

Matthew 5:1–6

- ¹ And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.
- ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

The Beatitudes – Part 4 **Matthew 5:7-8**

INTRO:

The beatitudes, which make up the beginning of our Lord’s famous sermon, describe who those are who will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The Lord began here because before we can even think of living as He describes in this sermon, we need to make sure we are possessors of this kingdom. So, the Lord Jesus began his sermon. Today we begin with the fifth beatitude. ***“Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).***

I. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL (v. 7)

II. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART (v.8)

I. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL (v. 7)

“Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

A. Another of the markers which shows someone is a part of Christ’s kingdom is that that person is characterized by mercy. Perhaps the first thing we need to do is to define exactly what ***“mercy”*** is. When I was young I was taught that grace meant God gave us what we didn’t deserve and mercy was God keeping back what we did deserve. While in many ways this is a fairly good definition for mercy, there is more to mercy than this.

1. Grace is when God gives us favor and blessing when we deserve wrath and judgment.

2. Mercy, on the other hand, sees our desperate situation because of our sin and does something to correct that situation. This is why we read in places like **Titus 3:5**:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

B. We must be careful that we do not see this mercy as something we do in order to receive mercy. We might think in terms of the Lord’s Prayer, **Matthew 6:12**.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

We sometimes read this as a “tit for tat” situation, if we make it a point to be forgiving, God will forgive us. To think like this makes forgiveness a point of merit and not of mercy or grace. If this is not a legalistic statement, what does it mean?

C. The best illustration is found in the famous parable of forgiveness in **Matthew 18**. The parable Jesus told is introduced by Peter’s question.

Matthew 18:21-22 ***“Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”***

The point is there is no limit to how we forgive (i.e. show mercy to someone who has offended us).

1. We might respond, *“Why should our mercy never run out?”* The answer is found in the parable. You remember the story. There was a king who called to account one of his slaves who owed him 10,000 talents. This is an amount so vast we cannot begin to comprehend how great it was. The slave could never ever pay it back. When the king ordered him, his family, and his stuff be sold to help defray the debt, the slave pleaded with the king.

“Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.” (Matthew 8:27).

The king forgave what the slave could have never paid.

2. What did that forgiven slave do? Instead of a celebration, he thought about another servant who owed him some money (100 denarii was no small debt but still is attainable). He proceeded to put the strong arm on this slave and demand repayment. When the poor man begged for time, the first slave had no mercy. His fellow slaves saw this and reported it to the king.

3. The king rescinded his forgiveness.

Matthew 18:32–33 ***“Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’”***

Our mercy needs to be endless because we have received mercy and forgiveness of a debt we could never pay.

D. Here is how this works from the pen of the Apostle Paul.

Ephesians 4:32 ***“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”***

Paul wrote the same thing in **Colossians 3:13**,

“Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

The context of both these statements is that we need to strive to grow to be like our Savior. We cannot do any of this without the Holy Spirit in us empowering us. Still the whole reason we forgive is not because we are good people, but because Christ forgave us. He forgave the debt we could never pay. So, we must forgive the debts others owe us, because God forgave our debt that was so great it cannot be compared with any debt someone owes us. The debt anyone owes us is nothing in comparison to the greatness of the debt God forgave for us.

II. BECAUSE THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY.

A. We need to revisit the Lord’s Prayer here to understand what Jesus said. We do not naturally pray what the Lord told us to pray in **Matthew 6:12** and the expansion in **verses 14-15**.

“And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12).

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14–15).

B. We need to recognize at the onset our Lord is not prescribing an action we must choose to take. Everything in our salvation, most notably our forgiveness of sin, is never a matter of merit. We cannot legalistically earn God’s forgiveness by forgiving others. Rather we are willing to forgive others because we recognize God has forgiven us. If we are not willing to forgive, we need to check to make sure we have been forgiven.

C. None of these things described in the character of those described in the beatitudes is natural. **(1)** We do not naturally recognize our spiritual bankruptcy before God. **(2)** We do not naturally hate our sin and mourn over it. **(3)** We do not naturally bow to God as the One who has the right to demand our obedience and loyalty. **(4)** It certainly is not natural to hunger and thirst after righteousness. **(5)** So, why would we think it is something natural to be merciful? These qualities are evidence that something has happened to us and that is because the Lord Jesus saved us through faith, and the Holy Spirit of God has taken up residence in us and is changing us.

What do we learn from this?

1. This is a way for each of us to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Are we growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? If we are not we need to do two things.

2. **First make sure you know Him.** Check out your faith. Make sure you know Him. Supernatural character traits only develop as the Spirit of God dwells in us.

3. **Second, check your fellowship with Him.** As we spend time with the Lord in the Bible and prayer, we grow and His character grows in us and makes us what He wants us to be.

HYMN #374 O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO