

Refuge City Church — February 25, 2024
Gospel of Matthew: “I need to be more compassionate!” (Matthew 5:7)

Introduction

- We continue our study through the Sermon on the Mount, and these specific teachings of Jesus called ‘beatitudes’.
- Something to think about...
 - Why didn’t Jesus provide specific examples as to how to use these blessings?
 - The situation or circumstance does not/should not matter.
 - This is who we are to be at all times! These qualities should define the very essence of our character.

[verse 7] “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

- “Mercy” = compassion; forgiveness; lenient
 - Forgiving the guilty... compassion on those in need.
 - **QUOTE:** “Grace is especially associated with men in their sins; mercy is especially associated with men in their misery.” [unknown]
- Can you withhold judgement? Does compassion present itself, or does condemnation?
 - What’s the first inclination of your heart in response to a situation or individual that needs to be shown mercy?
 - If your answer is “Not even close!”... You are not alone, and there is hope that you don’t have to stay in a position of perpetual “glass-half-emptiness” [negativity].
 - **REMEMBER:** Sanctification is an upward process for those who are willing to be trained by God through their circumstances.
 - This should lead you back to understanding your poverty of spirit and fallibility. We constantly need to look to God as our source of strength/dependency.
 - So then hunger for the satisfaction that only God can provide.
- Biblical Examples
 - [The Good Samaritan; Luke 10:30-37] *Answered in relation to a lawyer’s question regarding the inheriting eternal life.* “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’”
 - Did Jesus mention the man’s ethnicity or social class status? No.

- Sometimes title, time/busyness, denominational preference, social class status, or even cultural differences can keep us from showing compassion to those who are in need.
- But the reality is that none of that matters. What matters is that we are to show mercy to *anyone* in need.
- [The Unjust Servant; Matthew 18:23-35] Answered in relation to Peter's questions regarding how often we are to forgive others. "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. [roughly \$28 million by today's standards] And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii [\$12-13 thousand], and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."
- How easily we forget the forgiveness and mercy shown to us by God through the sacrifice of His Son.
- You've been forgiven! What keeps you from forgiving others?
 - What are you holding on to that's keeping you from letting go of the anger you feel towards this individual?
- If you are a disciple of Jesus, and you've submitted to His Lordship, you have the Holy Spirit inside you, giving you the divine power to show compassion and forgive.
 - Showing mercy does not depend on your feelings of "getting over the offense" or "waiting until you feel better" about your or others circumstances.
 - We show mercy because it is a command of God, who grants us the power and opportunity to be merciful in the physical, so that some might experience the everlasting forgiveness of God.
- *The merciful shall receive mercy.*
 - Who was the first to show mercy? God!
 - **Ephesians 2:4-5**, "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."
 - **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 because we've received mercy, we should not hesitate to show others mercy.
 - **Proverbs 19:17**, "Whoever is generous to the poor [helpless; powerless; insignificant; downcast] lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed."

- As we live out who He has created us to be, God will continue to give us mercy.
 - **Hebrews 6:10**, “For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints...”