

Be This Attitude

OPENING TEXT: MATTHEW 5: 1-12

1. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL:

MERCY:

THE PRIMARY GREEK WORD FOR "MERCY" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ELEOS (ἔλεος), WHICH APPEARS 27 TIMES TO DESCRIBE COMPASSION, KINDNESS, AND ACTIVE HELP EXTENDED TO THE NEEDY OR SINFUL. IT REFERS TO BOTH DIVINE GRACE AND A REQUIREMENT FOR HUMAN ACTION. ANOTHER, LESS COMMON TERM IS OIKTIRMOS (οἰκτιρμός), EMPHASIZING INTENSE COMPASSION OR TENDER MERCY.

KEY GREEK WORDS FOR MERCY

- **ELEOS (ἔλεος - STRONG'S #1656):** THE MOST COMMON WORD FOR MERCY, REPRESENTING KINDNESS TOWARD THE MISERABLE/ AFFLICTED WITH A DESIRE TO HELP. IT IS FREQUENTLY USED IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS AND PROACTIVE LOVE (E.G., "LORD, HAVE MERCY").
- **ELEEŌ (ἐλεέω - STRONG'S #1653):** THE VERB FORM OF ELEOS, MEANING "TO HAVE MERCY ON" OR "TO SHOW COMPASSION,"
- **OIKTIRMOS (οἰκτιρμός - STRONG'S #3628):** MEANS PITY, COMPASSION, OR "TENDER MERCIES," OFTEN USED IN THE PLURAL, AS IN "FATHER OF MERCIES" IN 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3 FROM THIS EZRA PROJECT ARTICLE.

CONTEXT IN THE BIBLE

- **ACTIVE COMPASSION:** ELEOS IS NOT JUST SYMPATHY; IT IS ACTIVE COMPASSION, SOMETIMES CONNECTED TO THE HEALING, COMFORTING NATURE OF OLIVE OIL (WHICH SHARES A SIMILAR ROOT).
- **DIVINE VS. HUMAN:** IT DESCRIBES GOD'S MERCY TOWARDS HUMANS (SALVATION/GRACE) AND THE MERCY HUMANS SHOULD SHOW TO OTHERS.

- "I DESIRE MERCY": IN MATTHEW 9:13, JESUS USES ELEOS TO QUOTE THE OLD TESTAMENT, EMPHASIZING THAT COMPASSION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN RITUAL SACRIFICE, EXPLAINED BY BILLMOUNCE.COM.
- HEBREW EQUIVALENTS: IN THE SEPTUAGINT (THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT), ELEOS OFTEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD HESED (STEADFAST LOVE/COVENANT LOYALTY) AND RACHAM (COMPASSION).

(ἔλεος, ELEOS) SPEAKS OF GOD'S COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TOWARD HUMAN MISERY AND OF THE BELIEVER'S CORRESPONDING ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS. IT IS MORE THAN SENTIMENT; IT IS LOVE THAT MOVES TO ACT AND TO RELIEVE. EVERY ONE OF ITS TWENTY-SEVEN NEW TESTAMENT OCCURRENCES CARRIES THIS NOTE OF ACTIVE COMPASSION, WHETHER DESCRIBING GOD'S SAVING INITIATIVE OR THE BELIEVER'S ETHICAL OBLIGATION.

MATTHEW 18: 21-35

21 THEN PETER CAME AND SAID TO HIM, "LORD, HOW OFTEN SHALL MY BROTHER SIN AGAINST ME AND I FORGIVE HIM? UP TO SEVEN TIMES?" **22** JESUS *SAID TO HIM, "I DO NOT SAY TO YOU, UP TO SEVEN TIMES, BUT UP TO SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN.

23 "FOR THIS REASON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN MAY BE COMPARED TO A KING WHO WISHED TO SETTLE ACCOUNTS WITH HIS SLAVES. **24** WHEN HE HAD BEGUN TO SETTLE THEM, ONE WHO OWED HIM TEN THOUSAND TALENTS WAS BROUGHT TO HIM. **25** BUT SINCE HE DID NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO REPAY, HIS LORD COMMANDED HIM TO BE SOLD, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN AND ALL THAT HE HAD, AND REPAYMENT TO BE MADE. **26** SO THE SLAVE FELL TO THE GROUND AND PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE HIM, SAYING, 'HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME AND I WILL REPAY YOU EVERYTHING.' **27** AND THE LORD OF THAT SLAVE FELT COMPASSION AND RELEASED HIM AND FORGAVE HIM THE DEBT. **28** BUT THAT SLAVE WENT OUT AND FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOW SLAVES WHO OWED HIM A HUNDRED DENARII; AND HE SEIZED HIM AND BEGAN TO CHOKE HIM, SAYING, 'PAY BACK WHAT YOU OWE.' **29** SO HIS FELLOW SLAVE FELL TO THE GROUND AND BEGAN TO PLEAD WITH HIM, SAYING, 'HAVE

PATIENCE WITH ME AND I WILL REPAY YOU.’ 30 BUT HE WAS UNWILLING AND WENT AND THREW HIM IN PRISON UNTIL HE SHOULD PAY BACK WHAT WAS OWED. 31 SO WHEN HIS FELLOW SLAVES SAW WHAT HAD HAPPENED, THEY WERE DEEPLY GRIEVED AND CAME AND REPORTED TO THEIR LORD ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. 32 THEN SUMMONING HIM, HIS LORD *SAID TO HIM, ‘YOU WICKED SLAVE, I FORGAVE YOU ALL THAT DEBT BECAUSE YOU PLEADED WITH ME. 33 SHOULD YOU NOT ALSO HAVE HAD MERCY ON YOUR FELLOW SLAVE, IN THE SAME WAY THAT I HAD MERCY ON YOU?’ 34 AND HIS LORD, MOVED WITH ANGER, HANDED HIM OVER TO THE TORTURERS UNTIL HE SHOULD REPAY ALL THAT WAS OWED HIM. 35 MY HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO DO THE SAME TO YOU, IF EACH OF YOU DOES NOT FORGIVE HIS BROTHER FROM YOUR HEART.”

PEOPLE THAT JESUS SHOWED MERCY TOO:

- THE MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA: **JOHN 5: 1-9**
- BLIND BARTEMAUS: **MARK 10: 46-52**
- THE DEMONIAK: **MARK 5: 1-13**

EPHESIANS 2: 3-5

3 AMONG THEM WE TOO ALL FORMERLY LIVED IN THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH, INDULGING THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND, AND WERE BY NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH, EVEN AS THE REST. 4 BUT GOD, BEING RICH IN MERCY, BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US, 5 EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST (BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED),

TITUS 3: 4-6

4 BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS OF GOD OUR SAVIOR AND HIS LOVE FOR MANKIND APPEARED, 5 HE SAVED US, NOT ON THE BASIS OF DEEDS WHICH WE HAVE DONE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, 6 WHOM HE POUED OUT UPON US RICHLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR,

JAMES 2: 12-14

12 SO SPEAK AND SO ACT AS THOSE WHO ARE TO BE JUDGED BY THE LAW OF LIBERTY. **13** FOR JUDGMENT WILL BE MERCILESS TO ONE WHO HAS SHOWN NO MERCY; MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT.

14 WHAT USE IS IT, MY BRETHREN, IF SOMEONE SAYS HE HAS FAITH BUT HE HAS NO WORKS? CAN THAT FAITH SAVE HIM?

JAMES 3: 16-18

16 FOR WHERE JEALOUSY AND SELFISH AMBITION EXIST, THERE IS DISORDER AND EVERY EVIL THING. **17** BUT THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, REASONABLE, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, UNWAVERING, WITHOUT HYPOCRISY. **18** AND THE SEED WHOSE FRUIT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE BY THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE.

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23

The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

PEOPLE WE SHOW MERCY TOO:

- THE MAN AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL: **ACTS 3: 1-10**
- CORNELIUS: **ACTS 10**
- THE ETHIOPIAN EUNICK: **ACTS 8: 25-40**

WE AS HIS AMBASSADORS ARE TO SHOW PEOPLE MERCY, COMPASSION AND GRACE. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE LIVED OUT MORE.

THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU WANT MERCY FROM GOD AND FROM OTHERS AND THEN LEARN TO EXTEND THAT TO OTHERS WHO ARE IN NEED OF MERCY AND COMPASSION.