

Story: The Merciful Myna

June 14, 2026

Exodus 19:2-8a

Matthew 9:35-10:8

This may sound a little bit odd to you – it sounds a little bit odd to me – but one of the mynas that lives near our church decided to listen to the sermon. Without falling asleep, which is a nice trick. And as you know, I've been talking about God's mercy recently.

This myna woke up one morning and decided, "I'm going to be merciful today."

The problem was, how could a myna be merciful? He thought about it while he had breakfast, and he couldn't think of a thing. Mercy would be something like rescuing stranded sailors from a disabled ship. He couldn't do that. Mercy would be something like healing a bird with a broken wing. He didn't know how to do that, and there was also the fact that none of the birds around him had a broken wing. He was smart enough to abandon the notion that he could break their wing and then fix it.

"That wouldn't be merciful," he said to himself, and he was right.

While he was thinking, one of the other mynas jostled him and he hopped back and said, "Pardon me." The other myna said nothing, just kept pecking at the ground.

A few minutes later that same myna bumped into another couple mynas and a screeching argument began. Our myna stopped thinking about being merciful and hopped over to calm them down. The bumping myna wanted to yell some more, but was persuaded not to. The bumped mynas wanted to whack him with their wings, but some gentle tones calmed them down.

"How am I going to be merciful?" he wondered.

A little later, he noticed a house finch hopping nervously about at some distance from the myna flocks. She looked hungry, but the ground she was on had already been picked over by hungry mynas. "Hop over here," he suggested, and she gratefully did, and began to enjoy her breakfast.

"How am I going to be merciful?" he wondered.

A cat wandered along to the edge of the grass, and the mynas, finches, and sparrows didn't notice until he spotted it and screeched, "Into the air, everyone! There's a cat!"

They all took to their wings and settled again in branches and on roofs as the cat pretended to just be going from here to there, thank you, and walked away. Some of the other mynas wanted to peck and annoy the cat, but our wanting-to-be-merciful myna persuaded them not to.

The whole day went like that. He tried to think of ways to be merciful, and he didn't think of a single one.

As the sun was setting he found an auntie and poured out the whole story to her. "You want to be merciful," she said. "Don't you think you were merciful when that bird bumped you and you didn't get into a fight? Don't you think you were merciful when you calmed the other birds down? Don't you think you were merciful when you invited that finch to feed, or when you warned everyone about the cat?"

"Mercy can be big and grand, nephew. Mostly, though, it's small things that matter a lot. You won't always get thanks for it; some may not even notice. But it's mercy all the same."

by Eric Anderson