

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

Matthew 5:7 | Mercy

July 31, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 5.
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

We have spent the last month in Matthew's Gospel specifically studying the Beatitudes within the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus has declared a certain type of supernatural happiness over our lives.

Happy

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

Blessed are those who mourn...

Blessed are the humble...

And then, last Sunday, we said that the fourth Beatitude is like a pillar.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness..."

We could say that the fourth Beatitude is like a dam.

The first three Beatitudes flow in—and the last three flow out because our spiritual hunger and thirst for God's righteousness.

(Desperation)

of

Jesus first deals w/ our hearts in His sermon—then hands
Pause... Can you see how Jesus has dealt with your hearts with these Beatitudes?

Why so much emphasis on our hearts?

We have to "be" before we can "do."

Moral character is Jesus' primary focus in the Beatitudes

Because the religious culture that Jesus lived in was obsessed with outward appearances.

Now, we as 21st Century Americans ~~are also obsessed with outward appearances for the most part,~~ ^{SO ARE WE,}

but the significant difference between them and us is that they were obsessed with how they looked spiritually.

~~On the other hand,~~ we are obsessed with how we look physically.

Regardless, Jesus knows that because of the depravity of our hearts and the remaining sin in our lives, He must first address our hearts and mind.

Jesus knows that to radically change our outward behavior. He must start with how we think. Head, Heart, Hands

The apostle Paul says...

Romans 12:1—... in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

Romans 12:2— Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. ^{Beatitudes — How?}

And if we've gone through the difficult process of taking these Beatitudes seriously over the past month,

We should start noticing that not only is my thinking changing, but my attitude is as well.

Head, Heart, and then Hands—total being.

Only when our head and heart align with God's will can we truly do the work of God's kingdom.

When God has our head and heart, He than can control our hands.

Jesus first deals with who we are—He did that through the first four Beatitudes.

And now He will show us the outward manifestations from those particular Beatitudes.

In other words, these next four Beatitudes are the fruit produced in our lives as a direct result of the previous four.

INTRODUCTION:

So this fifth Beatitude that we will study today deals with mercy.

We'll also learn a surprising theological concept about our sin and God's mercy.

What is that surprise?

Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:7 CSB

Matthew 5:1— *When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.*

Matthew 5:2— *Then he began to teach them, saying:*

Matthew 5:3— *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

Matthew 5:4— *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:5— Blessed are the humble,
for they will inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6— Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Matthew 5:7— Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Matthew 5:8— Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Matthew 5:9— Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Matthew 5:10— Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 5:7— Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

“Blessed” in Greek is *makários* (ma-car-e-ohs), which literally means happy.

Our definition of happiness is different than God’s, so we must adjust ours to His.

Matthew 5:7— Blessed are the...

Jesus points to a specific group of people here— *Who Are they?*

Matthew 5:7— Blessed are the... merciful,

Merciful is from *eleēmōn*, (el-e-a-mon).

The Greek verb is *eleeō*, “to have mercy.”

How do you have it? *What's it look like to have mercy?*

So let's start with some definitions here, and then we'll exposit this text using some narratives throughout Scripture.

Definition:

Mercy helps the helpless.

Thorough Definition:

A merciful person shows leniency, compassion, or forgiveness, especially towards someone who has offended them.

The best way to understand mercy is

KEYPOINT #1:

Mercy is compassion in action.

Mercy involves caring about people.

Mercy involves ^{it's being} being sympathetic and having understanding—and then doing what you can to alleviate the pain.

The ^{third} ~~second~~ definition of mercy deals with justice.

*Mercy - withholding the punishment
That is love.*

In Scripture, specifically in the OT, mercy is perfectly demonstrated by God temporarily withholding justice for His people who deserve punishment.

In the OT, we see God's compassion, pity, and love toward a rebellious nation.

The entire sacrificial system was based primarily on God's mercy.

The lambs that were slain in the OT were a temporary covering for sin.

That was until the Lamb of God arrived and shed His blood which became the final and perfect sacrifice.

Think about the patience within God's mercy.

If you were God dealing with the Israelites, how thick would your OT be?

—

I'm guessing most of us would have lost our patience, and we would implement absolute justice in Genesis 7 with the flood.

In other words, if it were up to us, the OT would be seven chapters long.

But not God. God saved a remnant of people in Noah's Ark. Why?

Because of God's character—God is love (1 John 4:8).

And God shows us His love through a special OT Hebrew term— חֶסֶד *hesed*.

Hesed is difficult to define in English—a love where mercy, kindness and compassion are demonstrated.

But the concept/idea of *Hesed* is this—steadfast love.

Hesed is a loyal love.

It's a love that never fails.

It's a love that takes action.

It's a love related to the promises God has made to you and me.

The reason that God didn't implement total justice during the flood is because of His covenant faithfulness and his merciful love for His people.

We see God's steadfast love throughout the entire OT. For example:

God's mercy led Abraham to rescue his nephew, Lot, from being killed. (Genesis 14.)

Lot was someone who rode on the coat tails of Abraham. He was proud, and a know it all.

Abraham was so gracious to Lot that when there was a family feud about not having enough land for their livestock, Abe allowed ~~him~~ ^{Lot} to choose which land to occupy.

Of course, Lot chose what looked best in his eyes.

He had no regard for Abraham and his family.

And yet, God's mercy flowed through Abe some time later when he had to rescue Lot when he was captured and about to be killed by a rebel army.

God's mercy allowed Joseph to forgive his brothers for wanting to kill him and sell him into slavery. (Genesis 50:20)

God's mercy prompted Moses to ask YHWH to remove leprosy from his sister, Miriam. (Numbers 12:13.)

Miriam was busy running her mouth about Moses, so God strikes Miriam with leprosy because of her sin—and yet Moses steps in and begs for his sisters life.

It was God's mercy that compelled David to spare the life of King Saul. (1 Samuel 26:9)

Mercy is so important to God that He commands the Israelites to be merciful to one another. (Deuteronomy 15:7-11.)

Micah 6:8 NKJV—*And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

God also teaches us to be merciful throughout the Proverbs 14:21; 28:27.

11:17, 28:13

Here's something interesting.

According to Scripture, God's mercy and compassion—like the gift of salvation—cannot be earned.

Mercy can only be received from God.

The source of mercy is God Himself.

In fact, God gives mercy to whomever He wants and according to His prerogative.

Let me show you an example.

During the Exodus, Moses asks God to show him His glory.

Exodus 33:19—*God said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name 'the Lord' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

Mercy is a gift from God.

The apostle Paul recounts this story in Romans and then says this...

SAME

Romans 9:16— ~~So then~~, it does not depend on human will or effort **but on God who shows mercy.**

Here's the deal—God is not stingy with His mercy.

Let me give you a few examples.

God grants mercy to Israel after the nation has committed ^{spiritual} adultery.

God divorced Israel in Jeremiah 3:8.

And it's through the prophet Hosea that God forgives them by offering mercy.

Hosea 2:19— *I will take you to be my wife forever.
I will take you to be my wife in righteousness,
justice, love (Hesed), and compassion.*

Hosea 2:20— *I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness,
and you will know the Lord.*

The prophet Joel pleads with the nation of Israel to repent so they can receive God's mercy.

Joel 2:12— *Even now—
this is the Lord's declaration—
turn to me with all your heart,
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.*

Joel 2:13— *Tear your hearts,
not just your clothes,
and return to the Lord your God.
For he is **gracious and compassionate,**
slow to anger, abounding in faithful love (Hesed),
and he relents from sending disaster.*

In other words, the Lord doesn't want to bring justice on you,

God offers his mercy and compassion, but you must repent and turn from your sins.

We learn also learn about God's mercy and compassion in a surprising story from Jonah.

God tells Jonah to go and preach to a city called Nineveh.

Jonah says, "no." And he jumps on a boat and literally goes in the opposite direction.

There's a big storm out in the middle of the sea. Everybody is about to die.

Jonah confesses that this whole thing is his fault, and ~~the crew makes~~ ^{he} Jonah walk the plank.

Jonah doesn't drown ~~as he should~~ for ignoring and rebelling against the One True Living God...

No! Jonah then receives ~~mercy~~ from God through a whale of all things.

Jonah lives through his sin, but he's still mad.

He doesn't want to preach the Good News to the people of Nineveh.

Nineveh is like Sedona—spiritually wonky.
Jonah finally preaches, and God saves the city!

God offers millions of people mercy.

And a ~~normal~~ preacher would be ecstatic about the great salvific work of the Lord.

This is where we pick up the narrative.

Jonah 4:1—Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious.

Jonah 4:2— He prayed to the Lord, "Please, Lord, isn't this what I said while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love (Hesed), and one who relents from sending disaster." *More of a rant*

Jonah knew the same thing about God as Joel.

Jonah is angry because God showed mercy to a people group he despises.

Needless to say, Jonah is a preacher with a bad attitude.

Jonah is an awful example of someone who is more than willing to receive God's mercy but not give that same mercy away in his own life.

We see God's mercy and compassion firsthand when we fast forward to the NT.

~~Because~~ mercy and compassion are perfectly demonstrated in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you a few examples.

Matthew 15:22—Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came and kept crying out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon." *worshiped idols*

This pagan woman heard the previous stories about how merciful Jesus was and begged Him to show her a part of that mercy.

And Jesus did!

Jesus had mercy on the poor, the blind, the crippled, widows, prostitutes, and tax collectors—every kind of sinner, like us.

We see several examples of mercy when Jesus was hanging on a cross for six hours, becoming our substitute for sin as the Lamb of God.

John 19:26—*When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."*

John 19:27—*Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

It's incomprehensible to think that Jesus is hanging from a Roman cross, gasping for every breath— and He's concerned about His mother's welfare.

Jesus even spoke words of mercy to the men who executed Him.

Luke 23:34—*"Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."*

Then Jesus said this to the thief on the cross...

Luke 23:43—*"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*

We see the Lord's mercy in Stephen's life as he is being murdered by the Jews in...

Acts 7:60—*He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!"*

I wanted to take the time to go through those examples in Scripture because human beings don't have the capacity to offer someone else mercy apart from the grace of God.

Mercy is a supernatural gift from God.

In the first century, mercy was not a virtue you gave to other people outside your family or close circle of friends.

In other words, you showed mercy to those who typically showed mercy to you.

Very few
~~Nobody~~ went out of their way to show mercy or compassion to someone they didn't know.

That's why we see the religious leaders—specifically the Pharisees and Sadducees, so harsh.

We know that the religious leaders were proud, self-righteous, and judgmental.

But, these men were anti-mercy. They were merciless.

As a general rule, they only talked to other Pharisees and Sadducees.

That's what cold hard religion does to people—it hardens, not softens.

The Romans called mercy “the *disease* of the soul.”

Let that sink in!

In their opinion, mercy and compassion ~~was~~ *were* the greatest sign of weakness.

Mercy was a sign that you did not have what it takes to be a real man —especially a real Roman.

The Romans had four foundational virtues—wisdom, justice, self-discipline, and courage.

Above all, they glorified absolute power.

Obviously, mercy doesn't make the list.

This is the background of the Jewish religious and Roman political culture that the Jews are living in.

And then Jesus comes in and says...

Matthew 5:7— *Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

Mercy is not a part of the Disciples vocabulary.

The Disciples may ^{have} even laughed when Jesus preached this Beatitude.

The emphatic pronoun *autos* (they) indicates that only those who are merciful qualify to receive mercy.

Now the question is, “shown mercy... by who?”

Is Jesus saying that those same people will be merciful to us because we are merciful to ~~other people?~~

Jesus is the embodiment of mercy, yet the religious Jews and the Roman government murdered him.

So we know it's not other people.

Answer—God.

If we show others the same mercy God has given us, then God will show us even more mercy.

We see a circular blessing in this Beatitude.

1. God gives us mercy.

2. We now have the capacity to give that mercy away.
3. God gives us more mercy.

We see an interesting dichotomy of mercy vs. merciless (good vs. evil) in a Parable called The Good Samaritan.

Let's take a look.

Luke 10:30— *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead.*

Luke 10:31(a)— *A priest happened to be going down that road.*
Good news!

A priest is expected to be a righteous man overflowing with God's compassion.

He knew that God's law commanded him to be merciful to strangers.

Leviticus 19:34 emphasizes this point of compassion by loving strangers as yourself.

So the priest sees this man and knows that God commands him to help—not only that, he should want to help because his love for people is part of why he's in the priesthood, correct?

Luke 10:31(b)— *When he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

That's not good—that wasn't supposed to happen.

Luke 10:32 (a)— *In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him,*

Good news! This guy has a second chance.

A Levite is someone who assists the priests, so he too should be overflowing with God's compassion because of the compassion given to him as a chosen man of God.

Luke 10:32 (a)— *passed by on the other side.*

That's not good. This man is having a very bad day.

This poor man is 0-2, and he's on his deathbed.

Luke 10:33— *But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion.*

Luke 10:34— *He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

So it's the Samaritan—someone who is not included in the chosen race of Israel—that has God's compassion.

Luke 10:35— *The next day he (Samaritan) took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'*

This is a good time to mention neither this parable nor this Beatitude implies that mercy provides salvation.

In other words, your compassion towards others does not give you a ticket to Heaven.

We do not earn eternal life by being merciful.

We don't earn salvation by feeding the poor, going on a mission trip, building houses, or digging wells.

~~That's~~
 There's a false belief system — ~~in fact it's every other form of religion besides Christianity~~ — that says God will judge your good deeds and compare them to your bad.

That's a very bad spiritual plan. Please don't believe that.

God judges our hearts ~~that contribute to our deeds.~~

We are saved by confessing our sins, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, and believing He was raised from the dead. (Romans 10:9)

Salvation comes one way—through Christ alone by faith alone.

Before we can extend mercy to others, God's mercy must first save us.
~~Mercy is one example that our confession of Christ is true.~~

If you are truly saved—time always tells—you will be ~~truly changed,~~ ^{merciful}

That's one of many lessons with The Good Samaritan—He was saved.

The priest and the levite both were either having really bad days, which is possible, or they were not saved.

Regardless, an unredeemed man can't offer God's mercy.

He can offer his own definition of mercy—but not true selfless eternal mercy.

We see this truth played out in the Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant.

Matthew 18:21—Then Peter approached him and asked, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? As many as seven times?"

Matthew 18:22– *"I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven.*

This is not a parable about math but forgiveness. This is hyperbole.

Jesus is not saying that once you get to 490 times, you don't have to forgive anymore.

Forgiveness is not about keeping score.

This is not a good time to use your bookkeeping skills.

And the reason for that is because we have sinned a whole lot more than 490 times against the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 18:23– *"For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.*

Matthew 18:24– *When he began to settle accounts, one who owed ten thousand talents (Gazillion dollars) was brought before him.*

Matthew 18:25– *Since he did not have the money to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt.*

He and his whole family are now slaves.

Matthew 18:26– *"At this, the servant fell facedown before him and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything.'*

Matthew 18:27– *Then the master of that servant had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan.*

The Master is so merciful that he forgave this man his entire debt!

You would think this is one of the best days ever!

Matthew 18:28– "That servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, 'Pay what you owe!'"

Now, is anger, rage, unforgiveness and and physical assault what The Master had in mind for this man after He forgave him of his excessive debt?

Matthew 18:29– "At this, his fellow servant fell down and began begging him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'"

This fellow servant said the same exact thing verbatim that the other man said to his Master...

Matthew 18:30– But he wasn't willing. (Merciless) Instead, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed.

Now, how can one man possibly have all of his debt forgiven, and yet the same man cannot forgive someone else a much lesser debt?

How can he remain unchanged and merciless, especially after the gift of mercy given to him?

Matthew 18:31– When the other servants saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened.

Matthew 18:32– Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.'

Matthew 18:33– Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

The answer is obvious. It's a rhetorical question.

For whatever reason, this man wasn't converted by God's mercy.

And the Master calls him "wicked."

Wicked people do wicked things.

He's acting like the world because he is of the world.

He is willing to receive God's mercy for himself but unwilling to extend that same mercy to someone else.

And yet Jesus is teaching us today through this Beatitude that...

KEYPOINT #2:

Mercy is both a gift to us and a requirement from us.

~~Look at the result of this man's mercy.~~

Look At the consequences

Matthew 18:34— And because he was angry, his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed.

It doesn't get any more severe than this.

Let me ask you an obvious question:

How does a man who is financially ruined, in jail, being tortured, have the ability to pay his debt?

He doesn't.

You can't pay your sin debt while being tortured for your sin debt.

Dear friends, this parable gives us a picture of how and why hell is eternal.

And if that's not a big enough dose of reality for us today, the parable continues.

Matthew 18:35— So also my heavenly Father will do to you unless every one of you forgives his brother or sister from your heart." - condition

Jesus ties mercy to forgiveness.
 Mercy and forgiveness are two characteristics that must overflow out of a Christian's life. - more on that in a second

Now I promised you that we would learn a surprising theological concept about our sin and God's mercy during this study.

We've already discussed that mercy is part of God's character.

But let's dive in deeper.

God has both *absolute* and *relative* attributes/characteristics.

His absolute attributes include love, truth, and holiness.

These characteristics are a part of God's nature from eternity past.

In other words, God had these absolute characteristics —these things that make God complete, whole, and holy, before He created the world.

But His relative attributes—God's relational characteristics like mercy, grace, and justice—were not known until after He created the world.

God is perfectly holy.

So, God, the Father, doesn't need to offer God the Son mercy.

God the Son doesn't need to offer the Holy Spirit grace.

The Holy Spirit doesn't need to offer God the Father justice.

So here's the surprising thing about mercy.

The only way that we as human beings would ever experience God's mercy— is when His mercy is offered to us.

Mercy couldn't be offered until after it was needed.

When did humanity need God's mercy?

After Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3.

Mercy, justice, and grace are only needed when sin is involved.

It's only when Adam and Eve sinned that God's love was extended to us in the form of mercy, grace, and justice.

Why? Because sin broke the relationship between Adam and God.

A broken relationship will never happen within the Trinity.

God never asks for forgiveness.

Dear friends, mercy is one of God's relational attributes that we can only recognize through sin.

What does this mean?

It means God's plan from the very beginning was to reveal Himself through redemption.

Dear friends, that kind of theological truth will have you run into the arms of your sovereign Lord.

PREACH:

And that brings us to the cross, doesn't it?

If the only mercy God gave us— were the mercy of forgiving our sins through Christ, that would be enough...and yet—

God promises that His mercies are new every morning!

Lamentations 3:22—*Because of the Lord's faithful love (Hesed) we do not perish, for his mercies never end.*

Lamentations 3:23—*They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!*

God's mercies should make us the most compassionate people on the face of the planet.

Think about it...

#1
What don't you have that God didn't give you?

Without God's mercy, you wouldn't be able to take your next breath.

It's only because of God's mercy that you have clothes on your back and food in the fridge.

It's only by God's mercy that you have talents, intellect, and the skills that have gotten you where you are today.

The gift of God's mercy is why grumbling and complaining are so offensive to God.

And it's a reminder for us to repent from our selfishness.

If you hunger and thirst for God's righteousness and seek Him first, you will be merciful.

It doesn't happen overnight.

It's a slow, life-changing process that goes along with the rest of your sanctification.

#2 Do you refuse to forgive someone?

Forgiveness is not about math, but it is about ^{repetition}—if you're counting to 490 your heart is not right.

How would you feel if Jesus did that to you?

Counted all your sin in one day and when He gets to 491—he says, “tough.”

#3 How quickly do you forgive?

There is a danger in waiting.

The longer it takes you to forgive the more time the root of bitterness takes hold of your life.

I have a pastor friend who compares old age to wine.

He says that the older we get ^{the more bitter or sweet we become.}
^{Forgiveness has a lot to do w/ that fermenting process.}
Lastly, The most merciful thing you will ever do is be a witness for Christ by sharing the Gospel—not the social gospel.

Not feeding them physical food, or building homes, or making yourself feel good in any other way.

Mercy involves sharing God's truth about SALVATION

That's why we teach verse-by-verse, so that you can share Jesus day-by-day this week.

PRAYER

God Intersections and Divine Disruptions.

BAPTISM

- celebrates!

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