

“#blessed: The Merciful”

Matthew 5:1-7 (NIV)

July 21, 2019

Rev. Dave Baldrige

Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm, Harbor, Florida

Blessed be. Blessed be. Yours is the Kingdom of Heaven. You will be comforted. You will inherit the earth. You will be filled. Oh, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek.

In listening to Rev. Cathy's message did you hear, really hear it when she said, "Meek is power under control." Under who's control? Under control of the Holy Spirit. Oh, and I even brought with me a Snickers candy bar after Rev. Cathy's sermon last week. I didn't want to get 'Hangry.' You know angry because we are hungry. Friends Snickers does not satisfy when it comes to spiritual hunger. What did you do about it? Have you not spiritually eaten since last week? Let's not be on a spiritual diet. You can come to the buffet here, but you need to eat daily.

To Rev. Cathy I say Merci Beaucoup. Merci. Merci. It means thanks, thanks. Beaucoup means, bunches. Thanks bunches. But today, I also want to say mercy, mercy.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

There are many definitions of mercy=compassion, forgiveness, not getting what we deserve. Let me pause and ask, "Aren't you glad you don't get what you deserve?" Xxxxx huh, huh, huh.

It says if we are merciful, we will be shown mercy. Well, wait just a minute. I recall when I graduated from College, I got a teaching job in Miami. The year was 1981. I left with my pride and joy (**Image of 1971 Pinto**). Me who had grown up in a small town, went to college in a literally 2 stoplight town in Wilmore, Kentucky ended up teaching in Miami. I learned what hot was. You see my 1971 Pinto did not have air conditioning. I remember one time I was in the median, both windows rolled down, and was trying to make a turn. Surely someone would let me cross over into the lane. I waited. I edged forward. I waited. Finally, I literally yelled out loud, "Oh come on!!" I then realized this was Miami in the '80's and I was glad I was not shot for yelling at people.

I thought I have let other people out, surely, they will let me come out into traffic. NOOOOO. Surely if I show mercy others will show mercy back to me. Uh, no. But hold it isn't that what scripture says? Yes, it says you will be shown mercy, but unfortunately it doesn't say when. As we show mercy here on this earth will we get mercy on this earth. To be honest maybe not. Just because I'm nice to others will they be nice to me. Maybe, maybe not.

Just because I show mercy and compassion with others won't others do that to me? Maybe, maybe not. We must realize we are not simply living for today; we are living for tomorrow; we are living for eternity.

In the age to come as we meet God face to face, I believe it is then we will receive the greatest mercy of all.

James 2:13 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

¹³ Yes, you must show mercy to others. If you do not show mercy, then God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the one who shows mercy can stand without fear before the Judge.

So, does that mean we are to show mercy to others when they may not show mercy to us. Xxxx Yes. This is radical. We are called in the Beatitudes to show mercy to those who act like they don't need mercy. We are called to show mercy to those who are ugly---and I'm not talking about facial prettiness. We are called to show mercy to those who are even mean to you. Say what?

Luke 6:32-36 New International Version (NIV)

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Perhaps you have heard the phrase “Kyrie Eliason.” The choir I know has sung those words. Kyrie Eliason literally is the Greek for Lord have mercy. We ask the Lord to have mercy on us then we need to give mercy to others.

Let me share an analogy that is not original, but applies here.

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere. Why did you spill the coffee?

"Well because someone bumped into me, of course!" Wrong answer.

You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup. Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled---tea.

Whatever is inside the cup, is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it until you get rattled.

So, we have to ask ourselves... “what's in my cup?” What spills over? Joy, gratefulness, peace, and humility? Or anger, bitterness, harsh words, and reactions? More importantly as we focus today----will mercy spill out?

If you really want to be like Jesus: be the one who stays, when everyone else walks away. Be the one who forgives, even when it's undeserved. Be the one to show grace and mercy when everyone else is casting stones Be the one to show love, even when they betray you. Be an advocate for mercy. Because that is who Jesus is, that is what Jesus did.

When we have received Jesus into our life, we are new people, the old should pass away. With the forgiveness of our sins and salvation it means that we act differently and have a different attitude, a BE ATTITUDE.

John Wesley the founder of Methodism said, “By salvation I mean not...the vulgar notion deliverance from hell or going to heaven but a present deliverance from sin... a restoration of the soul.... the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness in justice mercy and truth.” John Wesley

A present deliverance. A Restoration, a renewal, and righteousness. Holiness, being set apart, in justice, truth and MERCY.

In the Beatitudes Jesus, calls us to show mercy. We have to realize that these Beatitudes are not easy. Do we own that we have to put ourselves second and God first?

The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley (1703–1791)

**I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.**

A covenant made on earth and ratified in heaven. Ratified in heaven. Things look different from heaven. Speaking of the heavens, let me make a clunky transition to what happened 50 years ago. Some may not remember the event, but I remember what I was doing and where I was 50 years ago this weekend. It was an historic event. **(flag on moon)** The landing on the moon, and Neil Armstrong walking on the moon. I remember exactly where I was. Some of you may as well.

This event we have studied in history classes. This weekend marks the 50th anniversary. So, you know about the landing on the moon. However, you may not know this, and yes, Snopes, history.com and others have verified this.

Buzz Aldrin who was with Neil Armstrong got on the comm system and spoke to the ground crew back on Earth. “I would like to request a few moments of silence,” he said.

“I would like to invite each person listening in, wherever and whomever he may be, to contemplate for a moment the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his own individual way.”

During that silence he then reached for the wine and bread he'd brought to space—the first foods ever poured or eaten on the moon. “I poured the wine into the chalice our church had given me. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup,” he later wrote (Erin Blakemore, July 31, 2018, www.history.com)

Yes, Buzz Aldrin received Holy Communion there on the moon. **(image, communion kit of Buzz Aldrin)**. “This carried my personal belongings to Tranquility Base on Apollo XI. Including Communion Kit.

Let's watch a clip of history. **(moon landing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TYuXj5sq6A>)**

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Did you know that Armstrong and Aldrin left footprints on the moon? **(image)**

What footprints are we leaving here on earth. We are called to follow Jesus, walk in His footsteps. So what footprints are we leaving? Oh, our 'sisters' sang,

“I will follow him, follow him wherever he may go
There isn't an ocean too deep
A mountain so high it can keep me away

I love him, I love him, I love him
And where he goes, I'll follow, I'll follow, I'll follow.”

As you follow are you leaving a lasting footprint?

“The first footprints put on the moon will probably be there a long, long time — maybe almost as long as the moon itself lasts.

Unlike on Earth, there is no erosion by wind or water on the moon because it has no atmosphere and all the water on the surface is frozen as ice. Also, there is no volcanic activity on the moon to change the lunar surface features. Nothing gets washed away, and nothing gets folded back inside. (*SpaceKids on SPACE.com March 1, 2012*)

Are you leaving a footprint of mercy? Blessed are the merciful for they will show mercy.

My brother reads my sermons, that are posted on our website as part of his devotions. It touches me deeply and means a lot that he does that. From time to time he will share with me devotions. He regularly reads the Daily Guideposts and he sent me this on Monday. (Monday, July 15, 2019 from Daily Guidepost)

Brock Kidd writes this: I was walking to the sandwich shop and heard a long honk from the parking lot across the street.

As my eyes followed the sound, I saw a furious lady leaning out her car window. She was shouting obscenities and making rude hand gestures at an elderly gentleman who, it seemed, accidentally backed out in front of her. She was at least a car length away from the gentleman who was backing up, and it was entirely possible her car had not been visible to him.

I couldn't help thinking she must have felt she had a right to take "her half out of the middle" as she traveled through life. That sense of entitlement was in her display.

I was amazed at the depth of her anger. Why didn't she simply stop and allow the man to exit his parking spot? Instead she continued to lean on the horn until he pulled back in and waved apologetically to her. He smiled and mouthed, "I'm sorry," as she screeched by and shook her head in disgust.

As she pulled away, I noticed a glowing cross sticker on her rear window, an advertisement to everyone that she was a Christian.

"False advertising," I said out loud. But then, just as quickly, I had to ask myself, how many times have I "said and done not"?

Lord have Mercy. Kyrie Eliason. Lord help me show mercy on a daily basis. Not just say it, but to do it. Newscaster Walter Cronkite in that news report about landing and walking on the moon said, "What a moment, man on the way to the moon." "It seems like the whole world has stopped."

What a moment---maybe a bit exaggerated comparison---but if we Christians really started showing mercy---would it seem like the whole world has stopped.

Help us realize as we allow Jesus to come into our life and take over our life that we will know that we are no longer our own---but His. His way is to show mercy, just as He has showed mercy to us.