

# “Kingdom Come”

## Sermon on the Mount Series: Fifth Lesson

“BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY.” (MATTHEW 5:7 NIV11)

### Introduction

- **QUESTION:** What is helping us so far?
- This beatitude depends on us being meek. Only the meek are aware of their sinfulness and fully grasp the wonder of the mercy of God and therefore able to show mercy (eager) to others.

### Part 1 - Merciful

- What is the Biblical definition of mercy?
  - “Mercy is compassion for people in need.” “...whereby one is moved to pity and go to the relief of another in misery ... cause(ing) its possessor to make the case of another his own, so that he is grieved by it, ... we weep with those that weep.... It not only stirs the heart, but it moves the hand to render help to those in need.” Arthur Pink, “The Sermon on the Mount”, 30. **1 John 3:17-18; Prov 14:21b**
  - Empathy is involved, not simply recognition of need and practical assistance.
  - “The noun *eleos* (mercy) ... always deals with what we see of pain, misery and distress, these results of sin; and *charis* (grace) always deals with the sin and guilt itself. The one extends relief, the other pardon; the one cures, heals, helps, the other cleanses and reinstates.”
  - Paul separates grace and mercy in his greetings in the Pastoral Epistles (**1 Tim 1:2, 2 Tim 1:2**). Perhaps mercy, in this context, is different from grace.
  - “Grace answers to the undeserving, mercy answers to the miserable.”
  - “Grace is especially associated with men in their sins; mercy is especially associated with men in their misery.... Grace looks down on sin as a whole, mercy looks especially at the miserable consequences of sin.... The essential meaning of being merciful; it is pity plus the action.”
  - Mercy emphasis in Matthew: **Matt 6:12, 14-15; 9:13; 12:7; 18:21-35; 23:23**.
- Bible examples of merciful people
  - Abraham rescuing Lot (**Genesis 14**), Joseph forgiving his family (**Genesis 50.19-21**), Moses with Miriam’s leprosy (**Numbers 12.13**), David sparing Saul (**1 Sam 24**).
  - Our example is Jesus – merciful on the cross (see also Stephen, **Acts 7**).
  - Onesiphorus is held up as a person of compassion who can look forward to God’s mercy:
    - “May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.” (**2 Timothy 1:16 NIV11**)
  - The Samaritan in **Luke 10:33, 37**.
- What mercy is not
  - Mercy is not being tolerant, indifferent, ‘easy-going’, cool, ignoring evil etc. God is merciful and yet certainly not complacent or unmoved about sin.
  - Saul was not showing the right kind of mercy when he spared Agag (**1 Sam 15:9**).
  - Christlike mercy is not offered to some and not others. No sentimentality is involved.

**QUESTION:** What does being merciful look like in everyday life?

- “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (**1 John 3:17-18 NIV11**)

## Part 2 - Shown Mercy

- How do we balance the warning as well as the promise?
  - If we do not show mercy....
    - Is this a tit-for-tat? While it's true God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others (**6:14f**) is this the point here? Probably not.
  - Expectation of being shown mercy.....
    - The principle is similar to **Matthew 7:2 & Galatians 6:2** – we reap what we sow.
    - "The passive verb here (as in **vv. 4b, 6b and 9b**) speaks primarily not of how other people will respond to the merciful person, but of how God will deal with those who live by his standards." France, R. T. The Gospel of Matthew. NICNT.
  - When we show mercy we are benefited because we are:
    - Doing good to our own spirit.
    - Doing good to our own emotional well-being.
    - Living in harmony with God's Spirit and thus continuing to enjoy His mercy.
- **QUESTION:** How will this promise affect the way you live this week?
  - "Am I gentle or hard-nosed toward the downtrodden? Am I compassionate or impatient with the fallen?", Carson, 28
  - As we reflect on the mercy of God to us, we become more aware of our potential for growth in the area of being merciful. God is merciful and enjoys showing mercy. A good question for me – do I enjoy showing mercy or am I reluctant to do so?
  - Generosity: Mercy and generosity are connected, **Psalms 37:21**.
  - Restoring people: The merciful will be good at restoring people, **Galatians 6:1-2**.
  - Cheerful mercy: Mercy and cheerfulness are connected, **Romans 12:8**
  - A significant test of our mercy is when we have power over the person who has wronged us.
  - "Our Lord is really saying that I am only truly forgiven when I'm truly repentant. To be truly repentant means that I realise I deserve nothing but punishment, and that if I am forgiving it is to be attributed entirely to the love of God and to his mercy and grace, and to nothing else at all. But I go further; it means this. If I am truly repentant and realise my position before God, and realise that I am only forgiven in that way, then of necessity I shall forgive those who trespass against me." Lloyd-Jones, 102.

### How to develop a merciful spirit

- An unmerciful person cannot see themselves as in need of mercy so cannot receive it – see Pharisee / tax collector (**Luke 18:10ff**). A merciful person recognises their own need for mercy and so shows it to others.
- In showing it to others we become more aware of our own need for mercy – and so the virtuous spiral continues. It's a spiral and not a circle because the more mercy we show the more mercy we receive and the more Christ-like we become.
- Suggestions:
  - Pray to recall examples of God's mercy to you
  - Pray to notice those around you to whom you can show mercy

### YOU ARE MERCIFUL TO ME

You are merciful to me,  
 You are merciful to me,  
 You are merciful to me, my Lord. (*Repeat*)

Every day my disobedience  
 Grieves Your loving heart;  
 But then redeeming love breaks through,  
 And causes me to worship You.

*(Men – Women echo)*

Redeemer, Saviour, Healer, And Friend.  
 Every day, Renew my ways, Fill me with love, That never ends.