



**EXPLORING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN MATTHEW:
BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL!**

AUGUST 20, 2017

TEXT: MATTHEW 5:7

- We've often said of mercy as it relates to God, "Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve; Mercy is God NOT giving us what we DO deserve."
- When we are merciful, we are like **Christ** in that when reviled, we revile not, and when we suffer, we threaten not but commit ourselves to God who judges righteously. (1 Pet 2:23)
- Matthew Henry said, "We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must, by Christian sympathy, partake of the afflictions of our brethren; pity must be shown (*Job 6:14*), and bowels of mercy put on (*Col 3:12*); and, being put on, they must put forth themselves in contributing all we can for the assistance of those who are any way in misery. We must have compassion on the souls of others, and help them; pity the ignorant, and instruct them; the careless, and warn them; those who are in a state of sin, and snatch them as brands out of the burning."
- A wonderful definition of Mercy is this:

"That benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves; the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries, and to forbear punishment, or inflict less than law or justice will warrant. In this sense, there is perhaps no word in our language precisely synonymous with mercy. That which comes nearest to it is grace. It implies benevolence, tenderness, mildness, pity or compassion, and clemency, but exercised only towards offenders. Mercy is a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Being." —Webster 1828

- One of the best ways to remember what mercy means is to see it as **compassion**. Yes friends, blessed are the compassionate, for then others will be compassionate towards them!
- BTW, have you noticed the "**sowing** and **reaping**" principle embedded in the Beatitudes? :)

2Co 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Gal 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF GOD'S MERCY

One of the great truths in Scripture is that the LORD our God is Merciful.

- *Exo 34:5-7 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*
- *Num 14:18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*
- *Psa 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*
- *Psa 103:8-11 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*
- *Joe 2:12-13 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*
- *Luk 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

Since we are called to imitate Christ (Eph 5:1; 1Pet 2:21), we must imitate Him in this grace also.

- Christians are called to abound in many graces (2 Cor 8:7), including faith, speech, knowledge and giving. Much like giving, Mercy involves sacrificing...pouring oneself out and allowing oneself to be **vulnerable**.
- Like giving, we are predisposed to **withhold** mercy thinking that would produce some form of advantage.
- Remember the “upside down” nature of the Kingdom. Just like giving produces a harvest, mercy breeds mercy. Indeed, some of the mercy you are walking in now is because you’ve **sown** it to others. The opposite may also be true.

THE MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST

- *1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
- *Eph 2:2-7 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace*

ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

What love and mercy! We who were enemies of God, lost and loving our sin, headed for a devil's hell, were redeemed by Jesus our King in love and compassion! Like the LORD seeing Israel abandoned, naked, and bleeding, He spread His garment over us and covered us. (Ezek 16) May we declare like David...

"I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Psa 86:12-13

May we declare like the Psalmist:

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever." Psa 136:1-3

THE CALL TO BE MERCIFUL

So many blessings come when God's people are merciful...when we quickly forgive wrongs and move towards others in love, especially those who've hurt us. Indeed, given what our LORD has done for us, mercy is a **mandate** we should lovingly strive to obey:

Mat 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

In other words, we've been given so much compassion; how do we NOT extend that to others? What right do we have to withhold mercy from others?

Our call to imitate our LORD in mercy and compassion is constant throughout the Scriptures:

- *Pro 3:3-4 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*
- *Pro 14:21-22 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. 22 Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.*
- *Mic 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*
- *Zec 7:9-10 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: 10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

- *Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*
- *Col 3:12-14 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies ("compassionate hearts" ESV), kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*
- *Php 2:1-4 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*
- *1Jn 3:16-17 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

This example of God's call for mercy is particularly applicable to the Church; may we hear!

Mat 9:9-13 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

As one more example of this heart, our LORD taught this parable. May it encourage you!

"Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven! "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had

happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart." Mat 18:21-35

FAMILY WORSHIP, PERSONAL DEVOTIONS, AND APPLICATIONS

1. We've been reminded today of the love and mercy of God. Although we've offended God much more than any person has ever offended us, the LORD has been truly merciful towards us.
2. Write the name of one person to whom you can be actively merciful this week:_____.
3. Would you commit to pray for them now? What are you going to do THIS WEEK to demonstrate love and mercy towards them?
4. Sometimes, **unresolved** disagreements keep us from being truly merciful. Do you need to repent for any feelings you've harbored towards anyone?
5. Would you also commit to pray that our church family would be more merciful...that godly, Spirit-given compassion would flow from the depths of our hearts more and more?

Amen. Extra Credit: Please read the prayer called *Mercy* in *The Valley of Vision*, p. 170 when you get home: <https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional/mercy/>