

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

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God in NOT far

Sermon on The Mount - 08

Matthew 5 - 7; Luke 6:17-49

Blessed are the Merciful

April 25, 2021

Matthew 5:7 (NASB)

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

- 1 🎵 Doxology [DH 1981]
- 2 🎵 No other name 15
- 3 🎵 Under his wings 620
- 4 🎵 In moments like these 91
- 5 🎵 Change my heart O God 654
- 6 🎵 Great is thy faithfulness 139
- 7 🎵 **Family of God** [DH 2357]

Are you being a wimp is you show mercy?

Well, that’s what Islamic extremist think about Christians.

Christians are wimps, and wimps are to be exploited.

It could be that the very idea of mercy is a radical concept to those who are earth dwellers.

Mercy in fact has been called “the disease of the soul.”

Earth dwellers glorify “manly” courage, strict justice, and absolute power.

Think about our previous president who tweeted his distaste for those who he considered weak.

But for our Lord, mercy is a supreme virtue, and is used of both God and humanity.

God is merciful; but God is righteous,
God is holy, but God is just.

The Psalmist declares

Psalm 85:10 (KJV)

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

‘Mercy and truth are met together’

I. What is Mercy?

One way to understand mercy is by comparing it with grace. Most of Paul’s Epistles start similar to Romans:

Romans 1:7 (NASB)

7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Paul writes to Timothy and Titus, he changes this greeting to

1 Timothy 1:2 (NASB)

2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2 (NASB)

2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Titus 1:4 (NASB)

4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

And you ask yourself, why this difference?

Why did Paul add “peace” to his greeting to Timothy and Titus?

The threefold salutation of Paul, “grace, mercy and peace,” is used by Paul only in his greeting to Timothy and Titus.

Paul’s normal greeting is simply “grace and peace.”

It’s interesting that Jesus’ apostle John and His brother Jude also use this threefold salutation, “grace, mercy and peace,”

2 John 1:3 (NASB)

3 Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Jude 1:2 (NASB)

2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

“**Grace**” (χάρις, charis) represents the noun form of the Greek verb normally used in a greeting.

It indicates the unmerited goodness of God.

“**Mercy**” (ἔλεος, eleos) is God’s help to the discouraged, the down-and-out.

The verb form appears in 1 Tim 1:13, 16 where the plight of sinners and their need for divine favor is the focus.

“**Peace**” (εἰρήνη, eirēnē) represents the normal greeting among Jews, שלום (shalom) in Hebrew.

Shalom does not refer to the absence of warfare, but to the wholeness of the relationship between a person and God.

One way to think of this is grace is usually associated with our sins, and mercy is associated with our misery.

Grace looks at sin as a whole, and mercy sees the miserable consequences of sin.

In His second Beatitude, Jesus said

Matthew 5:4 (NASB)

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Those who mourn their sin feel miserable because of the loss of deep relationship to our Father who is in Heaven.

Mercy is that desire to relieve the suffering of a miserable soul.

II. What is a Merciful Person like?

Sometimes it helps to get something clear if we can view it over against its opposite.

And the Bible gives us examples of where mercy is contrasted with its opposite.

Matthew 9:9-13 (NASB)

9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He *said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. 10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax

collectors and sinners?" 12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Diogenes was one of the great teachers of ancient Greece. He was a man who loved virtue, and a man with a caustic tongue.

He was constantly comparing the decadence of Athens, where he spent most of his time, with the strong simplicities of Sparta.

One day someone said to him, "If you think so much of Sparta and so little of Athens, why don't you leave Athens and go and stay in Sparta?"

His answer was, "Whatever I may wish to do, I must stay where men need me most."

America, love it or leave it.

No, I'm staying where I can have the most influence.

It was sinners who needed Jesus, and amongst sinners he would move.

When our Lord said

"It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

Jesus was saying, "I did not come to invite people who are so self-satisfied that they are convinced they do not need anyone's help; I came to invite people who are very conscious of their sin and desperately aware of their need for a savior. It is only those who know how much they need me who can accept my invitation."

You can see in this that our Lord shows the opposite of mercy is have an outward show of piety, that condemned rather than give forgiveness, because He quotes from Hosea 6:6

'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,'

This quote from Hosea 6:6, is where God accuses the people that their love is like the dew on the grass.

It is there for a brief morning hour, and then is gone, and all that is left is the empty form of burnt offerings.

The point is that God wants his people to be alive in their hearts.

He wants them to have feelings of affection toward Him and mercy toward each other.

He does not want a people who do their religious duties in a perfunctory or merely formal way.

In this chapter, Jesus views sinners as sick and miserable people in need of a physician, even though they were the rich money movers of the day, the tax collectors.

They are sick, and He has the medicine.

But all that the Pharisees see is a ceremonial problem with becoming contaminated by eating with sinners.

Their life seems to be a mechanical implementation of rules. Something huge was at stake here, but they could not see it or feel it.

They were enslaved to the trivial issues of ceremonial cleanness when eternal sickness was about to be healed.

Thus, the opposite of mercy is bondage to religious ritualism.

But our Lord wants us to understand what mercy is, so He uses another illustration.

Luke 10:25-37 (NASB)

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 27 And he answered, "YOU

SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS

YOURSELF." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."

29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

The man asked Jesus how a person should act who may expect to find mercy at the judgment day and inherit eternal life.

Jesus answers that the persons who will receive the mercy of eternal life are those who have loved God with all their hearts and their neighbor as themselves.

In other words, "Blessed are those who are merciful now to their neighbor, for they shall receive the mercy of eternal life in the future."

So this story is very relevant to our text this morning:

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

But the man self-righteously asks "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 "And by chance a priest was going down

on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 "On the next day he took out two denarii [*\$5.00*] and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Here we have a very sharp picture of mercy and its opposite.

And in this illustration, our Lord shows that mercy has for aspects when He says:

33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

a) Mercy sees distress (verse 33): a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him

b) Mercy responds internally with a heart of compassion or pity toward a person in distress (verse 33): when he saw him, he felt compassion

c) Mercy responds externally with a practical effort to relieve the distress (verse 33): 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

d) Mercy responds even when the person in distress is an enemy (verse 33): But a Samaritan

A half-breed Jew with a warped religious tradition stops to help the Jew who hates him.

An eye for distress,
a heart of pity,
an effort to help,
in spite of enmity
Now, that's mercy.

Isn't it remarkable that this parable makes the same point as **Matthew 9:13?**

13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

There Jesus said, **"Go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion or mercy and not sacrifice.'"**

Here he says, **"Go and show mercy like the Samaritan, not like the priest and the Levite."**

The priest and the Levite stand for the same thing in the parable that the word "sacrifice" stands for in Matthew 9:13, namely, empty religious formalism.

Why did Jesus choose to illustrate the opposite of mercy with a priest and a Levite?

Isn't it a warning to all of us that there are far too many

people who are caught up in the mechanics of religious activity with no eye to see distress, no heart to respond with compassion, and no effort to bring the relief of the gospel?

So in answer to our second question, “What is mercy?” we should say that mercy is foundational to our relationship both with God and our fellow man.

III. How are we to decide when to show Justice rather than Mercy?

It is not an oversight of God that He does not give us hard and fast rules in Scripture to dictate for every situation.

The decision when to show justice rather than mercy comes out of our character.

In giving the Beatitudes, Jesus is giving us building stones of character.

The Christian faith is not something on the surface of our life like a kind of veneer or coating.

The Christian faith is something that is happening in the very depths, the very center of our character.

And that is why the Beatitudes are so searching of our character.

The aim of Scripture is to produce a certain kind of person, not provide an exhaustive list of rules for every situation.

The beatitude says, “Blessed are the merciful,” not, “Blessed are those who know exactly when and how to show mercy in all circumstances.”

We must be merciful people even when we act with severity in the service of justice.

We must be:
poor in spirit.

sorrowful for our own sin, and mourn our choices
gentle, free from defensiveness and self-exaltation
hunger and thirst for righteousness and seeking to do the
right thing

merciful, feeling pity for the sinner's pain and misery

So, should a merciful person always show mercy?

We have to answer with a qualified No.

You will often support the claims of justice and pronounce a judgment the way he deserves in order to bear witness to the truth of God's justice and to accomplish a greater good for greater numbers of people.

Judgment calls for balanced thinking, not prejudicial reactions.

The very opposite of Representative Maxine Waters calls for protesters to "get more confrontational" if no guilty verdict is reached in Derek Chauvin trial.

Attorney Alan Dershowitz compared statements made by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) during the Derek Chauvin trial to tactics used by the Ku Klux Klan to intimidate jury pools in the 1920s and '30s.

Judge Peter Cahill said that Rep. Maxine Waters' comments could be grounds for appealing the verdict.

Our Christian faith calls for balanced thinking and not forcing outcomes.

You see that balance even in God.

Romans 11:22 (NASB)

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

When kindness was called for God responded with kindness.
When judgment was called for then you see the **severity of God**

If you are a merciful person, then even the way you spank a child or prosecute a criminal or dismiss an employee will be different.

The mercy will show.

The parent may cry when he or she has to administer punishment.

The heart of mercy will show.

The central truth here is that God is looking once again at our character.

God is interested in our being.

God is interested in what is in our heart.

God is interested in our attitude.

Are we being controlled by cultural pressures or by what God has given us in Scripture.

Think about what Paul is saying in

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

IV. Why Do Only Merciful People Find Mercy From God?

Why will only merciful people find mercy from God in the judgment day, if salvation is by grace through faith?

Remember, our whole life is an expression and a proclamation of what we really are.

Matthew 5:7 (NASB)

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

The perfect, central and supreme example of mercy and being merciful is the sending by God of His only begotten Son into this world, and the coming of the Son.

Why?

Because there is mercy with Him.

Look at Him there on the cross, the only sinless person, who never did any harm to anyone, who came and preach the truth, who came to seek and to save the lost.

There He is nailed and suffering agonies on the cross, and what He does as looks at His persecutors and hear His words of mercy “Father, forgive them.”

Isn't Jesus saying the people who will receive mercy from him are people who have been merciful.

Is this a salvation by works?

Do we earn his mercy by our mercy?

No, because an “earned mercy” would be a contradiction in terms.

If mercy is earned, it is not mercy; it's a salary, a wage.

Be assured, if we get anything good at the judgment, it will be mercy — one hundred percent mercy!

When God asks for a record of your mercy at the judgment day, he will not be asking for a punched time card.

You won't say, “Here it is, eight hours of mercy. Now where's my salary?”

Instead, The Great Physician will be asking you for your medical records recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

You will hand them to him in all lowliness and meekness. And what you have written in the Lamb's book of life will be your evidence of how you trusted him as your divine Physician.

And in the Lamb's Book of Life you will have recorded how the medicine of His word and the therapy of his Spirit took effect in your life, because you relied on them to heal you of your unmerciful disposition.

And when he sees the evidence of your faith and his healing, he will say

Matthew 25:21 (NASB)

21 Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful

So, you can see the importance of being merciful.

Matthew 5:7 (NASB)

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Prayer and Invitation