

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - February 16, 2023

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Title: "The Sermon On The Mount" - Part VI

The Beatitudes - Part V

Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

I. Introduction

A. The first four beatitudes deal entirely with inner principles, principles of the heart and mind. They are concerned with the way we see ourselves before God.

B. The last four are outward manifestations of those attitudes. Those who in poverty of spirit recognize their need of mercy and are led to show mercy to others (v 7).

C. Those who mourn over their sins are led to purity of heart (v 8). Those who are meek always seek to make peace (v 9). And those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are never unwilling to pay the price of being persecuted for righteousness sake (v 10).

D. The concept of mercy is seen throughout Scripture, from the Fall to the consummation of history at the return of Christ.

E. Mercy is a desperately needed gift of God's providential and redemptive work on behalf of sinners - and the Lord requires His people to follow His example by extending mercy to others.

F. To discover the essence of mercy we will look at three basic aspects of mercy: its meaning, its source, and its practice.

II. Exposition [Part I] – The Meaning of Mercy

A. For the most part, the days in which Jesus lived and taught were not characterized by mercy. The Jewish religionists were not inclined to show mercy, because mercy is not characteristic of those who are proud, self-righteous, and judgmental.

B. To many, perhaps most of Jesus' hearers, showing mercy was considered one of the least of virtues if it was thought to be a virtue at all. It was in the same category as love, reserved for those who had shown the virtue to you.

C. You love those who loved you, and you showed mercy to those who showed mercy to you. That attitude was condemned by Jesus later in the Sermon on The Mount. **"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy."** (Matt. 5:43)

D. But such a shallow, selfish kind of love that even the outcast publicans (i.e., tax-collectors) practiced (v 46) was not acceptable to the Savior. He said, **"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;** (v 44).

E. **"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?"** (vv 46-47).

F. Yet many people have interpreted this beatitude in another way that is just as selfish and humanistic: they maintain that our being merciful causes, especially those to whom we show mercy, to be merciful to us.

G. However, I think most of us know that this principle does not

always work. Never-the-less, if we honor God by obeying His Word, if we show mercy to others, especially to His children, He will show even more abundant mercy to us.

Point: The fifth beatitude does not teach that mercy to men brings mercy from men, but that mercy to men brings mercy from God.

H. The word merciful is from the Greek word *eleemon*, from which we also get *eleemosynary*, meaning beneficial or charitable. Hebrews 2:17 speaks of Jesus as our "merciful and faithful high priest."

I. Jesus Christ is the supreme example of mercy and the supreme giver of mercy!

J. Mercy is meeting people's needs. It is not simply feeling compassion but showing compassion, not only sympathizing but giving a helping hand.

K. Mercy is giving food to the hungry, comfort to the bereaved, love to the rejected, forgiveness to the offender, companionship to the lonely. It is therefore one of the loveliest and noblest of all virtues.

III. Exposition [Part II] - Mercy and Forgiveness

A. A clearer understanding of mercy can be gained by working through some comparisons.

B. Mercy has much in common with forgiveness, but it is distinct from it. Paul tells us that Jesus "... according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5).

C. God's forgiveness of our sins flows from His mercy. But mercy

is bigger than forgiveness, because God is merciful to us even when we do not sin, just as we can be merciful to those who have never done anything against us.

Points:

- 1) God's mercy does not just forgive our transgressions, but it reaches to all of our weaknesses and needs. "It is of the Lord's mercies (His lovingkindness) that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23).

- 2) God's mercy to His children never ceases.

IV. Exposition [Part III] - Mercy and Love

A. Forgiveness flows out of mercy, and mercy flows out of love. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Eph. 2:4-5).

B. Just as mercy is more than forgiveness, love is more than mercy. Love manifests itself in many ways that do not involve either forgiveness or mercy.

C. Love loves even when there is no wrong to forgive or need to meet. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, although they both are without sin and without need.

D. They both love the holy angels, although the angels are without sin and need. When we enter heaven, we too, will be without sin or need, yet God's love for us will in comparison to eternity, only be, just beginning.

E. Mercy is the physician; love is the friend. Mercy acts because

of need; love acts because of affection, whether there is a need or not.

F. Mercy is reserved for times of trouble; love is constant. There can be no true mercy apart from love, but there can be true love apart from mercy.

V. Exposition [Part IV] - Mercy And Grace

A. Mercy is also related to grace, which flows out of love just as forgiveness flows out of mercy.

B. In each of his three pastoral epistles, Paul includes the words "grace, mercy, and peace" in his salutations (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4, (KJV),

D. Grace and mercy have the closest possible relationship; yet they are different.

E. Mercy and its related terms all have to do with pain, misery, and distress - with the consequences of sin. Whether because of our individual sins or because of the sinful world in which we live, all of our problems, in the final analysis, are sin problems. It is with those problems that mercy gives us help.

F. Grace, on the other hand, deals with sin itself. Mercy deals with the symptoms, grace deals with the cause.

G. Mercy offers relief from punishment; grace offers pardon for the crime. Mercy eliminates the pain; grace cures the disease.

//Please continue to pay close attention.//

H. When the Good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the man who had been beaten and robbed, he showed mercy. When he took the man to the nearest inn and paid for his lodging until he was

well, he showed grace. His mercy relieved the pain; his grace provided for healing.

H. Mercy relates to the negative; grace relates to the positive.

Point: In relation to salvation, mercy says, "No hell," whereas grace says, "Heaven." Mercy says, "I pity you"; grace says, "I pardon you."

VI. Exposition [Part V] - Mercy and Justice

A. Mercy is also related to justice, although, on the surface, they seem to be incompatible. Justice gives exactly what is deserved; whereas mercy gives less punishment and more help than is deserved.

B. It is difficult, therefore, for some people to understand how God can be both just and merciful at the same time, to the same person.

C. For Him to be merciful would seem to negate or cancel His justice. The truth is that God does not show mercy without punishing sin; And for Him to offer mercy without punishment would negate His justice.

D. Mercy that ignores sin is false mercy. It is that sort of false mercy that Saul showed to King Agag after God had clearly instructed Saul to kill every Amalekite (1 Sam. 15:3, 9).

E. It is that sort of false mercy that David showed to his rebellious and wicked son Absalom when he was young. Because David did not deal with Absalom's sin, his attitude toward his son was unrighteous sentimentality, neither justice nor mercy - and it served to confirm Absalom in his wickedness.

F. That sort of false mercy is common in our day. It is thought to

be unloving and unkind to hold people responsible for their sins. But that is a cheap grace that is not just and is not merciful, that offers neither punishment nor pardon from sin. And because it overlooks sin, it leaves sin; and the one who relies on that sort of mercy is left in his sin.

G. To cancel justice is to cancel mercy. To ignore sin is to deny the truth.

Point: Mercy and truth are inseparable, they "are met together" (Ps. 85:10).

H. In every true act of mercy, someone pays the price. God did, the Good Samaritan did, and so will we.

Point: To be merciful is to bear the load for someone else.

I. For the Church to offer the hope of God's mercy apart from repentance from sin is to offer false hope through a false gospel. God offers nothing but merciless judgment to those who will not turn from their sin to the Savior.

Point: Those who do not come to God on His terms have no claim on His mercy.

J. God's mercy is grounded not only in His love but in His justice. It is not grounded in sentiment but in Christ's atoning blood, which paid the penalty for and cleanses from sin those who believe in Him.

Point: Without being punished and removed, even the least of our sin would eternally separate us from God. **SIN SEPARATES!**

K. The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all sins in order that God might be merciful to all sinners.

L. On the cross Jesus satisfied God's justice, and when a person trusts in that satisfying sacrifice, God opens the floodgates of His mercy.

M. The good news is that in the shedding of Christ's blood justice was satisfied, sin was forgiven, righteousness was fulfilled, and mercy was made available! //And the Church said - Amen!//

Point: There is never an excuse for sin, but always a remedy!

VII. Exposition [Part VI] - The Source of Mercy

A. Pure mercy is a gift of God. It is not a natural attribute of man, but it is a gift that comes with the new birth.

B. We can be merciful in its full sense and with a righteous motive only when we have experienced God's mercy.

Point: Many people want God's mercy but not on God's terms.

C. God has both absolute and relative attributes. His absolute attributes such as love, truth, and holiness have characterized Him from all eternity. But His relative attributes such as mercy, justice, and grace were not expressed until his creatures came into being.

D. When man fell in the Garden of Eden, God's love was extended to His fallen creatures in mercy. God is the source of mercy and it is because we have the resource of God's mercy that Jesus commanded, "**Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.**" (Luke 6:36). //What a blessing!// But -

E. We cannot have the blessing apart from the **Blesser**. We cannot even meet the condition apart from the **One** who has set the condition.

F. We are **blessed** by God when we are **merciful** to others, and we are able to be merciful to others because we have already received salvation's mercy. And when we share the mercy received, we **shall receive mercy** even beyond what we already have.

VIII. Exposition [Part VII] - The Practice of Mercy

A. The most obvious way we can show mercy is through physical acts, such as the Good Samaritan.

B. As Jesus specifically commands, we are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and give any other practical help that is needed.

Comment: In serving others in need, we demonstrate a heart of mercy.

C. Consider this - Mercy did not begin with the New Testament. God has always intended for mercy to characterize His people. The Old Testament law taught, "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth (i.e., needs)." (Deut. 15:7,8).

D. Mercy is also to be shown in our attitudes. Mercy does not hold a grudge, harbor resentment, capitalize on another's failure or weakness, or publicize another's sin.

E. The vindictive, heartless, indifferent are not subjects of Christ's kingdom. When they pass need by on the other side, as the priest and the Levite did in the story of the good Samaritan, they show they have passed Christ by.

F. Mercy is also to be shown spiritually. First, it is shown through

pity. One of the early church fathers, Augustine, said, "If I weep for the body from which the soul is departed, should I not weep for the soul from which God is departed?"

Comment: The sensitive Christian will grieve more for lost souls than for lost bodies. Because we have experienced God's mercy, we are to have great concern for those who have not.

G. Consider our Lord's last words from the cross, they were words of mercy. For His executioners He prayed, "**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**" (Luke 23:34).

H. To the penitent thief hanging beside Him Jesus said, "**Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**" (Luke 23:43)

I. Like his Master, Stephen, said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts 7:60). This was after he had been stoned.

J. We are also to show spiritual mercy by confrontation. Paul says that, as Christ's servants, we should gently correct "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" (2 Tim. 2:25).

K. As Jude closed his letter with encouragement, he said, "keep yourselves in the love of God; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 21-23).

L. We are to show spiritual mercy by praying. The sacrifice of prayer for those without God is an act of mercy. Our mercy can be measured by our prayers for the unsaved and for Christians who

are walking in disobedience.

M. We are also to show spiritual mercy by proclaiming the saving power of Jesus Christ. This is the most merciful thing we can do.

IX. Exposition [Part VIII] - The Result of Mercy

A. Reflecting on the fact that when we are merciful we receive mercy, we can see God's cycle of mercy. God is merciful to us by saving us through the Lord Jesus Christ; in obedience we are merciful to others; and God in faithfulness gives us even more mercy, pouring out blessings for our needs and withholding severe chastening for our sin.

B. God does not give mercy for merit; He gives mercy in grace, because it is needed, not because it is earned.

C. To illustrate the working of God's mercy Jesus told the parable of a slave who had been graciously forgiven a great debt by the king. The man then went to a fellow slave who owned him an insignificant amount by comparison and demanded that every cent be repaid and had him thrown into prison.

D. When the king heard of the incident, he called the first man to him and said, "O thou wicked servant. I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. 18:23-35).

E. In that parable Jesus gives the picture of God's saving mercy

in relation to forgiving others (vv 21-22). The first man pleaded with God for mercy and received it. The fact that he, in turn, was unmerciful was so inconsistent with his own salvation that he was chastened until he repented.

F. The Lord will chasten, if need be, to produce repentance in a stubborn child. Mercy to others is a mark of salvation. When we do not show it, we may be disciplined until we do. When we hold back mercy, God restricts His flow of mercy to us, and we forfeit blessings.

G. If we have received from a Holy God unlimited mercy that cancels our unpayable debt of sin, we who had no righteousness but were poor in spirit, mourning over our load of sin in a helpless condition, wretched and doomed, meek before Almighty God, hungry and thirsty for a righteousness we did not have and could not attain, it surely follows that we should be merciful to others.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. Each passage has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

"I was also _____ before him, and have kept myself from mine _____. Therefore the Lord hath _____ me according to my _____; according to my _____ in his eye sight. With the _____ thou wilt shew thyself _____, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself _____."

[2 Samuel 22:24-26]

"And he _____ unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my _____? Therefore I fled before unto _____: for I knew that thou art a _____ God, and _____, slow to anger, and of great _____, and repentest thee of the evil."

[Jonah 4:2]

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast _____: for thou hast found _____ in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I _____ thee, shew me thy _____. And he said, I will make all my _____ pass before thee, and I will _____ the name of the Lord before thee; and will be _____ to whom I will be gracious, and will shew _____ on whom, I will shew mercy."

[Exodus 33:17-19]

"But I am like a green _____ tree in the _____ of God: I trust in the _____ of God for ever and ever."

[Psalm 52:8]

"For I desired _____, and not _____; and the _____ of God more than _____ offerings."

[Hosea 6:6]

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath _____ me, for that he counted me _____, putting me into the _____; Who was before a _____, and a _____, and injurious, but I obtained _____, because I did it _____ in unbelief."

[1 Timothy 1:12,13]

"Behold, we count them _____ which endure. Ye have heard of the _____ of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very _____, and of tender _____."

[James 5:11]

I pray that you have been blessed from the study of this lesson and may our Lord's love and tender mercies be a constant factor in your life.

In The Master's Service,

Pastor Austin