

Blessed Are The Merciful

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[0 : 0 0] not love and worship God. We can understand that in our world. The majority of people do not love and worship God, and we live among those people, and so we have to be cautious as well.

And in other parts of the scriptures where God is helping people understand, you know, here's an example of a people back here. Don't follow their example.

And so we have that example for us as well. Well, in God's time, he sent Jesus into the world, and when Jesus began his public ministry, it says in Matthew 4, 17, from that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

So here we have again the great prophet coming into the world of his people who were still disregarding, bringing this message of repentance still that they needed to hear.

And in Matthew 4, we read that Jesus went as it says in verse 23, throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and great crowds followed him from Galilee and from the Decapolis and from Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

[1 : 1 8] So this is the context in which Jesus begins this sermon on the mount that we've been getting into. He brings the same message of his kingdom, this message of repentance and righteousness from God by faith in the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

And hearing and believing this message, God provides the righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees. Pastor John has been focusing on that in his morning series.

Their righteousness was really only focused on the outward doing of the law and other laws and rules that they came up with.

And it was lacking that inward reality of true repentance and faith and love toward God. And so Jesus is there with these crowds of people following him.

And he retreats to this hillside with his disciples to unwrap for them, again, the blessedness of living, living out these distinctive features of the character and the conduct of one who is a member of the kingdom of God.

[2 : 3 7] And the Beatitudes that we've been looking at describe that character and that conduct of those who are those members of the kingdom of Christ.

And really the accompanying blessing that they will experience, both in the present and in the future. So it's always interesting seeing how God brings this presentation of truth.

His command, certainly, but it's commands that come with a blessing. Blessings that are good for people. And so we don't want to lose sight of that, even as we've been moving through these Beatitudes, that association of God's commands and the blessing that comes to those who are willing to walk in God's ways.

And John Stott writes again in his book, so the Beatitudes set forth the blessings which God bestows, not as a reward for merit, but as a gift of grace upon those in whom he is working such a character.

And in Jesus' teaching, as he was teaching them what the life of a follower of Jesus Christ looks like, we've been seeing in Matthew chapter 5, he says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[3 : 59] Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

And this morning, blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. We've seen this progression of character attributes and attitudes in the Beatitudes in the life of the individual who is a member of the kingdom of Christ.

And this morning, we begin to see how these character attributes and attitudes really begin to manifest themselves as we relate to other people.

For we know what truly is in the heart of an individual will be manifested outwardly in how we live our lives in the world today.

Luke 6.45, a verse I'm always reminded of when that thought comes to mind. The good person, out of the good measure of his heart, produces good. And the evil person, out of his evil treasure, produces evil.

[5 : 11] For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. So again, that individual that has entered this new relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ doesn't want to any longer be conformed to this world.

He doesn't want to be pressed into that mold. He's lived enough time, spent enough time of his life in those ways and understand the deficiency of the way of the world, both in his own life personally, in his relationship with others, but certainly in his relationship with God.

He wants to live a new life. He wants to be, as it says in 1 Peter 2, that living advertisement of that which is magnificent about God because he's part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, the person who belongs to God.

And now he wants to declare the praises. That's what that phrase means. It's like to be a living advertisement of the praises, that which is excellent about God in his daily life.

So, our manner of life is to be worthy of the gospel. I focused on that I think last time I taught.

[6 : 35] That idea of being worthy of the gospel means to be on balance with the glory of the gospel. As you look at that word, and it is conveying the idea of a balance.

Let's say, here's the glory and majesty of God in the gospel. And the person who is a genuine true believer, he wants to walk in a manner worthy.

He wants his life not to be conformed to the world, but he wants his life to be conformed to the standards of God that it would show forth that which is magnificent about God and the glory of the gospel.

His life is on par with this glory. And that's the idea here, walk in a manner worthy, as it says in Philippians 1.27, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

On Wednesday night, Pastor John shared a verse from 1 Thessalonians that fit this as well. And Paul writing to the believers there, helping them understand this same concept.

[7 : 42] Isn't it interesting how we as Christians are the same throughout the ages. What they needed, we need to hear as well. And he wrote to them and said, For you know how like a father with his children we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who called you into his own kingdom and glory.

So there's a transition that takes place. Certainly inwardly, new nature in Christ, we are made a new creation, but then there that which is true of us inwardly works itself outwardly now.

And we now walk in a manner worthy of, as it says here, God who calls us into his own kingdom. It's a separate kingdom with a brand new way of living for those who are members of this kingdom who now live for God's glory.

So Paul was following that same example of Jesus Christ, helping people understand the difference, the distinctions that there are now that bring God's blessing.

And as they would hear and conform to and be transformed, really, and in living and following God, they would be, what Jesus says a little bit later on in the Sermon on the Mount, they would become salt of the earth.

[9 : 07] They would be a city set on a hill. They would be a lamp that gives light to those in darkness. You see the distinction over and over again.

And what the people who are in darkness need is what we can provide in how we live daily. And providing that light just as the true light came into the world, Jesus himself.

We now would be like Christ in the world, shining as lights in the darkness. So again, this morning we go back to this additional characteristic and this attitude and attribute that manifests itself outwardly as we live day by day.

This whole matter of being merciful. Blessed are the merciful, but they shall receive mercy. Well, let's define what mercy is first. Mercy is kindness, exercise towards the miserable, and includes pity, compassion, forbearance, and gentleness.

Another definition, mercy is the outward manifestation of pity. It assumes need on the part of him who receives it and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.

[10 : 28] And its verb form means to feel sympathy with the misery of another. and especially sympathy manifested in act. You always see those things going together.

It's not just an inner quality or an attitude that you have towards somebody, but true mercy always follows up with an outward action in order to relieve in some way the misery, the need, the individual is experiencing.

And then one from John MacArthur's book also wrote a book, Kingdom Living, Here and Now, on the Sermon on the Mountain of Beatitudes.

And he explains it this way, to give help to the wretched, to rescue the miserable. Anything you do that is of benefit to someone in need is mercy.

It means sympathy and compassion and action toward anyone in need. It's genuine compassion with a pure, unselfish motive that reaches out to help.

[11 : 32] In other words, Jesus was saying to them, the people in my kingdom aren't takers, they're givers. So Jesus was teaching character attributes and attitudes and actions that would distinctly mark out those who are members of his kingdom.

And again, so we see this beatitude, blessed are the merciful. This attitude and action of being merciful as it's put on display would truly set them apart as different, distinct from the others, the majority of people who are not members of the kingdom of Christ.

So what does that tell you about how the majority thought about and displayed mercy back in those days? if being merciful would set them apart as distinct and different, well, we can begin to understand that this whole matter of mercy and showing mercy wasn't a virtue highly regarded by the majority of the people in which they were living with.

if the majority thought highly of mercy and displayed it in their daily lives, then those who are disciples of Jesus wouldn't be distinct or different from the rest of people.

But it wasn't highly regarded. And so God is telling, Jesus is teaching his disciples, no, you're going to be different here. There's a brand new attitude that you need to adopt and nurture and cultivate in your own way of life and your thinking.

[13 : 09] And that's going to affect the way you live outwardly and the way you respond to people in need. And so the application is coming back to us as well.

I know that mercy is highly regarded in our culture today. We see it displayed in some measure, of course, people still being made in the image of God, common grace display this, but highly regarded by the majority.

I don't think so. And still, so I think it still would set us apart if we begin manifesting this mercy that manifests itself in God.

And so we want to take a look at that. Well, why should we be merciful? Well, because God is merciful. I am the Lord your God. Remember, he said it to his people back in the Old Testament.

There's still true of us today. I am the Lord your God. Therefore, on the basis of that, because he is merciful, we will be merciful. And we have been recipients of his mercy.

[14 : 13] So let even those two thoughts be the motivation for us as we move through our day and recognize people in various needs. Well, I need to be merciful because he who is the Lord my God is merciful.

So here's another study you could do on your own. Study the mercy of God. Find a concordance or an online Bible app that will give you all the verses associated with the mercy of God.

And believe me, you'll have plenty of information to study for weeks and months to come. And you'll really come away blessed as you see something of the character of the Lord your God manifested in him being merciful to people in need in different ways.

But let me give some thoughts at least on it this morning. Our foundation for kingdom living is being, is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Who he is, is what we are being transformed into. Jesus, God, come in the flesh, was the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, and of course, he is a God of mercy.

[15 : 35] So, the mercy of God, the mercy of God is great. Listen and look at Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9, 18. Oh my God, incline your ear in here.

Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city that is called by your name. So, they're great people in need and in a situation of great misery.

And Daniel is turning toward God. We do not present our pleas before you because of our own righteousness, but because of your great mercy.

Understand that of the character of God. Recognize his need, the need of God's people, and so he's going to the God of mercy, God of great mercy.

1 Peter 1, 3, Peter writes to the believers there who were in great need. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[16 : 33] According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But he's also a God characterized by tender mercies.

Luke 1, 78-79, as Zechariah was prophesying about John the Baptist's ministry that he would have prior to Jesus' coming, and how he would be the one to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

This is what Zechariah says. He says, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

So there it is, that associated, here are people in great need, people in great darkness. It's God because of his tender mercy that he sends this light into the world, the person of Jesus Christ.

Tender mercy refers to an intense inner affection that moves a person to minister, to need. So out of God's great compassionate concern, his tender mercy for sinners, he sent his son, the light of life, to sinners in darkness and in the shadow of death, so that they might have peace.

[18 : 02] God responds with a sufficient provision for those in need. And we were the ones in great need, as we said, blessed are the poor in spirit.

We focused on that initially as we started this Beatitudes. But he's also rich in mercy, Ephesians 2, 3-5. We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved. You see the various attributes of God here in this verse. We see that connection between love and mercy.

And it's out of his great love that he extends his mercy so we can give thanks for the love of God. And so that's going to be associated with how we respond as well when we come in contact with people in need.

[19 : 09] Are we showing a greater love for ourselves, a greater protection for ourselves, what this might cost me and so I don't want to move in the direction of extending mercy, which comes with a cost to me as I provide and meet the need of those who are in great need.

No, if I have the love of God in me because of the spirit of God that is in me, I'm going to be merciful to those who are in need. So, mercy associated with love.

And we see that God is rich in mercy. It means the idea here is overflowing an abundant supply of mercy.

His richness and mercy is seen in many ways. Arthur Pink, W. Pink, wrote a book, The Attributes of God, and in one of his chapters he deals with the mercy of God and he tries to get a handle on it by dividing up into three sections.

And so, understanding how God is rich in mercy, he says, well, there's a general mercy of God, mercy extended toward all of his creation. Psalm 145, 9, the Lord is good to all.

[20 : 28] His mercy is over all that he has made. So, God sees the need of many ways in the world today in creation and is ministering to that out of his mercy.

mercy. Then there's a special mercy of God, that which is exercised toward the children of men, helping and succoring them notwithstanding their sins. Matthew 5, 45, For he makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust as well.

So, all kinds of needs that all kinds of people have, in this case, need for rain in the world, for ongoing provisions that they need, and God sends the rain on the just and on the unjust.

His mercy is extended to all people. But then there's that special sovereign mercy of God, that which is reserved for the heirs of salvation, which is communicated to them in a covenant way through the mediator.

God working in a special way for those who are his covenant people, extending mercy to them in the person of Jesus Christ. And so we look at the life of Christ, as he came into the world, the exact radiance of the nature of God, now extending mercy, showing mercy in invisible, tangible ways that people would understand what is the true character of God, what does mercy look like?

[21 : 57] Again, this would be a wonderful thing for you to take time, go through the gospel, follow Christ through the gospel. people. What does mercy look like as Jesus moves through the world and comes across so many different people in a variety of needs and conditions like healing the blind, the deaf, and the mute.

Jesus healed the blind beggar who cried out, Jesus, son of David. And what did he say? Have mercy on me. And Jesus said to him, recover your sight, your faith has made you well.

And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And in Mark 7, you remember the story of the people that brought the deaf man to Jesus, and they couldn't get into the house, and so they were lowering him down through the roof of the building, and they begged Jesus to lay his hand on him and to heal him, and Jesus did.

He healed the man, and his ears were open and his tongue loose, and he spoke plainly. The mercy of God displayed in the person of Jesus Christ, feeding the hungry. When Jesus saw the great crowds that were before him, that were following him, he saw their needs, and then it says he had compassion on them and healed their sick and fed over 5,000 from just five loaves and two fish.

There's mercy in action, a true display of mercy, that inner aspect. Jesus seeing the need of the people, being moved inwardly with a love, a tender heart, affection for them because of the great needs they were experiencing, and then true mercy manifests itself outwardly in healing, and in this case, providing food for them.

[23 : 53] He also cast out demons. A man came to Jesus with his son who was demon possessed, and the man said, Lord, have mercy on my son. People understood something of mercy, and they were understanding, here is one who is able to minister to my need, and they call upon him, have mercy, have mercy upon me.

And in this case, someone calling on Jesus to have mercy on his son. Interesting as we think about the application of how we display mercy.

Have mercy on my son, for he has seizures, and he suffers terribly, and Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. Jesus raised people from the dead.

Remember, the only son of the widow from Nain had died, and he was being carried out, and Jesus saw her and had compassion.

So you're going to be moving through your days as well. As Jesus was moving through his day, and you're going to be seeing different needs represented in the lives of people, what will happen to you inwardly, and how will you respond?

[25 : 09] Well, we're looking at Jesus, the king of our kingdom, and how he moved through his day, and how he was moved when he saw the needs of people, and how he responded.

That's what being merciful, is all about, and that's what Jesus was manifesting. He had compassion on her and said to his son, young man, I say to you, arise.

The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. And then, of course, Lazarus, who had died, Jesus came, saw Mary and the others weeping, so there again, coming amongst a group of people experiencing great devastation, being affected by the circumstances in which they were in.

Jesus, not coming coldly into the situation, but looking with the eyes of compassion, and moved with compassion, and it says he moved deeply in his spirit, and greatly troubled, and he was moved to action.

He raised Lazarus from the dead, but he also forgave sins. He forgave the sins of the paralytic man who was let down through the roof by his friends. He forgave the sins of the woman who came to the dinner and was weeping and wiping his feet with her hair.

[26 : 34] Great mercy on display. Let me finish with this one other additional display of the mercy of God, certainly, in his substitutionary sacrifice of himself to deliver destitute sinners from the desolation of sin, Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, God provided what was called the mercy seat. Interesting. There would be something like that in the tabernacle and temple.

The mercy seat was located on the top of the Ark of the Covenant. It was at the mercy seat that people met with God. The mercy seat was a physical location where the blood of the atoning sacrifice was offered.

And through these blood sacrifices, the justice of God was satisfied and the people could be at peace with God. They're having their sins covered for that time. But that practice was only a picture of what Jesus would accomplish on behalf of God's people once and for all time.

Because he would be the true mercy seat. What was happening in the Old Testament on top of the Ark of the Covenant was just a picture of that which would come in fullness in the person of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 58] Well, his sacrifice of himself on the cross would be the place where the wrath of God would be satisfied. And those who come to him in true faith and repentance would be at peace with God.

They would meet with God there. Be able to be joined together with God through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice. Of course, his mercy wasn't regulated by our good works.

You know the verse, Titus 3, 5, he saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

So now here justice and mercy meet. Justice is satisfied through Jesus' death on the cross on behalf of God's chosen ones and God's covenant people delivered out of that domain of darkness.

There would be another study as you go through the scriptures. When is justice appropriate in regard to mercy? Do you always show mercy and withhold justice?

[29 : 05] Come up with the answer for me and go study it. It's an interesting as I was able to read through some of that. So because of God himself is merciful and we have received mercy, we too as members of his kingdom can be merciful to those who are in need.

That's what it says, Luke 6, 36, be merciful even as your father is merciful. Then Matthew 18, the one who had been shown mercy by Jesus should himself have shown mercy as Jesus taught in that parable of the unforgiving, unmerciful servant.

He had been extended mercy, so it was expected he would have extended mercy as well to the one who owed him, but he didn't. So Jesus is telling that parable, that's out of line, that should not be the case.

Those who have been extended mercy should themselves show mercy. So who has been shown the greatest mercy of all? But we who have had the Son of God die on our behalf.

Great mercy. So we need to be showing mercy. When we see examples again, add this to your study on mercy as you go through and see, well, God showed mercy certainly.

[30 : 28] What about people? Well, people as well. Those who are God's covenant people showed mercy. Moses, let me run through these quickly. Moses showed mercy toward Miriam after she had spoken against him and was judged by God with leprosy.

And instead of Moses saying, see, you're getting what you deserve and being satisfied with that, no, Moses cried out to the Lord to please heal her, understand and recognize her need, and went to God on her behalf.

Joseph as well, instead of exacting revenge on his brothers for the wrong they did to him, he did them good and brought them relief. They were obviously concerned that, uh-oh, this is the one that we sold and now we are in deep trouble.

Not the one who knows what mercy is all about. He was able to extend mercy. He understood the bigger picture of God in his life and the lives of his people.

Set aside that those fleshly desires that wage war against the soul, maybe seeking for revenge, and it said, no, you come in and I will give you what you need.

[31 : 45] David himself, after Saul tried to kill him numerous times, and David had the opportunity to kill him, he instead spared Saul's life. Of course, the parable of the good Samaritan, there were a number that walked by and did not show mercy, but it was the Samaritan who came along and extended help to the one who was in need.

In fact, he sacrificed his time, his energy, his money to show mercy. Stephen as well. When his adversaries were stoning him, Stephen said, it's written of Stephen falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

Mercy of God being manifested through Stephen, even as he was dying there and being stoned. The Philippian jailer, after he was converted, after the earthquake had taken place and he was converted, he took Paul and Silas to his home and washed their wounds.

How quickly the life of God and the soul of man manifests itself through this Philippian jailer who was converted and came to Christ.

The people of the church at Philippi, when they heard of Paul's imprisonment, they took the initiative, when others didn't, and sent gifts and people to help Paul. Over and over again we find these examples of the mercy of God being displayed through those who are his.

[33 : 17] So, can we show mercy? This is where if we had additional time, I'd just love to open it up and say, okay, begin sharing some ideas and ways in which we who have experienced the great mercy of God in our lives, how we can extend that to people around us.

Well, let me throw some ideas out to you here. We can give to those who do have physical needs, and we do that as a church. In our annual budget, we included gifts to compassion ministries, ministries established to help those with physical and spiritual needs throughout different places of the world.

Of course, it needs to be done with wisdom. Mercy is just not thrown out there without wisdom. There was a book written a number of years ago, When Helping Hurts, and when people give indiscriminately without thoughts and understanding of what really is the best way to show mercy to people.

When we do it without wisdom and thought, we can tend to hurt people more than really help them. So that's another good book you can take a look at and read when you're desired to show mercy.

We show mercy locally through a compassion fund. Stan wrestles with that at times, and how to do that when people come and wanting help in their need.

[34 : 47] Provide meals at different times. I know there's those of you that have skill in cooking, that go far beyond mine, that it wouldn't be mercy for me to make a meal and take it to them.

But those that have that ability can do that. So as a church, we're doing that individually. There might be people, families that have great unexpected needs that you come in contact with, and you have an opportunity to show mercy.

But again, that's something you need to prepare yourself in how you're going to do that. Maybe put a line item in your budget for extra giving for when those times come up. Prepare to be one that can show mercy as you move throughout your week.

Maybe it would be cutting someone's lawn when they're down from being in the hospital. There's just any variety of ways, you know that, that we can be ready to move in the direction of being lights in the world.

But we can also show mercy toward those who have great spiritual needs. We do that as a church too, sending out missionaries throughout the world, but individually, what are ways that we can do that?

[35 : 57] We can be ready to share the gospel with people who are in great desperate need. Are you prepared to do that? Are you prepared to give an answer to those that ask a reason for the hope that you have?

If you're not prepared, get prepared. And we have meetings, we meet quarterly, the men to discuss how we can be prepared and help make disciples of others.

You'll hear an announcement about that again our next time, but get prepared. Meet one-on-one with someone who is discouraged and needs help. Come alongside with a biblical admonishment to someone who is overtaken with some sin.

Pray for God's mercy for someone. Teach your children the gospel and be discipling them. That's an act of mercy. In fact, listen to Mark 6, 34. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And he began to teach them many things. So he recognized the need, the great spiritual need, and its response at that time was to teach them. So be aware as parents and grandparents and members of the church with other children.

[37 : 12] Here's children who are in desperate need spiritually. Am I ready to minister to the needs of those children with the gospel of Jesus Christ as I move throughout the day looking for those redemptive opportunities to help my children understand why they can't obey mom and dad, why they struggle fighting with their sibling or on and on, and helping them understand, well, let me help you understand why you struggle with that.

Because there's this element, you know, we'll use element with your kids depending on their age. That's what Carol says. That's the way Papa would say it. You've got to bring it down with understandable language that the children could follow.

But you get the idea. And then our mercy is shown as we forgive others as we've been forgiven by God. Well, let me close by focusing on the blessing.

There's an inner sense of joy certainly. That subjective feeling of bliss and happiness that comes through showing mercy. But then the verse ends with, blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

In the present, certainly, we will be extended from God additional mercy. Psalm 18.25, with the merciful, you show yourself merciful.

[38 : 41] Proverbs 19.17, whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and he will repay him for his deed. Psalm 14.1, blessed is the one who considers the poor.

In the day of trouble, the Lord delivers him. So on and on, we could go, I've got other examples here of the blessing that comes to us. But in the present, certainly, but also in eternity.

It's the mercy of God that brings us into eternal life. Jude 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God. Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

And then in 2 Timothy 1.18, it was Paul's expressed desire and expectation of the Lord that faithful Onesiphorus would find mercy from the Lord on that day.

So, mercy now, mercy in the future because our God is merciful. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this instruction from your word.

[39 : 43] Thank you for who you are. We wouldn't even be here this morning speaking about this beatitude had it not been for your grand display of mercy through Jesus Christ becoming that atoning sacrifice on our behalf.

And so now, we're coming to you as the God of mercy, expressing our need for you by your Spirit to continue to nurture within us this attitude of longing to be merciful and to show the mercy of God to those that we'll come in contact with, maybe even today or throughout the week.

So, help us to do that and you be magnified and glorified through us in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.