

The Quality of Mercy is Not Strain'd (Shakespeare quote) from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"The quality of mercy" is a soliloquy by Portia in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; it occurs during Act 4, Scene 1, set in a Venetian Court of Justice. It is the speech in which Portia begs Shylock for mercy. The speech is regarded as one of the great speeches in Shakespeare, and it is an example of the esteem Shakespeare held for those who showed mercy.

Speech

The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. **It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.**
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway.
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute to God Himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.



— Portia, in William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4, Scene 1.
The Quality of Mercy - made available on www.MyPrayers.net

The Quality of Mercy (Poem by Paul Martin)

Mercy is a precious word,
yet it's not so often heard.
It's a quality that is twice blessed,
for both the giver and recipient.