



## Mercy Not Sacrifice

*Sunday, July 5, 2020*



TALK  
ABOUT IT

- What is your favorite Independence Day memory?



PRAYER

Throughout the Bible, God is clear that our religious actions mean nothing if we do not also love God and love others. Read this passage from Isaiah 58 and then pray in your own words.

### **Isaiah 58:6-9**

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’”

*(more on next page)*



SERMON +  
WORSHIP

**Watch this week's Sermon and Worship Set**  
*(reminder, it's easiest to watch it from the YouTube playlist)*



TALK  
ABOUT IT

- **Pastor Jeff started by walking through Matthew 9:9-13, a scene that is very characteristic of Jesus's ministry.**
  - Why were the Pharisees so judgmental of the company Jesus kept?
  - How did Jesus including a tax collector among his disciples rebel against religious norms of his day?
  - Why is it important that Jesus went into a house full of tax collectors and sinners, who by all indications had not repented yet?
- **Pastor Jeff shared how Matthew's account, and the name he called himself, shows how he recognized what Jesus had done for him. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul makes the same point.**
  - How does recognizing our sin help us appreciate Jesus even more?
- **Matthew 9 ends with 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'**
  - What does this statement show us about God?
  - In what ways have you prioritized rituals over mercy?

*(more on next page)*



## PRACTICE POINTS

- **As the Pharisees questioned Jesus, they did it with a passive-aggressive question and attitude. Is this something you need to work on, and if so, how can you grow in it?**
  - When your next conflict or confusion arises, make sure to have a gracious, truthful conversation with the person directly.
- **We sometimes give up on following commands from God, because we are not sure what difference they will make. Where have you struggled with this?**
  - Pick one command (or more) from God that is directed towards others and obey it this week.



## DIG DEEPER

**Want additional content to dive into during the week? Try this:**

*These prompts can be used one-per-day or for an extended time on your own, with your spouse or family members, or with your small group:*

- **Pastor Jeff mentioned a few texts that relate to the theme of mercy, not sacrifice. These were passages that the Pharisees should have known well. Let's walk through them.**
  - Read Hosea 6:4-6
    - Why is the Lord upset with His people and what has He done to warn them?

- Verse 6 shows us why God's judgment was severe on His people, what does this tell you about the importance of mercy/steadfast love?
- Are sacrifices/rituals still important? Why is it important to not stop with sacrifices/rituals?
- Read Amos 5:21-24
  - God describes all of their ritual actions as 'yours.' Why is this an important point and what does it tell us about how God's people are living out their covenant with Him?
  - Now go back and read Amos 5:10-15. What is God upset about here? What justice is God crying out for in Amos 5:24?
  - God gives both a negative command (v. 23) and a positive one (v. 24). What hope is there for God's people in this chapter?
- Read Micah 6:6-8
  - What is the difference between a covenant and a contract?
  - How do verses 6-7 show that God's people are treating their relationship with Him like a contract?
  - Micah 2:1-2 shows why justice and kindness were so important in this context. The first two requirements are directed at those injustices. How does walking humbly with God support justice and kindness?
- Read Isaiah 58
  - In what ways are God's people pretending they can keep a relationship with God, while ignoring others?
  - God decries their 'fasts'. What is the fast that God asks for? How can you take part in this today?
  - What promises does God give His people if they listen to these commands?
- These are just a few passages that deal with how God's people got things upside down. They assumed they could keep their relationship with God as long as they performed for Him, no matter what injustices they allowed. What should this teach us today?