

WHAT GOES AROUND

Matthew 5:7

August 24, 2008 Sunday am

INTRODUCTION

- A. A lady had her picture taken. When she looked at the proofs she complained that the pictures didn't do her justice. The photographer replied. "Ma'am you don't need justice, you need mercy".
- B. Today we examine Jesus' fifth beatitude - Matthew 5:7.
 1. This fifth beatitude marks a transition from the first four.
 2. The first four focus on our relationship with God whereas the last four focus on our relationships with others.
 3. Another way of saying this is that the first four relate to what we need while the last four relate to what other people need from us.
 4. This fifth beatitude says one of man's greatest needs is for mercy.

I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MERCY?

- A. Mercy is more than a feeling or attitude.
 1. Mercy is "love in action."
 2. It involves doing something not just thinking or even feeling something.
- B. Jesus' story of the "Good Samaritan" is an example of mercy in action (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus concluding question relates to mercy—v. 36-37.
³⁶ **"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"**
³⁷ **The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."**
 1. A Sunday School teacher of first grade girls explained in great graphic detail the story of the Good Samaritan. She related how bloody, bruised, and injured the man must have been. She then asked the girls what they would do if they saw someone like that. One little girl replied, "I would throw up".
 2. Mercy doesn't just "throw up", it raises up those who need our help.

II. WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR SHOWING MERCY?

- A. Because God is merciful.
Psalms 145:8 (KJV) The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.
Ephesians 2:4 (NIV) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
- B. Because God commands us to be merciful too.
Hosea 6:6 (NIV) For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
Micah 6:8 (NIV) He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
- C. Because God has been merciful toward us.
Matthew 18:33 (NIV) Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' (The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant).
Luke 6:36-37 (NIV) ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (To You).
- D. Because we will need mercy again in the future unless we planning on never sinning again.
James 2:13 (NIV) because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

III. WHAT ARE THE METHODS FOR GIVING MERCY?

- A. Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan lists three things mercy does.
- B. What are they?

- 1. Mercy notices people in need.

Erma Bombeck shares an interesting story about a time that she was waiting for a flight in an airport. She was reading a book in an effort to shut out the commotion around her and writes:

“A voice next to me belonging to an elderly woman said, ‘I’ll bet it’s cold in Chicago.’ Stone-faced I replied, ‘It’s likely.’ ‘I haven’t been to Chicago in three years.’ the elderly woman persisted. ‘My son lives there.’ ‘That’s nice,’ I said, my eyes intent on my book. After a few quiet moments, the woman said, ‘My husband’s body is on this plane. We’ve been married 53 years..’

Bombeck continues: ‘I don’t think I ever detested myself more than I did at that moment. Another human being was screaming to be heard, and in desperation had turned to a cold stranger who was more interested in a novel than in the real-life drama at her elbow. She talked numbly and steadily until we boarded the plane, then found her seat in another section. As I hung up my coat, I heard her plaintive voice say to her seat companion, ‘I’ll bet it’s cold in Chicago.’”

- 2. Mercy responds to people in need.

Those of us old enough remember the 80’s scandal of Jim Bakker and the PTL club. He swindled thousands of people and spent some time in jail. You may not be familiar with what happened to him immediately after he got out of jail. He told the following story in an interview.

He said, “When I was transferred out of my last prison, Franklin [Graham] contacted me and said he wanted to help me out when I got out-with a job, a house to live in, and a car. That was my fifth Christmas in prison. I thought it over and said, ‘Franklin, you can’t do this. It will hurt you. The Grahams don’t need my baggage.’

He looked at me and said, ‘Jim, you were my friend in the past and you are my friend now. If anyone doesn’t like it, I’m looking for a fight.’ So when I got out of prison, the Grahams sponsored me and paid for a house for me to live in and gave me a car to drive. The first Sunday out, Ruth Graham called the halfway house I was living in at the Salvation Army and asked permission for me to go to the Montreat Presbyterian Church with her that Sunday morning. When I got there, the pastor welcomed me and sat me with the Graham family. There were like two whole rows of them: I think every Graham aunt and uncle and cousin was there.

The organ began playing and the place was full except for a seat next to me. Then the doors opened and in walked Ruth Graham. She walked down the aisle and sat next to me: inmate #07407-058. I had only been out of prison 48 hours, but with her actions she told the world that morning that Jim Bakker was her friend. Afterwards, she had me up to their cabin for dinner. When she asked me for some addresses, I pulled this envelope out of my pocket to look for them.

You see, in prison you’re not allowed to have a wallet, so you just carry an envelope. She asked, ‘Don’t you have a wallet?’ And I said, ‘Well, yeah...this is my wallet.’ After five years of brainwashing in prison you think an envelope IS a wallet. Well, she walked into the other room and came back and said, ‘Here’s one of Billy’s wallets. He doesn’t need it. You can have it.’”

3. Mercy excludes no one in need.

Illustration: A doctor told a man in his office that he had rabies. The man began to feverishly write something down on paper. The doctor thinking he must be writing his will said to the man that rabies was treatable and there was no need to write his will. The man replied, "I'm not writing my will, I'm making a list of the people I'm going to bite!".

CONCLUSION

A. Do you need mercy?

1. From God? Remember...

Psalms 145:8 (KJV) The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

2. From others? Ask for it.

B. Do you need to show mercy on someone else?

1. Remember that God shows mercy on us.

2. God expects us to show mercy on others too.

4. Remember.... "What goes around, comes around."