

“I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Matthew 9:13).



WHEN JESUS SAID HE DESIRED MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE, He meant He would rather see us have love than a dutiful adherence to the law and performance of duties. He would rather we give love to somebody than to try to be so righteous and perfect.

The drunks and the harlots and the sinners came to Jesus for love and mercy, and He treated them tenderly, kindly. He forgave them and gave them the hope, love, and strength they needed to change for the better. Those sinners didn't go to the harsh, rigid, self-righteous, unyielding, unforgiving, critical, condemning religious leaders who told them to be perfect or go to Hell, but they came to Jesus for His love and mercy, forgiveness, encouragement, and patience.

Love throws a veil over countless sins (1 Peter 4:8). But some people are so self-righteous they think they never make mistakes. Remembering what sinners we are and how many mistakes we've made greatly helps to keep us humble and to avoid that spirit of self-righteous pride that causes us to criticize and condemn others. When you realize that you need a lot of forgiveness and mercy, it really helps you to extend it to others. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7)—so be merciful!