

## **Mercy Ministers**

Matthew 5:7 - NCBC, June 16, 2019

Main Point: **Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the merciful.**

- **Mercy is not:**
  - Optional, but Necessary
  - Natural, but Supernatural
  - Cheap, but Costly
  - Unjust, but Loving
- **Mercy is:**
  - Love's pursuit of righteousness for others
  - Related to, but distinct from grace
  - Not repaying evil for evil, but overcoming evil with good – Romans 12:21
  - Active compassion to relieve the consequence of sin in others' lives
- **Mercy receives:**
  - Not merit for salvation, but sufficiency to serve
    - Freedom to genuinely love & forgive others
  - Assurance of God's mercy at final judgment
    - Being merciful is the result of being saved
    - Only the merciful shall receive mercy
- **Mercy comes by:**
  - Submitting to God's Spirit
  - Repenting from the love of money
  - Forgiving whoever has sinned against you
  - Serving sinners practically as God's hands and feet

### **Opening Announcements:**

- Visiting GO Partners, John & Missy Camiola
- Vacation Bible School quickly arriving!! Still opportunities to serve – please contact Sharon Carey, [scarey@myncbc.org](mailto:scarey@myncbc.org) to learn more.

<<At Calvary>>



Burdened souls are set free when God's love showers them with His mercy. Mercy ministers freedom from all sin's consequences to hearts who are humble enough to receive help that they do not deserve.

We are in the middle of studying the opening Beatitudes to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and this morning **Matthew 5:7** is before us. *Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.*

To help rivet our attention to this truth, I invite you to open your Bible to **Matthew chapter 9**, where our Scripture reading will come from **verses 10-13**.



If you don't have a Bible, simply raise your hand as people are coming now with Bibles for you to use. Once you receive a Bible, please prepare to read from **Matthew 9, verse 10**.

What a joy to take time today to thank God for those fathers among us. Men, no matter whether you are a physical father, or a spiritual father,<sup>1</sup> God has called you into a rewarding spiritual ministry. As a church family we want to thank you for all you do, and most of all – thanks for who you are becoming in Christ!

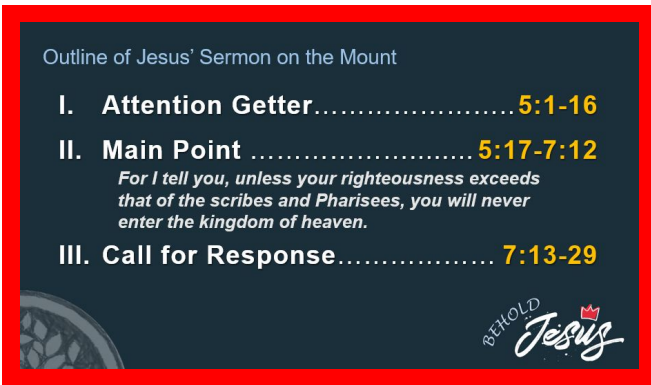
Now today is our 15<sup>th</sup> sermon in our series *Behold King Jesus* from **Matthew's** gospel, so it's probably good to review what we've learned so far.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel			Kingdom offered to all Nations	
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

The first 3 chapters presented Jesus as the long-awaited Messianic King. 2000 years of God's grace climax in His supernatural birth where He fulfills prophecy and is worshipped as the King of the Jews by Gentile nations.

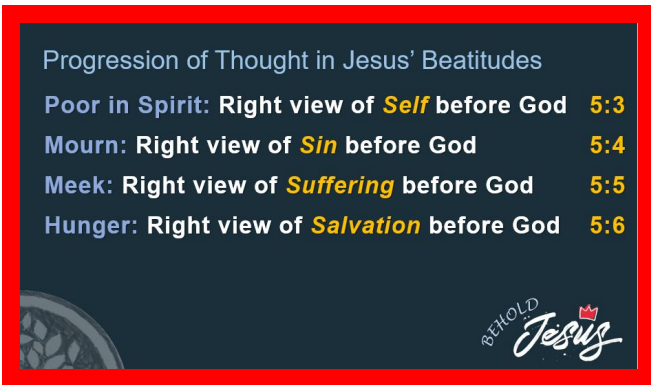
Once an adult, **chapter 3** formally commissions Jesus as God's beloved Son who publicly identifies with the sinners He came to save. In **chapter 4** Jesus proves His kingly authority by defeating Satan, calling His disciples, and completing his first year of public ministry – working many signs and miracles throughout all of Galilee – preaching the good news of His kingdom! To help his readers understand the Proclamation of the King, **chapters 5-7** contain Jesus' Sermon on the Mount – a sermon given on the side of a large hill to a crowd of curious seekers and faithful disciples.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:15



The main point of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is found in **chapter 5, verse 20**: *Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* Jesus is redefining what it means to be righteous in an unrighteous world.

So far, these Beatitudes or pronouncements of God's blessings have certainly gotten our attention.

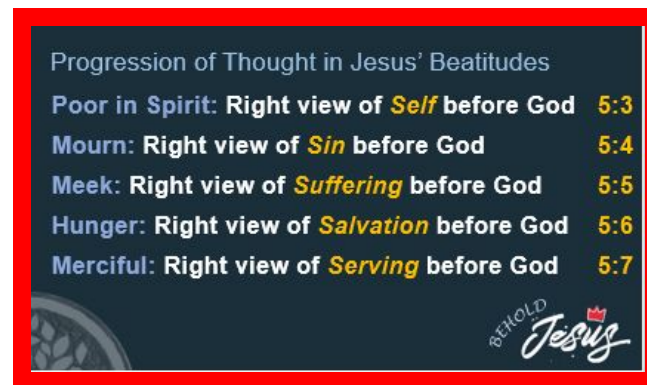


We've observed how the beatitudes seem to build on one another... painting a progressively unreachable portrait of

inner righteousness that far exceeds any possible achievement of human effort. Jesus started with these statements describing whom God blesses in order to humble the religious pride of his listeners.

Remember, these Beatitudes are not prescriptive, but descriptive. The Beatitudes don't command Christians what to do, but declare who Christians are. These beatitudes describe the fruit of God's Spirit in hearts submitted to His Kingdom reign. In truth, these beatitudes are a comprehensive self-portrait of King Jesus Himself.

For only those who receive the Spirit of God in fulfillment of the New Covenant will ever have a right view of self in **verse 3**, a right view of sin and repentance in **verse 4**, a right view of suffering and submission to God's hand in **verse 5**, and a right view of salvation as they increasingly ache for God to make everything right - just as it was intended to be in **verse 6**. This brings us now to **verse 7**,



Which describes a **right view of Serving before God**, as Jesus highlights the resulting mercy in the hearts of all who have truly been granted the righteousness of God.

Thus so far, **verses 3-6** have focused on our own neediness before God. Now **verses 7-16** progress to describe how God's kingdom rule affects our relationships with others. And mercy leads the way.



I believe Matthew's own conversion testimony found in **Matthew chapter 9** helps properly set the stage for our understanding of mercy, so please stand in honor of the public reading of God's Word as I read from **Matthew 9 verse 10**, in the English Standard Translation:

*And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup>But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>Go and learn what*

*this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

### Let's Pray.

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We live in a competitive world. If you have the power to stick it to your enemies, then step on their necks and never let up! Ruthless dominance is the world's badge of power, so if you have an opportunity to run up the score or exert your rights in any way, the world will applaud you for doing so.

We see this kind of self-serving competition in sports, in business, in education, in politics, and even in marriage. After all, it's a dog-eat-dog world, and our society teaches you not to trust anyone else to care for you.

But this is not how King Jesus rules. **Matthew 5 verse 7** adds another layer to this blessed righteousness, by teaching that God approves or blesses those who are merciful, for they are the ones who have received and will continue to receive God's mercy.

In other words,



Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the merciful.

Not just the meek who are used to the hand of God...but the merciful...who are vulnerably giving away their own resources to aid the misery of others...these are the ones whom God endorses as truly being righteous in His kingdom.

This is radically different from what our neighbors believe out there, isn't it? But I wonder, is it also radically different from what we believe in here this morning?

You see, just like the Pharisees in **Matthew 9**, there's a number of us who pride ourselves in being truth people! We love being right! We arrogantly defend every conviction with the same degree of intensity. Everything is a primary issue for us.

Are you quickly defensive? Are you amped up and fighting all the time?<sup>2</sup> If you are a religious legalists:

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<sup>2</sup> C.f. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/distinguishing-m>  
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Come and learn what this means: God desires mercy, not law-keeping!<sup>3</sup> Lay down your religious weapons this morning, and hear the life-giving declarations of your merciful High Priest,

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*  
Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the merciful.

Now let's root out some misconceptions about mercy:



First, *Mercy is not: Optional, but Necessary.* To fail to show mercy is always a sin. In fact, **Romans 1** identifies the ruthless unmerciful person as the pinnacle of sin's depravity.<sup>4</sup> If you desire to experience God's mercy, you must be merciful.

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[arks-quarrelsome-person/](#) for a thought-provoking self-examination of these quarrelsome qualities.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 9:13  
<sup>4</sup> Romans 1:28-31

Second, it should come as no surprise that the mercy Jesus is describing here is not,



**Natural, but Supernatural**, just like all the other inward characteristics of God-given righteousness described by the Beatitudes.

This means that the mercy of **verse 7** is not some natural temperament or mood of concern that some personalities have more than others. Mercy is not the result of mere emotion. No – this mercy is the fruit of God’s Spirit in the heart that has been born again.

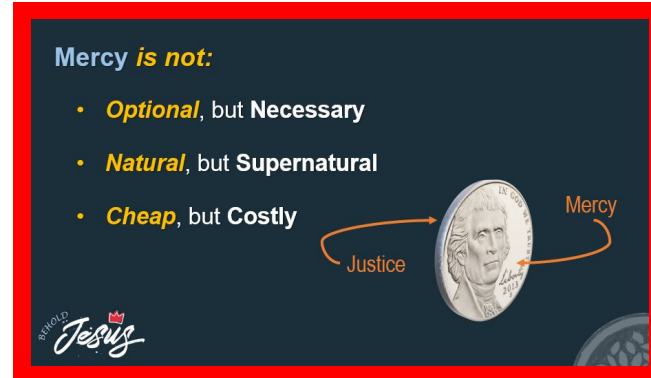
Mercy does not smile at wrong-doing, or idly stand by in silent concern. Righteous mercy is the supernatural power to overcome evil with good<sup>5</sup> grounded in the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore we must understand that biblical mercy is never,



**Cheap, but Costly.**

Biblical mercy is not just pretending. Mercy doesn’t ignore truth. In fact, did you know that mercy and justice are two sides of the same coin?



It’s really true. You can’t have mercy apart from justice. Mercy doesn’t do away with justice or truth. **Psalm 85:10** teaches that *mercy and truth meet*<sup>7</sup> -- they are one and the same, just viewed from different angles.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 12:21

<sup>6</sup> Colossians 1:20

<sup>7</sup> King James Translation; the Hebrew word for mercy is *chesed*, which is translated as “Steadfast Love” or “Lovingkindness” in many modern translations; however the meaning is still the same.



This is why biblical mercy is always expensive, since it selflessly pays the cost that justice requires *on behalf of* the one who is in misery.

So don't misunderstand. God-given mercy is never,



**Unjust, but Loving.**

Mercy forgives, and thereby absorbs the debt of the forgiven.<sup>8</sup> Mercy extends practical aid and help, and thereby gives away its own resources for the eternal good of the other.<sup>9</sup>

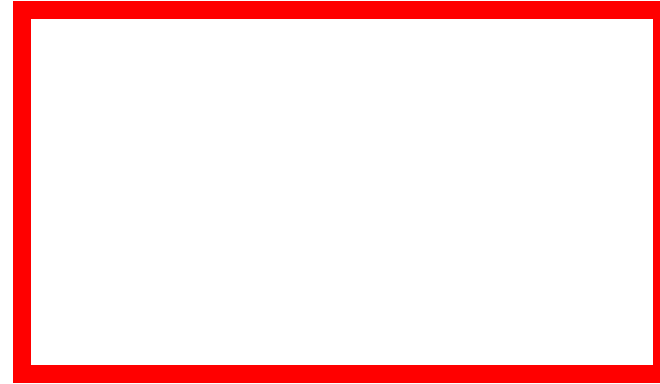
To show mercy therefore, is to express a kind of supernatural love for those in need. Mercy doesn't overlook sin or its consequences just to leave it there. Mercy sacrificially ministers to another's need in order to help restore spiritual or physical wholeness.

So let's now carefully define what mercy means.

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 18:21-35

<sup>9</sup> Luke 10:25-37



**Mercy is: Love's pursuit of righteousness for others**

Write this down, mercy is *love's pursuit of righteousness for others* when they are hurting. And remember what righteousness means from last week: righteousness is complete agreement with God's will. It is when all is as God intended it to be – entirely free from sin and all sin's consequences.

So to sacrificially help people in misery pursue freedom from sin and its consequences is what it means to be merciful!

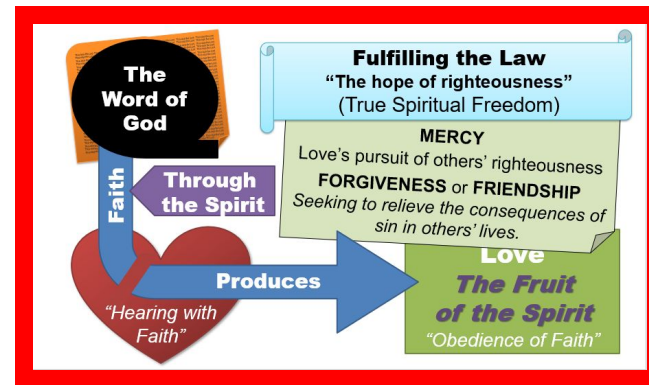
Mercy is one of the supernatural expressions of love. Perhaps I can illustrate this using a diagram from our series in **Galatians** a couple of years ago:



Through our study of **Galatians**,<sup>10</sup> we learned how the Spirit of God granted faith in the Word of God to the heart of the believer. So that by the work of the Holy Spirit, a sinful heart could hear the Gospel with faith, and thereby produce the obedience of faith which the Scriptures summarize as love.

The entire fruit, or result, of being controlled by God's Spirit is summarized as love,<sup>11</sup> which **Galatians** teaches is the fulfillment of God's law, or the expression of true righteousness.<sup>12</sup> Only a supernatural love that is produced by the work of God's Spirit in our hearts through faith in His Gospel can bring about true spiritual freedom for sinners.

So when Jesus is pronouncing God's blessing upon the merciful in the Sermon on the Mount, He's teaching us that,



Mercy is the supernatural fruit of God's Spirit – it is that form of love which pursues others' righteousness. A heart that is humble, repentant over its own sin, and surrendered to God's will – a heart that yearns for all things to be free from will be a heart that is then merciful towards others in need. For mercy always seeks to relieve the consequences of sin in others' lives. If they have sinned themselves, then mercy pursues forgiveness. If they have been sinned against, then mercy befriends them with practical helps.

So first, understand that mercy is an expression of Spirit-produced love in the believer's heart.

<sup>10</sup> For a fuller explanation, please see the “What Really Counts – Part 1 and 2” sermons from July 2, 2017 (<https://vimeo.com/224007417>) and July 9, 2017 (<https://vimeo.com/225192081>), as well as “The Spirit-Controlled Life” sermon from July 16, 2017 (<https://vimeo.com/225828527>).

<sup>11</sup> Galatians 5:6, 13-14, 22

<sup>12</sup> Galatians 5:14





Then second, it can be helpful to understand that mercy is **Related to, but distinct from grace**. You will better understand the blessings for the merciful if you are careful to see the differences between grace and mercy in Scripture.

**Mercy is:**

- Love's **pursuit of righteousness** for others
- Related to, but **distinct from grace**

Grace	Mercy
Pardons the sinner	Pities the miserable
Love's action towards Sin	Love's action towards Sin's Consequences

Both grace and mercy are expressions of supernatural love. But grace **pardons the sinner**, while mercy **pities the miserable**. Grace is **love's action towards sin** itself. Mercy is **love's action towards sin's consequences**. God extends both grace and mercy to sinners like you and me all the time. Aren't we thankful this morning for

the grace of God which saves,<sup>13</sup> and the fresh mercies of God that keep us from being consumed every day?<sup>14</sup>

But it's interesting that while Christians are commanded to love and show mercy to one another,<sup>15</sup> nowhere in Scripture are Christians commanded to give grace to others. Only God gives grace. Instead, we are called to help those who are miserable with sin's consequences come to know God's mercy through us.



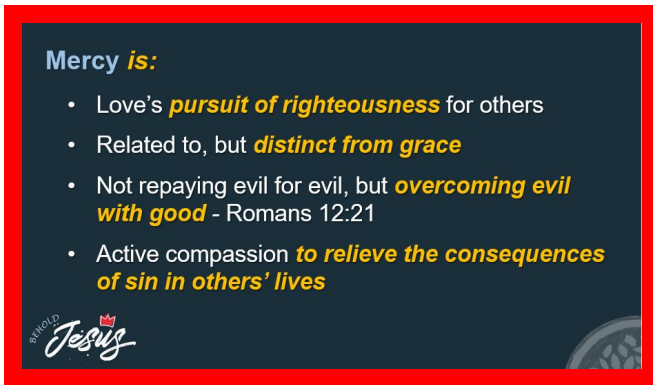
So then, to be merciful is to sacrificially love others by seeking to relieve as many of the consequences of sin in their life as possible. The merciful person never retaliates or seeks to **repay evil for evil, but seeks to overcome evil with good**.

In brief, mercy can be defined as,

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>14</sup> Lamentations 3:22-23

<sup>15</sup> C.f. Micah 6:8; Hosea 6:6; Zechariah 7:9-10; Matthew 9:13, 23:23; Romans 12:8



Active compassion to relieve the consequence of sin in others' lives. Mercy is compassion in action. It includes both the feeling and the activity of supernatural love. Mercy is never deserved, but always others-oriented. Mercy selflessly pays the cost of being inconvenienced in order to bear the load for another.

Practically, there's two primary kinds of mercy:



Mercy selflessly serves to relieve sin's misery by forgiveness and friendship. The aim of forgiveness is to gain reconciliation with sinners – those who have sinned against you. Mercy prays for sinners, and proclaims

the gospel to sinners – seeking to spiritually restore the sinner from the very sin which is causing his misery.

Of course the greatest example of this kind of mercy is Jesus Christ Himself – who *became our merciful...high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*<sup>16</sup> We also see this kind of mercy referenced in **Matthew 18** when Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving steward in order to teach His disciples about the priority of forgiveness and mercy in their lives.

But mercy is broader than forgiveness. The supernatural love of mercy is also expressed through friendship. To help those who have been sinned against gain relief. In such cases, mercy actively provides all kinds of physical generosity like food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Or mercy offers the presiding mercies of companionship or comfort. These expressions of mercy are easily seen in the Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan who showed mercy to his neighbor.<sup>17</sup>

Mercy is love's pursuit of righteousness on behalf of the miserable – either through forgiveness or friendship.

But what does Jesus mean by teaching that the merciful shall receive mercy?

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<sup>16</sup> Hebrews 2:17

<sup>17</sup> Luke 10:25-37



Jesus clearly teaches here that we will receive mercy only if we ourselves are merciful. Only those whose lives are marked by the inner character and lifestyle of mercy truly qualify to receive God's mercy.

At first glance this could be misunderstood to teach that we have to earn God's mercy by being merciful to others. But **Matthew 5:7** means that mercy receives,



Not merit for salvation, but sufficiency to serve

After all, mercy by definition cannot be earned. God does not give mercy for merit.<sup>18</sup> We are saved by grace, not by works.<sup>19</sup> So our being merciful is not the *cause* of God's granting us mercy, but rather the result of His merciful supply to us.

Let me say it this way: God desires for His children to be channels of His mercy in this world. When we sacrificially extend mercy to others – it costs us a great deal. So God promises to give us even more mercy, so that having received it, we might continue to share it with others again and again!



It's only after you've received mercy from God that you possess the **Freedom to genuinely love & forgive others**. Apart from God's mercies towards us, we hold grudges. We punish our enemies. Our hearts become calloused and imprisoned by the cancer of bitterness as we destroy our own lives waiting for our enemies to die.

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<sup>18</sup> John MacArthur

<sup>19</sup> Ephesians 2:8-10

Let me say it another way. If you refuse to forgive someone who has deeply hurt you – you cut off the supply of God’s mercy to your own heart which you so desperately need.<sup>20</sup> You cannot fulfill Jesus’ purpose for you on this earth if you are unwilling to freely share mercy with others in distress with sin.

Another right understanding of the reward of **Matthew 5:7** is to see that,



The merciful receives **Assurance of God’s mercy at final judgment.**

The mercy that is received is from God, and since,



**Being merciful is the result of being saved**, and only the saved will receive God’s merciful deliverance from hell on judgment day, it seems quite appropriate for Jesus to teach that,



**Only the merciful shall receive mercy.**

For only those controlled by God’s indwelling Spirit will ever enter the kingdom of God. And only those who are in the kingdom, possess the God-given righteousness of an inward disposition of mercy.

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 5:23-25, 6:15; 18:35; c.f. Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7  
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So then, let's get practical. How does Jesus want you to respond to this teaching on mercy? How might we cultivate a greater practice of mercy this week?



First, *Mercy only comes by Submitting to God's Spirit*. If you do not understand your own need for God's mercy, then you will never have the power to share mercy with others. If you haven't yet been able to admit that you are a sinner who is spiritually bankrupt and unable to be righteous on your own – then you will hate other sinners!

The path towards mercy only comes through the progression of the previous Beatitudes. You must recognize your own need for mercy and be overwhelmed with the richness of God's undeserved mercy towards you before you will ever become merciful towards others.

We see this in the parable of the unforgiving steward in **Matthew 18**. When the Master initially called him to pay the huge debt of 4.6 Billion dollars, the servant begged for mercy, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything."<sup>21</sup> You see, this servant really thought he

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew 18:26  
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could pay it all back if he just had a little more time. So when the Master forgave his debt, he wasn't awed by the mercy he received! His pride blinded him from his own bankruptcy, and his competitive ruthlessness towards others demonstrated that he never understood what it meant to be forgiven in the first place.

If you are clinging to any of your own righteous efforts for your standing with God, you suffocate mercy. Mercy only comes by submitting to God's Spirit and embracing your own dependence upon God's mercy first and foremost.

Then, second, you cultivate a merciful heart by,



*Repenting from the love of money.*

We see the connection between money and mercy in Jesus' warning to the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:23-25**,

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without*

*neglecting the others. [Then He says, you] are full of greed and self-indulgence.*

It is your love for money and greed that shuts down your compassion for those with genuine needs around you.<sup>22</sup> Mercy cannot grow in the seedbed of greed.

Third mercy comes by,



Forgiving whoever has sinned against you

Church this is a very serious and somber matter for us to consider. **Matthew 6:15** is clear: *If you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* **Matthew 18:35** warns strongly that God will deliver your soul to torment *if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.*

Here's the truth: if you refuse to forgive someone who has deeply hurt you in this life, then you have no assurance of your salvation. Your forgiveness of your enemy doesn't save you of course. But your forgiveness

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<sup>22</sup> 1 John 3:17

of your enemy does demonstrate and give evidence to the fact that God's grace has saved you, and His Spirit is now in control of your heart!

God promises to give more mercy to those who are merciful. So who do you need to forgive today?

**Ephesians 4:32** commands you to *forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven you.* So have you been sinned against? And is the sinner repentant? If so, then channel the mercy which God has given to you and freely forgive. Transact the promise of pardon by which you promise to not bring their sin up to them again, not to bring their sin up to others, not to bring their sin up to yourself, and you promise to not allow their sin to in any way hinder your ongoing pursuit of Christlikeness together.<sup>23</sup>

You say, well pastor what if the person who sinned against me isn't repentant? Well then God's Spirit supernaturally empowers you to love your enemy and pray for their repentance.<sup>24</sup> To bless those who curse you, and do good to those who hate you.<sup>25</sup>

It is true that you cannot horizontally forgive an unrepentant sinner in a way that brings about reconciliation with them until they repent.<sup>26</sup> However, in your prayers you can vertically turn over the offense to

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on the 4 promises of biblical forgiveness, see <https://rw360.org/four-promises-of-forgiveness/> and a number of helpful resources found at: <https://rw360.org/peacemaking/>.

<sup>24</sup> Matthew 5:44

<sup>25</sup> Luke 6:27-31

<sup>26</sup> Luke 17:3-4

God,<sup>27</sup> surrendering all justice and revenge to God,<sup>28</sup> and thereby freeing your soul to really love your enemy and show him or her God's mercy even while you wait for the first signs of their repentance.

Can you imagine what kind of spiritual revival and outpouring of God's mercy we would all receive if this week we forgave our spouse, our ex, our boss, our parents, our enemies for all the ways they have sinned against us?

A merciful heart pities the sinner, and separates the sinner from the sin. Yes mercy is always costly, but O how blessed are the merciful...for they shall always receive more mercy from God than they could ever give away to others!

Finally, mercy also comes by,



Serving sinners practically as God's hand and feet.

This week God will give each one of us opportunities to minister mercy. Perhaps we will see someone suffering in some physical need. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to share God's mercy with someone who is doubting,<sup>29</sup> or with someone who is lost?<sup>30</sup> Or perhaps you will choose mercy after hearing a juicy story of gossip...where you mercifully refuse to listen and spread Satan's poison of sin.

Now listen: Mercy is never easy nor convenient. Never. Mercy is always painful. But mercy is powerfully productive – for mercy always gives glory to God. And those whose hearts are free to be merciful are those whom God has blessed.



Because Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the merciful.

Therefore, rejoice in your great salvation. Rejoice that God's mercies follow you all the days of your life. And go minister His mercy through forgiveness and friendship to

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<sup>27</sup> Mark 11:25

<sup>28</sup> Romans 12:19

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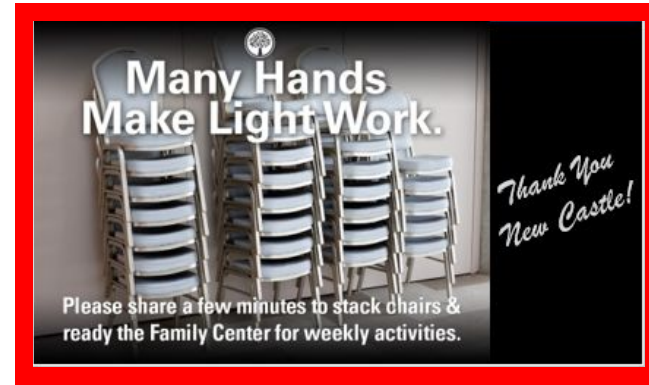
<sup>29</sup> Jude 22

<sup>30</sup> Jude 23



all those who are yet suffering under sin and its consequences.

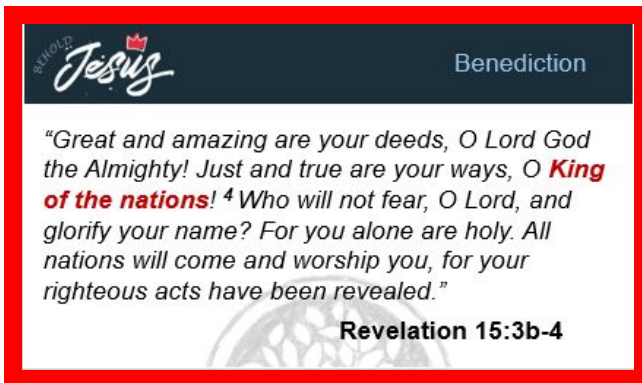
*Revelation 15:3b-4*



**Let's pray.**

<<His Mercy is More>>

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**



*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

## Recommended Resources on Mercy Ministers:

- 2 Samuel 22:26
- Psalm 18:25-26; 23:6
- Proverbs 11:17; 14:21
- Isaiah 49:10-13
- Lamentations 3:22-23
- Hosea 6:6
- Micah 6:8
- Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35; 23:23-24; 25:41-45
- Mark 11:25
- Luke 6:35-36; 10:30-37; 23:34
- John 8:7-11
- Romans 12:8
- Ephesians 2:4-7; 4:32
- Colossians 3:12-13
- Hebrews 2:17
- James 2:12-13; 3:17
- 1 Peter 2:10
  
- <https://unlockingthebible.org/sermon/blessed-are-the-merciful/>
- <https://unlockingthebible.org/sermon/cultivating-forgiveness/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/blessed-are-the-merciful>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/mercy-grace.html>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/distinguishing-marks-quarrelsome-person/>
  
- *Unpacking Forgiveness*, Chris Brauns
- *Ministries of Mercy*, Tim Keller

## Discussion Questions:

1. Read Luke 10:29-37. How does mercy demonstrate itself in this parable? How does the broader context of this parable help us understand the significance of being merciful ourselves?
2. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Why didn't the wicked servant show mercy to the one who begged mercy from him? What motivates you to hold grudges or attempt retaliation against those who have sinned against you?
3. Read James 2:8-13. What does it mean that mercy triumphs over judgment? What is the relationship between mercy and justice? Is mercy cheap or costly, and for whom?
4. Read Matthew 9:10-13 and 23:23-26. How does the love of money and a performance-oriented religion drown all potential for mercy? (c.f. Lk16:14; Mk 10:17-22; 1Tim 6:18-19)
5. Select 2 or 3 of the listed verses above and after reading them, discuss how God is calling you to excel yet more in sharing the mercy He has entrusted to you. Where is God calling you to act in order to relieve the miserable consequences of sin around you? What's the first step God is calling you to take today?