

## Matt. 5:38-6:4 "The Law & Mercy"

**INTRO: In AD 249-262**, a great Plague in Roman Empire. **Cyprian Plague**. **Bishop Dinysius** wrote about how it was Christians who were caring for the sick. Even facing infection and death themselves. 100yrs later, Christianity had spread so much, **Julian**, Roman Emperor tried to revive paganism and modeled much of his attempts after the Christians. He said, "they not only care for their own sick, but for ours as well." Classic example of loving your enemies, praying for those who persecute you and having Compassion for the Needy.

**THESIS: Only the Gospel of Jesus' Mercy for us can create Merciful People**

### I. Mercy for Enemies

- A. Different than the **anger** passage earlier, that seemed to do with **inward struggles**.
- B. **Enemies/Persecutors** - This seems to have to do with **outward struggles**.
- C. **Gotta be fair? Get even?** Retribution. Revenge.
- D. **You can't seek justice without forgiveness & love**, otherwise it'll be **revenge**.
- E. **Our response to our enemies can only be love**, when we realize God's response to us was love. While we were enemies, He died for us. **"Father, forgive them." JESUS.**

### APPLICATION:

- a. **Turn the Other Cheek.** Give you the shirt off their back. Go the extra mile. Sayings. LOVE.
  - 1. **Don't take revenge.** Don't retaliate. Don't give the response. LOVE.
  - 2. **Not talking about abusive relationships/situations.** LOVE is the goal. Leave.
- b. **Pray for them.** Not just for change & repentance, but for their wellbeing. Their good. LOVE.
- c. **Greet People.** Don't avoid them in aisle 4 of Walmart, parking lot, church, ABC store, etc.

### II. Mercy for Needy

- A. **Compassion** - "Suffer With..." It hurts a little to help and have mercy on others. You enter into their pain, poverty, need, suffering, hurting, grieving, etc.
- B. **Something Christians have always done.**
  - 1. **Luther** - Bubonic Plague. Wittenberg. Stayed to care for sick. Opened house.
  - 2. **Spurgeon** - Did not flee/travel, but stayed and preached and ministered.
  - 3. **Hospitals** - started by Christians. "Hospitality" - bring enemies into home. Radical. Hospes - Guest, Stranger, etc. Originally houses that welcomed poor, sick, travelers.
- C. **Why?** B/c it feels good? *This is what the world might say. But it doesn't ultimately work.*
  - 1. **Simon Sinek "Leaders Eat Last"** - Hormones. Evolution.
    - a) **Endorphins (The "Runner's High"):** These mask physical pain, help us push through challenges, and promote resilience during difficult tasks.
    - b) **Dopamine (The "Goal Achiever"):** This chemical provides a rewarding "hit" when we achieve goals or make progress. It motivates us to complete tasks but can become addictive if only focused on short-term success.
    - c) **Serotonin (The "Leadership Chemical"):** Released when we feel pride, status, or respect from others, especially from mentors or peers. It strengthens bonds and creates a sense of belonging.
    - d) **Oxytocin (The "Bonding Agent"):** Fosters feelings of trust, love, and friendship, often released through acts of human connection and empathy. It is crucial for building high-trust, safe cultures.
  - 2. **Internal Family Systems:** 8 C's of True Self (Imago Dei) - *Calmness, Curiosity, Clarity, Compassion, Confidence, Courage, Creativity, and Connectedness.* **They're in there, but hidden under hurt, brokenness, shame, etc.**
- D. **What's the motivation?** Because this is the gospel. Only thing that can.
- E. **Jesus came to "suffer with" us and for us.** Only in His grace & mercy, can we do the same for others. **Jesus Christ who was rich became poor for us. 2 Cor. 8:8-15**

**CONCLUSION:** *When we had no hope, God had mercy and compassion on us. Rom. 5:6-11.*

- 1. **We were weak.** We can help the weak/sick/disabled/hurting.
- 2. **We were sinners.** We can be patient, gracious, loving, accepting, kind to sinners.
- 3. **We were enemies.** We can love, forgive, pray for our enemies/persecutors.