

Matthew 5:7

Blessed Are The Merciful

*The first four Beatitudes emphasize our inner life with God. The second four emphasize our relational life with people...**Why is it important that we change “internally” (the first four Beatitudes) before we can have the most meaningful relationships with other human beings? (The second set of four Beatitudes?)***

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

Mercy is closely tied to...

- **Forgiveness** – “...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but **because of his mercy**. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...” (Titus 3:5)
- **Love** - “But because of his great love for us, God, **who is rich in mercy**...” (Eph. 2:4)
- **Grace** - “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we **may receive mercy** and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Heb. 4:16)
- **Benevolence** - “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need **but has no mercy 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).
- **Looking carefully at the bullet points above, are you surprised that mercy plays such a big part in the Christian life? Do we forgive those who wrong us? Do we love unconditionally and reflect God’s grace to others? Are we practicing the “working side” of mercy by becoming wise and effective benefactors?**

The practical side of mercy...

- “I see the need” – **recognition**
- “I am moved by the need” – **motivation**
- “I meet the need” – **action**
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Mercy deals with the implication of sin, whether through the actions of one who needs forgiveness, or as the result of sin in a broad societal setting? Why do you think the concept of mercy is starting to fade in our culture?

The great mercy thief in our lives – selfishness...

- ***Selfishness at its worst – I will care about me.***
- ***Selfishness at its best – I will care about you if you care about me.***

Love is not...self-seeking... (1 Cor. 13:4a, 5a)

God’s laws are often inverted from the world’s standards. Selfishness ultimately results in a life where someone becomes “nobody to anybody.” Why do you think it is true that when we love God most we love others best?

¶ *A common struggle: we want justice for everyone else and mercy for ourselves – “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!” (James 2:12-14).*

James says here that God will not extend His mercy to us unless we practice the extension of mercy to others. Forgiveness and the ability to be merciful are divine gifts of the Holy Spirit. How are we doing practicing both in our lives?

The reward – “...for they shall receive mercy.”

- *As a gift from God.*

Yet He was merciful; He forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time He restrained His anger and did not stir up His full wrath. (Psalm 78:38)

Psalm 78 recounts the long history of Israel and Gods’ constant love and protection for them. The Psalm is also a summary of Israel’s rebellion in their wanderings and God’s anger against them. YET, God is merciful in verse 38. How many times in your life have you deserved God’s full anger but have experienced His mercy instead?

- *At the cross of Christ.*

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Heb. 2:17-18)

Jesus is our faithful and merciful high priest. What does Hebrews 2:18 indicate about the Lord’s earthly experience that would prove His understanding of mercy?

Go out and be merciful in everything you do...