

## Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: Christians, Despised by the World, but Super-Blessed by the Father, A Study of the Beatitudes Part Six. From Matthew 5:3-9

November 11, 2018

Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Introduction: Practice entering into this woman's skin and head – The LGBT advocate who came to Christ, mentioned in the Vine and the Branches.

Context

Exegesis (no need)

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

Main point: Forgiving others is mandatory if believers want it reciprocated and given to them by their Heavenly Father.

First, a word study:

1. The Greek word for mercy (eleemon) means to feel pity towards someone to the point where you relieve their suffering. In the context of a debt owed, it will mean forgiving that debt if the debt is creating a hardship. The emphasis seems to be on doing acts of mercy not just feeling merciful or sympathetic. It is an action word.
  - It means literally to crawl inside another person's skin to feel exactly as they feel.
  - Our English word sympathy would be a cousin. Comes from two Greek words together 1) sun = together, 2) paschein (pathos) = suffer with
2. It takes its meaning in this context from the Hebrew word for mercy (chesedh) which is essentially too hard to translate with one English word. Chesedh is often translated "lovingkindness" in your Bibles but it is impossible to find one word that fits. Stork is the best animal analogy.
  - Willingness to lay down one's life for another
  - Despite the fact the person does not deserve mercy or forgiveness

What does all this mean for us?

1. If we are unwilling to forgive, God will not forgive us. James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (ESV)

and Matthew 18:34–35 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. [35] So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” (ESV) and Matthew 6:14–15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (ESV)

- Implications:

- All true believers’ sins are forgiven in the sense we are justified and do not have to pay for them in eternity: Romans 5:[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV), but,
- Failing to forgive others will indeed cause God to hold back his fatherly affection until you are willing to forgive others. Hebrews 12:5-15 (Read). [5] And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. [6] For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” [7] It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. [9] Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. [11] For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [12] Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, [13] and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. [14] Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. [15] See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; (ESV)

2. If we are unwilling to forgive, we are opening the door for Satan’s demons to have a toehold, then foothold into our being. Ephesians 4:26–27 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. (ESV)
3. If we are unwilling to forgive then we are grieving the Holy Spirit within us and limiting his power to change us and do great things through us. Ephesians 4:30–32 [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. [32] Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (ESV)

4. However, if we continually fail to forgive others their sins against us, we are demonstrating an unregenerate heart and then we risk more than just God's frowning face, we risk God's eternal wrathful face.

What does all this mean practically?

It means:

1. **No actual or wishful payback.** Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (ESV) and 1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. (ESV)
2. **Feeling as sad as they do when they calamity strikes.** Proverbs 24:[17] Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, (ESV)
3. **Wanting what is best for them.** Luke 6:28a bless those who curse you,
4. **Praying for them.** Luke 6:28b pray for those who abuse you. (ESV)
5. **Coming to their aid.** Exodus 23:4–5 [4] "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. [5] If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him. (ESV)
6. **Making peace with them.** Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (ESV)

It doesn't mean

1. **Ignoring sin or its consequences.** Matthew 18 requires confrontation.
2. **Ignoring the pain caused by your enemy.** 1 Peter 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (ESV)
  - If true reconciliation is desired the perpetrator must acknowledge the wound and describe the hurt inflicted and be sincerely upset by it. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 [9] As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. [10] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. [11] For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. (ESV)
    - Signs of true repentance: 1) the person named the sin, 2) the person confessed before he was caught, 3) the person was anxious to make amends, 4) the person was willing to pay the price of his actions, 5) the person was willing to get the help he needed and 6) the person acted in

humility and asked for help.

3. **Allowing the perpetrator to continue with his/her abuse.** Matthew 18 again.
  - What about spousal abuse and what can be done about it?
    - Non-violent abuse – elders and Matthew 18
    - Violent abuse – elders and law enforcement.

What if?

What if the person who hurt you isn't truly repentant and showing godly sorrow? Do I still show mercy?

Answer: If it is a minor grievance that can easily be overlooked, Yes. Proverbs 10:12  
Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. (ESV)

If it is serious enough to rupture relationships then Matthew 18 is Jesus' procedure for all other sins.