

The Beatitudes 4 – Blessed Are The Merciful

Being MORE than just KIND

Matthew 5

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I. Introduction (Matthew 5:1-7)

- A. About 2,000 years ago, a Man named Jesus went around all the villages and towns of the region called Galilee (MAP), walking, and speaking to anyone who would listen...
- B. Preaching that “the kingdom” was coming back – that it was almost here, and just at the door if everyone would just get ready for it
 - 1. Luke 8:1 *And it came to pass afterward, that he [JESUS] went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.*
 - 2. Mar 1:14,15 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*
- C. It excited absolutely everyone as He spoke about it
- D. And crowds gathered by the thousands around Him to hear Him teach about **the kingdom**
- E. Why?
- F. Because everything in the Old Testament had pointed to a coming perfect KINGDOM like David's, that would continue forever, and a Prophet like unto Moses that would come and would be able to give brand new laws, and new hearts to people
- G. And so here was this Jesus, from Nazareth of all places, talking about a kingdom based not on armies and borders, but on transformed hearts and lives
- H. And all those new laws, and new hearts are perfectly described in a series of lessons that we call The beatitudes

II. Background

- A. What are the Beatitudes? (Blessed Attitudes found in Matthew chapter 5)
 - 1. Eight beginning truths about the kingdom of God – these are the first lessons in KINGDOM living for the Christian!
 - a. They are Gospel truths that are out of this world – not from any culture! Not from any science book, or religion. They are NOT naturally learned. They are out of this world!
 - b. Jesus devotes THREE chapters in Matthew exploring and describing what it is like in His kingdom
 - 2. Eight necessary attitudes of a follower of Jesus going into that kingdom
 - 3. Eight blessings of having kingdom attitudes, instead of worldly ones – they are exactly the opposite of what you would expect – that's why I refer to them as the Great Opposites of the Christian Life

- a. Blessed are the poor in spirit - Be glad to be empty – you’ll inherit everything one day
 - b. Blessed are they that mourn - It’s okay to be sad sometimes – you will be comforted
 - c. Blessed are the meek - Take Last Place, because you one day will win First Place
 - d. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst – Keep yourself Hungry for Good Things, and you will be satisfied
 - e. Blessed are the merciful - Show Mercy and Compassion and Kindness a LOT, because you one day will need mercy and will get it!
 - f. Blessed are the pure in HEART - Prize Purity of your own Heart, because one day you will get to see God
 - g. Blessed are the peacemakers - Seek to Make Peace
 - h. Blessed are you when persecuted - Rejoice in ALL Persecutions
- 4. Instructions on how we are to live HERE AND NOW while being a citizen of a greater kingdom**
- 5. These be-attitudes and instructions are NOT for everyone**
- a. When people talk about Jesus, these are the teachings they talk about that they seem to like and respect, and yet never actually lived by!
 - b. But they are NOT written to the busy company manager, or the successful football coach, or the ambitious politician
 - c. Only written to those that gather at the feet of Jesus – those who seek to follow Him with all their heart!
 - d. They are NOT a way to become holy, or religious, or godly like most churches teach
 - e. They are written to people who have been born again and are already washed and clean on the inside
- 6. The be-attitudes are NOT easy to live by**
- a. As proven by how few people actually love preaching, and love church
 - b. It is not easy to change how you view affliction, troubles, success and prosperity
 - c. In the kingdom of God, everything is backwards!
 - d. No one will live by these things who doesn’t desperately want to
 - e. And those that want to live by these things will find that they are the hardest things to attempt imaginable!
 - f. Because the devil will NOT allow you to just live this way. He will use your WIFE or your CHILDREN, or your husband or your culture, or your past to hinder you and frustrate you and stop you from being “blessed”! Press on anyways!

III. Let’s Review...

A. So, WHERE and WHAT is the Kingdom of God?

1. It is a spiritual kingdom that exists in the hearts of every believer
2. It is not in the world, but in the heart
3. It is where we live now that we are saved
4. Our bodies are here – but our souls are in a new kingdom altogether – the Kingdom of God
5. Only born again people get to experience the kingdom of God (John 3:3)

B. The Meaning of “Blessed”

1. The state of being blessed by God
2. *Happy, fortunate, well-off, well-to-do, helped, encouraged, “rich”, thriving, successful*
3. A good way to be – who wouldn’t want to live that way?

C. So far we have pondered the first FOUR attitudes

- 1. 1-“Those that are the poor in spirit” – They are blessed to be EMPTY inside!**
 - a. Low, empty – not poor in pocket or wallet, but in their spirit – empty on the INSIDE, in the heart!
 - b. The poor in spirit are those in need, lacking what they need, barren and empty on the inside
- 2. 2-“Blessed are they that Mourn” - *It’s okay to be sad sometimes***
 - a. Mourners are people overwhelmed with sadness – grief, sighing
 - b. Jesus says, the kingdom of God is where grieving people can come and be blessed
- 3. 3-“Blessed are the meek...” - *Taking Last Place, Wins First***
 - a. It means Gentle
 - 1) Mild of temper, gentle, teachable
 - 2) An attitude of humble, submissive and expectant trust in God while under pressure, and a loving, patient and gentle attitude towards others, while being attacked. WOW!
 - b. Meekness is Gentle yes, but is really STRENGTH restrained!
- 4. Message 4-“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness”**
 - a. Jesus said, “BLESSSED are those Christians who LOVE righteousness, and hunger and thirst for it instead of for sin – because THEY will be filled with every good thing imaginable!”
 - b. But Jesus wants us Christians hungry, thirsty for RIGHTEOUSNESS in our HEART
 - c. Not just be RIGHT (like in an argument), but righteous in the sight of God

D. Why are people in this kingdom so blessed?

1. Sounds like a strange kingdom doesn’t it?
2. But they are blessed because they have moved OUT of the natural dog-eat-dog kingdom and the dark kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of God’s Son!
3. And IN that new kingdom, is joy, and peace and righteousness and eternal life more abundant than can ever be imagined!

IV. Message 5-“Blessed are the merciful”

A. What does it mean to be merciful?

1. It means more than just being nice, or kind to someone.
2. Merciful means Being compassionate, and tender, and kind towards someone who is unworthy of kindness; being unwilling to cause pain for someone who has hurt you,

and unwilling to punish for injuries against you, and instead forgive any offenses against you.

- a. To have compassion and show great love and tenderness towards on someone or something that does not deserve it!
 - b. The opposite of mercy is: cruelty, harshness, being mean, severe, unkind
3. Mercy is the balancing side of the previous attitude – seeking righteousness
- a. It is wrong to only be judging
 - b. And it is just as wrong to only be compassionate
 - c. BOTH must go together in the Christian's life
 - d. God has such a balance (Num 14:18) *The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*
4. Note: Compassion is NOT the rejection of the righteousness of God's Laws
- a. It is actually PART of the Law (Micah 6:8) *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*
 - b. And thankfully, it is actually a BIG part of the Law (Mt 23:23) *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted **the weightier matters of the law**, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

B. Examples of showing mercy, compassion on unworthy people

1. **Pharaoh's daughter** towards a cursed and dangerous Jewish baby she found in a river (Ex 2:6) – that baby was a threat to Egypt and to her uncle's kingdom (boy was he ever)
2. **The Samaritan's** kindness showed toward a racist and hurtful Jew (Luke 10:33)
3. **The entire life of Jesus Christ** was one of almost constant mercy
 - a. Compassion on the sick – actually touched lepers
 - b. On the demon possessed – Jesus constantly intervened
 - c. On sinners – even adulteresses – He ate with them and loved them
4. History from the creation is filled with **God's** mercy is towards all people! Lam 3:22,23 *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*
 - a. God was merciful towards wicked Lot and his daughters (Gen 19:16) when he should have burnt them to a crisp
 - b. God was merciful towards Abraham's son Isaac, giving him a good wife (Gen 24:27)
 - c. God was merciful towards carnal and selfish Jacob before he ever got converted (Gen 32:10)
 - d. God was merciful towards Joseph, and then later towards Joseph's employers and towards Egypt and even towards his wicked brothers (Gen 39:21)
 - e. God showed mercy towards the Israeli slaves in Egypt, freeing them (Ex 15:13)
 - f. The very centre of worship in the Old Testament was focused not on a throne, but on a MERCY seat in the core of the Tabernacle (Ex 25:17)

- g. So, be like your heavenly Father... (Luke 6:36) *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

C. Showing Mercy is SUPER Important

1. *Kindness Is Powerful – wouldn't you agree?*

- a. In her memoir about the journey from being a committed lesbian to a committed Christian, a woman named Rosaria Butterfield says that, as a non-Christian, her impression of “born again Christians” was that they were poor thinkers, judgmental, scornful, and afraid of diversity.
- b. After publishing a critique of an evangelical Christian group in her local newspaper, she received an enormous volume of polarized responses. Placing an empty box in each corner of her desk, she sorted hate mail into one and fan mail into the other.
- c. Then she received a two-page letter from a local pastor. “It was a kind and inquiring letter,” she says. It had a warmth and civility to it, in addition to its probing questions. She couldn't figure out which box to put the letter in, so it sat on her desk for seven days. “It was the kindest letter of opposition that I had ever received.” Its tone demonstrated that the writer wasn't against her.
- d. He did not agree with her lifestyle, but asked her some very powerful questions, and showed a very different kind of reaction to her than she was used to.
- e. Eventually, she contacted the pastor and became friends with him and his wife. “They talked with me in a way that didn't make me feel erased.” Their friendship was an important part of her journey to faith.
- f. She has an earned Ph.D. from Ohio State University in English Literature, served in the English Department and Women Studies Program at Syracuse University
- g. She is now the wife of a pastor, and a home-schooling mother.
- h. Mercy is very powerful on the human heart!

2. *We need to understand just how VALUABLE mercy is and how vital it is to have mercy from God, and mercy FOR the people that hurt us*

- a. 290 times ‘mercy’ is praised in the Old Testament
- b. That's three times as many as the words Grace or Gracious appear
- c. Yes, holiness, and righteousness, and godliness appear 1,102 times
- d. But mercy is needed in our relationships too!

3. *By the way, God's mercy is only understood when seen in light of God's righteousness! Mercy means nothing unless God's holiness and righteousness is feared and appreciated!*

- a. 2Ch 20:21 *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise **the beauty of holiness**, as they went out before the army, **and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.***

4. *Most everywhere Jesus went, people depended upon His MERCY, instead of His power*

- a. Mat 9:27 *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, **Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.***

5. *In Matthew 5:7 Jesus promises that God will have compassion on those that show compassion to people that don't deserve it*

6. *Did you get that?*

D. There is a time for justice and righteousness to be held to (without showing mercy)

1. First towards sin in our own lives – so little is expected of ourselves, and too much mercy is given to ourselves! We should be very strict with ourselves, and merciful towards others
2. And then towards evil doers.
 - a. As a Bible believing Christian, I will call out liars, and frauds and fakers, and paedophiles, and drug dealers, and pornography, and hypocrites
 - b. That does not mean that I don't love them as eternal souls – but I WILL expose sin, and wrong doing!
 - c. Somebody tries to rape your daughter, or break into your home, you show no mercy. Christians are not stupid! There are times when you act with swift decisive actions to protect your family, and not the attacker
 - d. God does not say you should “go easy” on everyone like most modern judges do today – no jail time for most crimes today, just slaps on the wrist
 - e. There IS a time to show mercy on those that do wrong folks!
 - f. But being merciful needs to be carefully given, or justice will have no value!
3. Especially in a church (1Cor 5:1-5)
 - a. 1Co 5:1 *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*
 - b. 1Co 5:2 *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*
 - c. 1Co 5:3 *For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*
 - d. 1Co 5:4 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
 - e. 1Co 5:5 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
 - f. No mercy – jus kick the man out of the church until he repents!!! Amen!
4. So, Christ's expectation is to live righteously AND mercifully... (Luke 10:33-37)
 - a. Luk 10:33 *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*
 - b. Luk 10:34 *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*
 - c. Luk 10:35 *And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*
 - d. Luk 10:36 *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*
 - e. Luk 10:37 *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, **Go, and do thou likewise.***

E. What Happens to Unmerciful Christians?

1. They will not experience God's mercy when THEY will need it!!!
2. They will NOT experience blessedness in the kingdom of God – will end up only miserable - guaranteed
3. And, They will only grow harder and harder
 - a. No escape from the consequences of this process. You will either become more merciful or more cruel
 - b. No wonder so many people think GOD is cruel! Because they have not sought His mercy and then SHOWN anyone else mercy (example of the man who was forgiven 10,000 talents of God, but showed no mercy towards his own debtor)!

F. Final Thoughts

1. Seek GOD'S mercy for yourself first - and find it in His Son
 - a. One day, it will be too late to avail of God's mercy (Luke 16:24) *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*
 - b. Getting Mercy begets mercy!
 - c. If you lack mercy in your treatment of other people, it is because you do not yet realize just how merciful God is being towards YOU right now
 - d. God wants to show mercy towards us instead of justice - Mat 9:13 *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*
 - e. Justice will damn you. Mercy will save you, if you ask for it!
2. Practice the presence of God – it will always break you down, and cause you to never approach on your own goodness or value, but to cry out for God's mercy!
3. SEE other people like Jesus does
 - a. Be careful of being holier than thou – (Gal 6:1) *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*
 - b. See the Distress instead of blame and cause
 - c. See their Value, instead of cost
 - d. See them as a Priority instead of the burden you end up accepting
 - e. Mat 9:36 *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*
4. Do kind things – lots of them – GOD DOES!
 - a. Make it a priority to start showing mercy and kindness and compassion without preference – on everyone, even though MOST will not deserve it and most will never appreciate it (Remember the 10 lepers? Only 1 returned to give thanks)!
 - b. Like, Say something NICE – encouraging – to people – especially your husband, wife, family member!
 - c. Do something that just benefits someone else that doesn't deserve such niceness – AMAZINGLY difficult
5. And you will be guaranteed two things:

- a. You will be USED, taken advantage of, exploited, and abused by the people you show mercy to
- b. You, by the grace of God, WILL be blessed, happy, better off
 - 1) 2Sa 22:26,27 ***With the merciful [NOT JUST THE RIGHTEOUS] thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright. With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.***
 - 2) A forward person is someone that is not willing to yield or comply with what is required of them [WOW]; ungovernable; disobedient.
- c. And, you will experience the mercy of God yourself when you need it!