

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Text: Matthew 5:7

INTRO: Of the beatitudes we have studied so far, this is the one that is least shocking to the human mind. It jolts us to hear that the poor in spirit, the mourners, the hungry & thirsty are to be considered blessed; that the meek shall inherit the earth. But finally we come to a beatitude that makes complete sense to all of us—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

I. NOT ONLY DOES THIS BEATITUDE MAKE SENSE TO US, BUT IT ALSO PLACES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY UPON US.

A. As sinners, we often need to pray with the tax collector of Luke 18, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Rom 3:10, 23.

B. Yet in the light of this beatitude, we have no right to seek mercy unless we extend mercy to others. In the same sermon, Jesus taught His hearers to pray:

Matt 6:12, Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

Matt 6:14-15, 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.

- C. This beatitude prompts us to practice self-examination. It should bring to mind our hasty judgments, harsh criticisms, uncaring moments, lest we forget to be merciful.
- D. There are 2 underlying reasons we need to practice the art of being merciful.
 - 1. Because of the mercy that has already been extended to us.

Matt 18:32-35, 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 compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' "And his master was angry, & delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Eph 4:32, And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Col 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.

2. Because we will continue to need mercy to be extended to us.

1 John 1:8, 10, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, & the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

II. WHAT DOES THIS BEATITUDE REQUIRE OF US?

- A. A forgiving spirit. It is said that someone once bragged in the presence of John Wesley, "I never forgive." Wesley replied, "Then I hope you never sin." If we can grasp the magnitude of the forgiveness God has extended to us, it should help immensely in producing in us the attitude we need toward those who sin against us.
- B. Feelings of pity & compassion for others who are in trouble or in need.
 1. Not just words of sympathy, "Be warmed & filled," (James 2:16).
 2. Jesus set the example of showing mercy to the disadvantaged & downtrodden: the blind, the lepers, the demon-possessed, the mute, the hungry.

3. He commanded His learners to "go & do likewise" (LK 10:37).

Matt. 25:31-46

III. HOW DO WE PROMOTE THIS ATTITUDE OF HEART?

- A. 1st by remembering our own need of mercy.
- B. 2nd by putting ourselves in the other person's shoes. Gal 6:1-2
Matt. 26:22, "Lord, is it I?"
- C. Last but certainly not least, draw closer to Christ by studying & obeying His will.

IV. THE MERCIFUL SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

- A. Like the other beatitudes, this one begins to find its fulfillment in the here & now.
 1. Will usually be reflected by the attitude of others toward us. By being merciful in our dealings with others, we prompt that attitude in others toward us.
 2. But more importantly, our merciful attitude toward others paves the way for us to experience the forgiveness of God in the present age & in the world to come, everlasting life, Mark 10:30.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, August 16, 1992

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, February 6, 2005

6th St., Stillwater, OK, September 27, 2005