

# What is God Like?

## 01 / Merciful

You might remember exploring last January this foundational question:

### Who is God?

Exodus 3:13-14 helped us answer that really important question:

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: '**I AM** has sent me to you.'"

God has always been. He is everywhere and knows everything. God can do anything. But what is he **LIKE**?

Exodus 34:6 is the most quoted verse in all of the Old Testament. It gives us one of the clearest descriptions of what the Lord God Almighty is like:

The LORD passed before [Moses] and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God **merciful** and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..."

In this session, let's focus on that first attribute of God: God is **merciful**. It's a word often translated **compassionate** or **tenderhearted** (Gen 43:30; Neh 9:27-28; Isa 49:15-16; Psa 103:13; Isa 55:7; Psa 51:1).

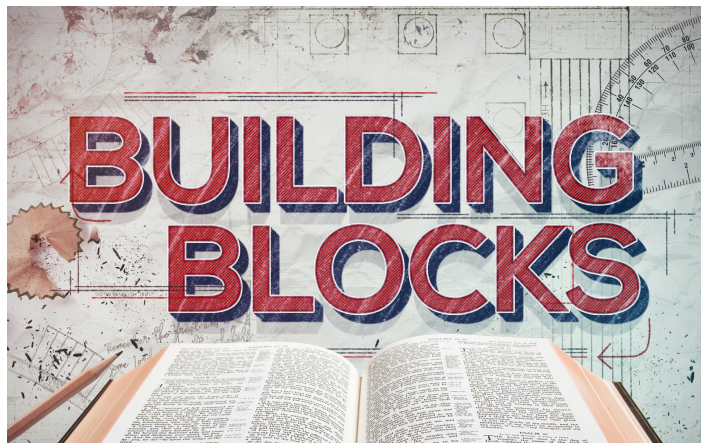
With Jesus, the Son of God, we're given a clear image of **MERCIFUL** in the flesh (Matt 9:36; Mark 1:40-41; 1 Pet 2:24). But Jesus has done more than serve as a good example for us. He's called us to follow in his footsteps:

"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

Or, as the apostle Paul put it in Ephesians 4:32:

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

What is God like? God is **merciful**.



### For Class & Family Discussion:

- Why is it important that we not only have a sense of what God can do, but what he is like?
- In your own words, when someone "**shows mercy...**" what does that look like?
- Let's revisit Isaiah 49:15-16 and listen carefully. What does God want us to understand about himself?
- Let's also revisit Psalm 103:13. In practical terms, what does it mean to "**show compassion**"?
- Can you think of any episodes from Biblical history when God was merciful and compassionate?
- In contrast, Jesus described difficult days when "**the love of many will grow cold**" (Matt 24:12). What does it look like when that happens?
- Let's read the words of Jesus in Luke 6:27-36. He calls us to "**be merciful**" in verse 36. Why? What might that look like in your life this week?