

Pursuing God’s Blessing Through the Beatitudes: “The Joy of Complete Forgiveness”

Matt. 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Most people want to forgive, but many don’t know how to get there, and feel forgiveness is impossible.

The virtues of mercy and forgiveness Jesus speaks about in Matt. 5:7 belong together and have a relationship between them:

- Mercy is broader than forgiveness, but forgiveness goes further than mercy!

The Good Samaritan story of Luke 10 shows the Samaritan showing mercy to a man lying in the road left for dead by robbers.

- The Samaritan didn’t do this injustice to the wounded man, so he didn’t need forgiveness but he did show mercy towards the wounded man by treating his wounds and placing him in an inn to be taken care of and paying for it.
- We will often have opportunities to show mercy when no wrong has been done to you and where there is nothing to forgive.

Mercy is broader than forgiveness – but forgiveness goes further than mercy when someone wrongs you.

- To be merciful means that you have compassion on them, rather than returning harm to them, you seek to do them good.
- Mercy does not repay evil for evil, but overcomes evil with good – Rom. 12:21.

Forgiveness goes further because it involves **restoring a relationship**.

- Mercy is like stepping stones helping you get to being forgiving.
- If you pursue mercy you will get to forgiveness.

Luke 10 of Jesus’ teaching says that mercy has two parts:

1. Tenderness of heart: “When he saw him, he had compassion.” V. 33.
2. Action that arises from compassion: “He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.” V. 34.

God’s Character and Our calling:

God appearing to Moses at Sinai, revealed Himself in a fourfold description repeated seven times in the Old Covenant:

Ex. 34:6 “The Lord, the Lord, a God **merciful** and **gracious, slow to anger**, and **abounding in steadfast love**.”

This is God the Father's character:

1. Gracious
2. Merciful
3. Slow to anger
4. Abounding in love

Mercy is at the heart of what God reveals about Himself and it means God has a tender heart, and acts out of compassion towards us for our good.

Eph. 2:4 "He is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loves us, even when we were dead in our transgressions..."

Psa. 23:6 David says: "Surely goodness and lovingkindness/mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,.."

Titus 3:5 "He saved us,...according to His mercy..."

1Tim. 1:13 Paul's testimony: "I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief..."

Heb. 2:17 Jesus as our Great High Priest: "He had to be made like His brethren in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest** in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Heb. 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

Heb. 4:16 when you know that Jesus is your merciful High Priest, you will feel freedom and the desire to come to Him.
"Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Opportunities for showing Mercy:

1. When you find someone who has material needs-

Sinclair Ferguson said: "Mercy is getting down on your hands and knees and doing something to restore dignity to someone whose life has been broken by sin."

- In Luke 10, the Samaritan addressed the immediate need that was before him and did what he could to bring relief.

- God will bring people with material needs across your path, and you will have an opportunity to reflect His likeness by showing mercy.

2. **When you encounter a fellow Believer who is struggling in his/her walk with the Lord-**

- Jude 22 “Have mercy on those who doubt.”
- Their greatest need is the kindness and compassion of a believing friend who is willing to come alongside and strengthen them.
- Gal. 6:1-2 “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looks to yourself so that you too will not be tempted.”
- Christ does not “break a bruised reed” – Isa. 42:3
- Psa. 18:35 David says: “It was God’s gentleness that made him great.”
- Our usefulness to the Lord’s service will increase as we become more tender toward others and sensitive to the loads they bear.

3. **When someone fails in a way that brings shame or embarrassment-**

- 1Peter 4:8 “Love covers a multitude of sins...”
- A merciful person will look for ways to spare the embarrassment of the one who has failed, not exploit them.
- There are some sins/crimes that should not be covered and must be dealt with, and that’s different.
- A hard heart always makes a big deal over another’s failure, but a merciful heart will lead you to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear.
- Psa. 103:10 “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

4. **In how we treat a piece of gossip-**

- satan is the father of lies and seeks to destroy each of us with rumors.
 - The trap is to cause brothers and sisters in the Lord to think less of one another.
- Thomas Watson says: “It’s as bad to believe a lie as it is to tell one, and that it is as bad to repeat a lie as it is to invent one.”
- The culture we now live in is overwhelmed with verdicts slung at others even before evidence is heard.
 - This causes people to magnify others people’s failures rather than to even see their strengths and virtues
 - MERCY goes the other way and makes more of the strengths and virtues than their failures.

- A merciful person will close his eyes/ears to anything that would diminish their view of someone else.

5. **By having REASONABLE expectations towards others-**

- Christians as well as other people will disappoint and fail us at some point in life.
- The Lord remembers that we are dust and when we remember our own imperfectness, it should cause us to have grace and mercy towards others who are also human and even towards ourselves from being too hard on ourselves at times.
- Your spouse, children, relatives, work associates.
- Learn not to be surprised by the discouragements and disappointments they bring into our lives.
- We have to give grace to others and realize there are no perfect people/Christians yet!
- Remember that if you were carrying your brother or sister's burdens; would you be doing as well as they are?

6. **When someone hurts or wrongs you-**

- Joseph in Genesis is the greatest example of being wronged by family, boss & others in life.
- God orchestrated Joseph's life so that he would have the opportunity **to either get even - or to forgive.**
- That's how mercy works – if you've been wounded by someone, the opportunity usually comes around for you to be put in a position where you have the opportunity to pay them back.
- In that moment of decision, it will reveal a lot about you – are you merciful or are you vengeful?
- David vs. revenge against King Saul in the cave.

7. **Presenting the gospel to someone who is not yet a Believer-**

- Merciful people often find the opportunity to speak to those not knowing Jesus yet because they remember how the Lord had mercy on them.
- Jude 23 exhorts us to: “Save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear.”
- A merciful heart is the one who cares and acts for the good of others who don't know the grace of God yet.

These are multiple opportunities for you and me to develop this character and show mercy to others.

Jesus' words: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

In life and especially in the Kingdom life; what we sow or give to others; is what we will receive or harvest in return.

WHICH ARE YOU?