

Blessed Are The Merciful

Matthew 5:7

We have been studying the Beatitudes of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew's gospel and chapter 5, this morning from verse 7 -The fifth Beatitude of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5:1 "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was sat down, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. This Beatitude, whether we realise it or not is the remedy, it is the cure for all bitterness - whether in family, whether in fellowships, whether in your own heart or in your mind. If you, this morning, have the problems of these twins - that there are many that have these problems, many a brother, a sister, a man, a wife, a father, a son, a daughter, or mother, the relationship has been broken through bitterness - if you have that problem this Beatitude is the message of liberation.

A recap about the background of the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 3 we see the context and the backdrop of what the Lord Jesus was preaching against within the Beatitudes. Matthew 3 v 7 -12: 'But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down', cut down, 'and cast into the fire'. The Lord Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees and the Sadducees here,

Jesus is speaking to their religiosity, their self-righteousness, their perception that - provided they looked alright, they talked alright, they walked alright on the outside - it didn't matter what was inside, it mattered what was outside. They were men and women who followed the law of external holiness, and thought that that was enough.

What matters - according to the Lord Jesus Christ- is what is in the inside. What is inside!

Matthew chapter 23, what the Lord Jesus was up against as He ministered in Palestine at this time. Matthew 23 : 27, He says: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity'. 'You're like a dead tomb! On the outside you're all clean, you may be engraved, you may be covered in beautiful colours, you may be perceived by those around to be pure, to be holy, to be white - but within your very heart of hearts, your soul of souls, deep down in the real person you're dead!'

What matters – in all these beatitudes, is what is in the inside. What is inside! The change that has been brought by God the Holy Spirit within the soul of a man, the new birth, something that brings eternal life to bear on your external life.

The first four beatitudes that we've been studying over the past weeks really centre upon the inner principles that deal with how you are before God, how you are yourself.

Verse 7 this morning: 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy'.

What Does it mean that God cannot be merciful to you unless you are merciful to other people? Is that what it means? Does it mean unless you forgive other men their sins, before that God can never forgive you your sins?

The Greek word for 'mercy' within the New Testament simply means this: 'to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable'. Therefore a few comparisons about what mercy really is, how we obtain it, how we commit it, and how we get it from God.

First of all let's compare mercy and grace. Within Scriptures, the word grace and the word mercy are synonymous - they mean the same thing. They mean: 'God goodness which has been shown to mankind'. Grace simply means: 'the love of God which has been shown to undeserving men'. God's love towards people that have sinned against Him, towards sinners that have broke His law, that are guilty in a legal sense before God - grace is the lavishing of God's love upon those people.

Mercy is the compassion of God, that when He looks upon us it motivates Him to lift that guilt off us...

The mercy of God speaks of those that are helpless, those that are miserable. It is another word for compassion, that He looks, He sees those that are wounded, He sees those that are broken, those that are sorrowing, those that have no hope, the hopeless of the hopeless - and He looks upon them in compassion, and He seeks to heal them.

Grace is when God pardons sin, when God pardons us.

To compare mercy and compassion - because mercy primarily means compassion. And mercy is not simply feeling compassionate. Compassion is more than a feeling, but it is an active verb - it is something that is shown, it is something that must be done.

In Luke chapter 10 the story of the good Samaritan, the priest walked by the man that was lying bleeding, beaten up, the Levite walked by the man. They both looked, and felt compassion upon him, but we read the Lord Jesus Christ's words in verses 36 and 37: 'Which now of these three, do you was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do likewise'.

What did the Lord Jesus Christ say?-- 'Go and feel compassion', 'Go and feel this way about those that are poor'? No! He says: 'Go, and do likewise!'

The Lord Jesus Christ says to us today: 'Go, and do likewise'.

He saw us in our pitiful state, He saw us the way that we were in our sin, with all the wrong that we have, with all the guilt, with all the ugliness of our filthy sores in His sight - yet He sent the Lord Jesus Christ!

Mercy, is compassion, and mercy and forgiveness, how does mercy relate to forgiveness? The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking in v 7 not just compassion, but it is also expressed in forgiveness.

Mercy is the love of God that forgives, and the love of God that pardons another who is wrong.

example: Joseph in the Old Testament Scriptures? Joseph had to go out of the court to weep, to weep because of the compassion that he had upon his brothers because the family, the nation was starving - and he didn't act against them in the way that was his right, but he forfeited his right because of compassion.

Who is the greatest person that ever showed mercy? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? The most merciful human being that ever lived, because He looked, he went after the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the lame, the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the drunkards, the weak little children. You remember the widowed woman that was following a coffin of her son - she'd already lost the breadwinner, and now one who could bring money into her home had died - and the Lord Jesus Christ stopped the procession, He touched the casket and he brought life back into that woman's life, because He had compassion upon her! Remember John chapter 8, we have the woman caught in adultery - and there were all the religious men stuffed up with their own self-righteousness, standing about in their long garments with their big scrolls and beards, and looking ready to throw the stones at this woman. And they say: 'Rabbi, what do we do? Moses says stone her, what do You say we do?' - and the merciful Jesus looks at that woman and says: 'Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more'.

The Lord Jesus Christ was full of mercy, God sent Christ to save the sinner, He had to He did not have to do it, but He did it because He was rich in mercy.

God shows mercy towards us not in some sentimental, wishy-washy way that He feels sorry for us, because God must judge sin, God must condemn sin - and any time that you find in the Scriptures where mercy was extended to men, someone else had to take the judgement. It was the lamb in the Old Testament, praise God it's the Lamb of God in the New Testament

Finally, there is mercy in grace, there is mercy in compassion, there is mercy in forgiveness.

When you have been the object of God's salvation it ought to be that you show mercy to those around you - and the greatest evidence that God has shined into your heart is when you help the helpless, when you lift the downtrodden, when you heal the broken-hearted.

In Romans 1 vs 29 to 31 we read a description of the city of Rome and those that lived in Rome. They were described as many things, but the very last word used to describe them is: 'unmerciful people'.

If we look into our lives, and we search with the search light of God's holiness into our souls, and we see that we are unforgiving, that we are unmerciful - that is not a fruit of the Spirit! So what is it a fruit of?

1 John 3vs 17 John's talks o often about how we ought to love one another - now listen to the implications that emanate out of this verse, think about it! 'But whosoever', verse 17 'whosoever hath this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and refuses him compassion is saying:

If you don't have this compassion and this mercy in you, you don't have God in you. That is what the word of God is saying, that's what Jesus said in Matthew 18:21 to 35, where He talked about the unmerciful, the unforgiving servant.

If we do not have the desire or the ability within ourselves to have compassion upon a dying world, a poor world; if we do not have it in our hearts for our brothers and sisters in Christ, to forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us, we are in grave danger. For Jesus says that even the life of God may not dwell in our hearts.

How merciful are you Balaam in Numbers chapter 23 and verse 10, do you know what he said when he was dying He was thinking of death and he said this: 'Let me die the death of the upright'. Let me die the death of righteous people! Maybe you're unsaved here, and you're asking: 'Let me die the death of a Christian'. Balaam wanted to die like the righteous alright, he just didn't want to live like the righteous'. Are you merciful to others? Are you living in accordance with the Beatitudes? For Christ says: 'If you are, you are richly blessed'.