

Blessed Are The Merciful

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Matthew 5:7

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Matthew 5:7. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Introduction

- In our beatitude, Jesus makes a promise to “the merciful.” ‘The merciful’, Jesus promises, ‘shall receive the lavish blessing of God’s mercy.’
- Jesus is not preaching salvation by works. Jesus is not saying we merit God’s mercy by giving mercy to others.
- He is saying that giving mercy is to be a defining mark of one who will receive the blessing of mercy on the last day. He is saying that giving mercy is to be a defining mark of a Christian – one who by the mercy of God, is destined for eternal glory.
- The difficulty is, we as people are not instinctively merciful. Instead, we are instinctively, by nature, selfish.
- Even as Christians, whose hearts have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit — we can and do struggle deeply with selfishness.
- The flesh, remaining sin, constantly aims to turn us inward on ourselves rather than outward in love for God and other people.
- In stark contrast, mercy is others focused.
- So mercy is something, we need to by God's grace in in God's strength to seek to grow in.

(1) Mercy is the kind, sympathetic, and forgiving treatment of others that works to relieve their distress and cancel their debt. Or (2) mercy is compassion combined with forbearance and action.

-- Paul Tripp and Tim Lane

- Our beatitude says: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” So how do we do this and what does showing others mercy look like?” Thankfully, Jesus’ words in Luke 6 provide the way forward.

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. -- Luke 6:36

- If we are to be merciful people, we must begin by considering the perfect example of our heavenly Father and what it means that He is merciful.

I. God’s Mercy

- The Old and New Testaments reveal that one of God’s essential attributes is that He is merciful.
- Properly understood, God’s mercy is a function of His goodness. God in His very being and essence is completely and absolutely good.
- God’s mercy is His goodness expressed in a specific direction.

God's mercy means His goodness towards those in misery and distress. - Wayne Grudem

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness... - Exodus 34:6

- While some seek to pit the God of the New Testament against the God of the Old, saying that the God of the New Testament is a God of love and mercy, and the God of the Old is a God of judgment and wrath – any careful reading of the Bible will show that the theme of God's mercy pervades the entire storyline of scripture.
- From Genesis to Revelation God's justice and His mercy is on clear display.

Countless examples of God's mercy from the Old Testament could be given. Here are a few:

- God clothed Adam and Eve after they had sinned (Gen. 3:21).
- God rescued Noah and His family from the floodwaters that covered the earth as an expression of His judgment.
- God heard the cries of His people and delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
- God rescued his people from the Phillistines through young David and his sling (the story of David and Goliath).
- God through Ezra and Nehemiah brought the exiled people of God back to the land to rebuild the temple and the walls.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, [4] who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy -- Psalm 103:2-3

- Every single expression of mercy in the Old Testament, points forward to the ultimate expression of mercy in the New Testament – the Cross.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." -- John 3:16

"The proper notion of mercy may be understood as God first 'taking our misery to heart' and then giving relief to the miserable." -- Mark Jones

- Our heavenly Father saw the misery and distress we would one day be in because of our sins. He took our misery to heart. He pitied us and in the gospel, out of the overflow of His benevolent goodness flowed rivers of redeeming mercy.
- Regeneration and the new birth is also God's mercy to us.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:4–5

- God's mercy to us didn't stop at our conversion, but continues to flow in our direction every single day of our lives.

- He is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3).” and any point in time, we can approach the throne of grace and “receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).”

Forever His mercy stands, a boundless, overwhelming immensity of divine pity and compassion. - AW Tozer

II. Our Mercy

- Jesus says Matt 5 vs. 7- “Blessed are the merciful....”
- The structure of the beatitudes helps us to understand how we actually, in reality, become more merciful.

“[These beatitudes] spring out of each other, as if each one depended upon all that went before.” -- Spurgeon

- The character quality of “mercy” in v.7 springs from the prior qualities in verses 2-6.
- Each of these characteristics could be subsumed under the heading of humility, inadequacy and need.
- The clear implication is -- a disposition of mercy springs from humility of heart and a profound sense of inadequacy and personal need.
- It is the humble and meek person, not the self-righteous and proud, who can look upon a fellow sinner suffering the consequences of their sin with great sympathy.
- Remember, Jesus said, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”
- The more merciful we become - the more rivers of God’s own loving mercy will flow through us in every direction to family, fellow-church members, neighbors, co-workers etc...
- Let us make it our aim, by God’s grace, in full dependence upon the Holy Spirit--in the days ahead, to become more merciful people.
- A good place to start is in the context of family and close relationships. These principles of mercy apply to church relationships, work relationships, to reaching the lost etc. and we do well to think about all of that as well.

III. The Promised Blessing

- As with all the beatitudes, there is a blessing connected to this call to be merciful.
- Vs 7 - “Blessed are the merciful, *for they shall receive mercy.*”
- Summarize and review parable of the unmerciful servant in Matt. 18.
- In scripture, not the only, but a primary evidence that someone is truly converted, is that albeit imperfectly—they do in fact seek to show others the kind of mercy that they themselves have received.
- Our beatitude promises extravagant blessing to those who do just that. This blessing is the exact opposite of what the unmerciful servant received.
- On the final day of judgment the merciful shall receive mercy.
- We will not receive what our sins deserve but because Christ bore our sins on the Cross, in our place, we shall receive mercy and unending joy in the presence of God in the new heavens and new earth.

Questions for Discussion/Application

- Re-read Matthew 5:7 and Paul Tripp's definition of mercy at the beginning of the Recap. How does considering our beatitude along with that definition challenge you?
- Drawing from the sermon, and your own reading of God's Word, in what ways do we see the mercy of God on display in the Old Testament?
- We know the gospel reveals the mercy of God. Take a few moments as a group and consider *how*. How specifically does the gospel reveal the mercy of God?
- Jesus said, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful (Luke 6:36)." What does it look like for us to obey this verse practically in the home, in the workplace, in our evangelism etc...? Take time to consider application in each of these spheres.
- How personally do you want to grow in showing mercy to others?
- Consider taking time to pray, asking God to help us to grow in showing the same kind of mercy we have received from God to other people.