

THE BEATITUDES

MATTHEW 5:7



OPENING

- Find out how this week's sermon has impacted your group members, or if anything has stuck with them since Sunday.

SERMON REVIEW

- Have you ever needed the benefit of the doubt? Or mercy? We're incredibly quick to receive mercy and grace, but tend to withhold it from others.
- Matthew 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."
- Note that there's a difference between acts of mercy and being merciful. Jesus is calling people to the latter.
- We've been shown great mercy, and we should show great mercy to others.
- What does it mean to be merciful? Compassionate and forgiving toward someone who it is within one's power to harm or punish.
- When *compassion* and *power to act* are combined, the key to the mercy of Christ is found.
- Humanity wants to put limits on how much mercy we show (e.g., Peter asking Jesus how many times he should forgive a person), but Jesus calls us into a Christ-like way of loving.
- Real mercy means doing everything we can to bring those who are broken, hurting, lost, or needy to Jesus.
- Mercy is a posture of the heart, a way of life. We should be FULL of mercy, as a reflection of what God has done (and continues to do) for us.
- "God, who is rich in mercy..." (Ephesians 2:4-5)
- The merciful surrender their rights and show the same love and compassion they have been shown.

DISCUSSION

- Why is it easier to receive mercy than to give it?
- Based on our discussion of the Beatitudes thus far, how do you think one arrives at the point where he or she is merciful in attitude and disposition?
- According to Matthew 5:7, in what way are the merciful blessed?
- What did you think of the explanation that mercy is a combination of compassion and power? (*If the group is struggling to give an answer, remind them that power - in this context - could be defined as the ability to act.*)

- How should God's mercy cause us to treat the broken, hurting, lost, & needy? Why?
- What does it mean to say that "Mercy is a posture of the heart"?
- "The merciful surrender their rights" in order to show love and compassion. In what ways has God, in the person of Jesus, surrendered his rights?

CHALLENGE

- Ask God to fill you with righteousness and mercy, that your attitude and disposition would always be merciful.
- Strive to become more merciful in Christ, demonstrating compassion with power to those around you in the days ahead.
- Think of someone who has wronged you. As an expression of the grace and mercy of God on you, forgive that person; if you're able to, communicate that forgiveness to him or her.

PLAN AHEAD

- As we continue through the Beatitudes, pray that God would use these verses to impart the principles of kingdom life to the members of your group.