiculous.
 - a. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners!
 - iii) So, as we work in mercy ministry, we need to meet needs and address the root problems of sin with the gospel.
- e) **EmPower the weak**
 - i) I believe that the problem with most secular and liberal programs for the poor, breed dependence and perpetuate poverty.
 - (1) The goal of the social worker should be to work themselves out of a job.
 - (a) In my experience, this is not usually the case.

- (b) I had a friend who met with his social worker regularly to be reminded of how disabled he was.
 - ii) God has a better plan:
 - (1) Isa 61:1-3
 - (a) Do you see the goal of protection?
 - (b) Do you see the goal of purification?
 - (i) Now look at this: 61:4!
 - 1. Who is the “they”?
 - 2. They are the poor of v1!
 - a. We need to be God’s agents of empowerment so that the poor “rebuild” their cities!
 - iii) Therefore, our mercy ministry cannot only be about giving stuff away.
 - (1) We must begin to help people get on their feet to provide for themselves.
 - (a) Education, support (encouragement and accountability)
 - (i) I would not be here without the support (financial, spiritual, motivational, relational support) from my family.
 - 1. I was raised in a home where hard work, perseverance, and saving money were values that was expected and modeled.
 - 2. We need to become like a Christian family to the poor.
- f) So there are the means of biblical mercy ministry: providing for, protecting, purifying, and empowering the poor.

What is the aim of biblical mercy ministry?

- 1) MM should adopt kingdom goals: (notice the acronym HOWS)
 - a) Humility
 - b) Order
 - c) Work
 - d) Service
- 2) **Humility**
 - a) As we serve, we don’t want to remove them from the blessings of poverty.
 - i) Jesus said in Luke 6, “Blessed *are* you *who are* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”
 - ii) Elsewhere, Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”
 - (1) Whatever we do to help people get out of poverty, we don’t want them to lose the poverty of spirit—the humility and neediness before the LORD that is precious to Him.
- 3) **Order**
 - a) Our God is a God of order.
 - i) He desires order in our lives and our homes.
 - (1) ^{NAU} **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12** . . . make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, ¹² so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.
 - (a) Our goal should be to help the poor move from chaos and instability to order and stability and peace.
- 4) **Work**
 - a) It is good and right to have meaningful work

- i) God created Adam and gave him meaningful work (cultivate the garden and guard it).
 - (1) Work was given before the Fall.
 - (2) God saw it and declared it very good!
 - b) It is good and right to be self-supporting.
 - i) ^{NAU} **1 Thessalonians 4:11** . . . make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, ¹² so
 - ii) ^{NAU} **2 Thessalonians 3:10** For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.
- 5) Service**
- a) We want to help people get to a point where *they* are sharing with those in need:
 - i) ^{NAU} **Ephesians 4:28** He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.
 - ii) ^{NAU} **Acts 20:35** "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, '*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*'"

Why aren't we doing mercy ministry well?

- 1) I hope that somebody is thinking, "If this is so important, why haven't I been taught this more?" (great question, but a sad question).
 - a) Roadblocks to biblical MM:
 - i) **Weak, narrow understanding of the cross**
 - ii) **Greed/selfishness**
 - (1) We are very busy storing up treasures on earth.
 - (2) But the cross was proof that Jesus' kingdom is not of this world—our kingdom is still future.
 - (3) Greed was the problem of the rich, young ruler—do you remember what Jesus told him?
 - (a) ^{NAU} **Mark 10:21** Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
 - (i) The cure for greed is a heart that is set on the kingdom to come.
 - iii) **Pride**
 - (1) How many times do we see people in need and think in our hearts something like, "They just need to get out and get a job just like I did."
 - (2) Again, we need to take a good look at the cross and see that everything we have including work AND our work ethic is a gift from God.
 - (a) ^{NAU} **Deuteronomy 8:17** . . . you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' ¹⁸ "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.
 - (b) ^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

- (c) ^{NAU} **1 Samuel 2:7** "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.

iv) Ignorance

- (1) Most of us cannot imagine what it is like to live the way many of the poor live.
- (a) For example:
- (i) Most of us have no idea what it is like to grow up as a child in a community where there are no visible examples of success.
1. I grew up in a low income family, but had many examples to encourage me to get out of poverty.
- (ii) Most of us have no idea of what it is like having no foundation of wealth to fall back on.
1. Eve and I can struggle from month to month, but in the back of our minds we know that in our families there is a foundation of wealth to fall back on.
- (2) We need to learn to walk in other people's shoes.
- (a) Isn't this what Jesus did.
- (b) He did not serve from a distance.
- (c) God became a man to identify with and live among those He was seeking to rescue.

v) Busyness (lives that are too full)

- (1) Biblical mercy ministry is not neat and tidy.
- (a) It is time consuming.
- (b) It is emotionally consuming.
- (2) For many of us, real mercy ministry is out the question because we are too busy:
- (a) Kids are playing every sport offered on everyday of the week.
- (i) Life revolves around them to the point that they begin to believe that t-shirt that says, "It's all about me!"
1. You do not want to raise kids that believe that it is all about them.
 2. People who believe that it's all about them do not please God.
 - a. We—and our kids—need to learn to live under Christ and for others.

vi) Fear

- (1) Fear of being hurt and/or fear of hurting another (like not wanting to tell them the truth)

vii) Cynicism & discouragement

- (1) The problem of poverty in our world is huge.
- (2) Satan is at work to keep people down, and he will not be challenged without a fight.
- (3) But this strategy is not ours but God's, and my Bible tells me:
- (a) ^{NAU} **Galatians 6:9** Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

How can we follow Jesus in caring for the poor?

- 1) Book recommendations:
 - a) *Ministries of Mercy* by Tim Keller
 - b) *Restorers of Hope* by Amy Sherman

- c) *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* by Charles Roesel
 - i) Full of practical, biblical wisdom from Bible-believing churches that are doing mercy ministry well.
- 2) Practical principles:
 - a) Mercy Ministry is to be lived out in normal everyday life.
 - i) ^{NAU} **Deuteronomy 24:19-21** "When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ "When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. ²¹ "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.
 - (1) Don't spend your whole pay check; always keep some to give away.
 - (2) Use loose change for the poor
 - ii) ^{NAU} **Jeremiah 22:16** God speaking of Hezekiah said, "He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; Then it was well. Is not that what it means to know Me?" Declares the LORD.
 - b) Our ministry must be regularly evolving to become increasingly more faithful.
 - c) Ways to make it happen:
 - i) Come, get involved in the Food ministry—work to really get to know folks and learn to disciple them.
 - ii) Get involved with Choices for Women
 - iii) Consider adoption or foster care
 - iv) Consider (as a small group or family), adopting a widow in the church or single parent family—
 - (1) Get together regularly to play with the kids, provide childcare or mow the yard.
- 3) As I close I am reminded of the story of the boy walking up the beach, throwing starfish back into the water.
 - a) A man saw the boy and asked, "What are you doing?"
 - b) The boy replied, "The tide moved out and these starfish got stranded on the beach. They will die without water so I am throwing them back in."
 - c) The man kind of chuckled and said, "Why do you even bother? This beach goes on for miles and there are thousands of stranded starfish. Do you think you can really make a difference?"
 - d) The boy reached down and picked up another starfish and said, "I can make a big difference for this one." And he tossed it back into the waves.
- 4) We cannot do everything, but we can do something.
 - a) And what we can do we must do.
 - i) Pray.
 - (1) ^{NAU} **Deuteronomy 10:18** "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. →
 - (2) ¹⁹ "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.