

# The merciful God

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to get into the New Testament, Matthew chapter 5, and we'll continue our study of the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount. Let us read from the beginning of Matthew chapter 5.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst of the righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And that is the Beatitude that we will look at for a few minutes this morning. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

And we will look and see and try and find out what mercy is and how a person is merciful. And then to see what the Lord Jesus Christ means when he says, for they shall obtain mercy.

[ 1 : 03 ] Now, mercy is pity in action. And the great New Testament example of being merciful is the parable that we read there. The parable of the good Samaritan told by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

A man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho was set upon by robbers who strip him of his money, his clothing, and take away whatever else he had.

They wound him, and they leave him half dead. And a priest comes along, and although he sees the condition of the man, although he sees the poor, injured, helpless man, he doesn't do anything to help him.

He passes by on the other side. And as the priest walks on out of sight, a Levite appears. And as he comes to the poor man, he pauses, and he looks closely at him.

And anyone watching would think that he was going to do something about him. But having looked, he also passes by on the other side. And after he was gone out of sight, a Samaritan on horseback rides up.

[ 2 : 07 ] And as soon as he sees the poor man's plight, he dismounts and brings the unconscious man back to life. He begins to bring him back to life. He pours oil into his wounds, and he bandages them up.

He gives him wine to drink, and he lifts him up onto his horse, and he takes him to an inn, where he sees that he's well cared for, and that all his expenses are paid for.

And then, having spent the night there in the inn, probably looking after him, he goes away next day. He makes sure that the poor man is well taken care of, for he leaves some money to cover his expenses there.

And also, he assures the landlord that whatever else he had to spend on this poor man, that he would pay for it when he came back next time. Now we'll look for a few seconds at what this good Samaritan did.

The Samaritan was miserable because he saw a man in need. He saw a person in need, and he responded to it. He is sorry for the victim.

[ 3 : 09 ] He gets down off his horse, he goes across the road, and he does all he can to relieve the misery of this man. Sympathy, yes. Compassion, yes. But both joining together in action towards someone in need.

You see, the priest and the Levite, they may have felt sorry for the man as well. They might have had compassion on him. They might have had pity for him. They might have felt sorry for him. But they did nothing about it.

No doubt if there had been in their law a specific command to cover the situation, because the priest and the leader, Jesus takes there, are the ones who are well taught in religion. And if there was a specific command, a specific part of their law that dealt with this situation, in their own legalistic religious way, in the correctness of their own lifestyle, they would have kept the law. If thou shalt see a man lying half dead upon the roadside, thou shalt not pass him by unheeded, but shalt surely help him. If there had been such a law in their commandment, they would have done it to this man.

[ 4 : 15 ] But because it wasn't specifically in the law, they didn't see any need to respond to the man's misery. They felt they were under no obligation.

But you see, in the mind of the Samaritan was a genuine compassion, a pure and selfish motive that reached out to help a person in need.

Then secondly, we see that the Samaritan's mercy was not hindered in any way by the fact that the injured man was someone he didn't know, was not of his own people, neither was he of his own beliefs.

Jesus here was speaking to Jews, and if the injured man had not been of their own race, Jesus would have said so. And we know that not only were Jews and Samaritans not in agreement together over many things, but there was a bitter hatred between them.

So this Samaritan here could, with a certain amount of self-justification, have passed by on the other side and said, well, he doesn't belong to me, let the people that he belongs to, let them look after him.

[ 5 : 21 ] I really don't care whether he lives or dies. He could, with a certain amount of self-justification, have passed by on the other side. But no, there was a poor man in need of help, and everything else was forgotten as the good Samaritan crossed the road, got off his horse, and did what he could to help.

And then we see that the Samaritan's mercy was such that he forgot about himself. He didn't remember anything at all about himself. He went to help this man. Inconvenience to himself, he didn't worry about it.

Even personal danger. They were forgotten and ignored. He could easily have said, look, I'm in a hurry, I'm in a bit of a rush to get to Jericho, I've got business to attend to, I want to get there before nightfall.

Or he might have said, I better not go near this man, because I might be accused of robbing and wounding this man. I might be implicated in this offense if I'm found near him, because there's no witnesses, and it's only my word to say that I'm going to help him.

Somebody might come along and think that I'm trying to rob him. And then on the other hand, he might have said, well no, the robbers who have done this to this man, they might be lying in wait. It might be a sort of booby trap to draw other people in, so that they will be able to rob whoever comes to help this man.

[ 6 : 36 ] And then he could have said, no, no, there's nothing I can really do, this man looks dead, and I haven't got that much money on me, I'd better just go and leave him alone. And like the priest and the leaver, he could easily have passed by on the other side.

But no, he was unable to pass this poor man by. He was miserable. And his own interests were pushed into the background in the face of this man's need. He crossed over at once to revive him and to help him.

And then lastly we see that this Samaritan's mercy met the injured traveler at the very point of the injured traveler's need. He did the very things which the sufferer needed to have done for him. And he did these things immediately, without a thought. The wounded man needed to be revived, so that this man probably propped him up and tried to revive him. His wounds needed to be treated, because probably the blood would be flowing, and maybe the flies would be gathering, and this man treated his wound.

He poured oil on it, in order to keep the sunlight out, to keep the dirt out, in order to do things properly. This man would need a drink, and this man, Samaritan, gave him a drink. This man needed to be taken to a place of safety, and that's where he was taken to.

[ 7 : 48 ] This man had lost all his money, so he would have to pay expenses, and that's exactly what this man did. That's exactly what the good Samaritan did, right through that he met the injured traveler at the very point of the injured traveler's need.

That's mercy. Well, in the Old Testament as well, we have examples of mercy in people being merciful. It was mercy in Abraham, after being wronged by his nephew Lot, that made him go and release Lot from his enemies.

Lot had taken the best land, and had done a lot of things that were not really honest against Abraham, and then when he was captured by his enemies, Abraham could easily say, well, it serves the young upstart right.

He could have left him, but he didn't. He gathered all his forces, went and fought against Lot's enemies, and freed Lot from his enemies. And it was mercy in Joseph, after being treated so badly by his own brothers, that made him not hold that against them when they came looking for food. But he gave them food, all the food they needed during a famine, and he never once held anything back. It was mercy in Moses. You remember after Miriam joined with Aaron in rebelling against Moses, and God sent a punishment upon her, she became leprous.

[ 9 : 02 ] But Moses cried out sincerely to God, O God, heal her, I pray. The mercy was overcoming the fact that she had risen up in rebellion against.

And it was mercy in David that caused him to spare Saul's life twice, when he had him at his mercy, and that Saul was chasing him to kill him. But the supreme example of all, the perfect and central example of mercy, and of being merciful, is the sending by God, of his only begotten Son, into this world, and the coming of that Son.

You see, God saw our need. God saw our pitiable condition. He saw our suffering because of sin. And although we had broken his law, although we had rebelled against him, although we went our own way, it was our misery, our pitiful condition, as a result of sin.

God looked on us, and he saw, and he was moved with pity for us. It moved him to action. So Jesus, his Son, came into this world, and dealt with man's condition.

[ 10 : 16 ] And it had to be Jesus. God would have looked around everybody else, the angels, and every other being on this earth, but he finally had to look and see, that to satisfy justice, it had to be the Son of his own bosom, the Son of God.

No other being would do. The Son of God had to die, to satisfy God's own justice. For God's law had been broken, and sin had to be paid for.

So never forget this, that God does not shut his eyes to sin. God shuts his eyes to sin, because it has already been paid for. He never shuts his eyes to unpaid for sin.

Sin has to be paid for. And that is why, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we are able to come, and find our sins already paid for, and God is able to pardon us.

In the death of Jesus at Calvary, we have God's mercy, and God's justice meeting. And both are satisfied. So, as John the Baptist's father, acknowledging the coming of Jesus, says that it was, through the tender mercy, of our God.

[ 11 : 28 ] So, in our examples, of what being measurable means, we see, that mercy is, meeting the need. Not just feeling it, you can feel lots of pity, and compassion, but if you remain sitting, and not doing anything about it, then it's not mercy.

And Jesus says, in the Sermon on the Mount, that those who are measurable, are blessed. They will obtain mercy. He says, blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Now, there's a very, very dangerous thing here, that you might think, and that people might think, that this means, that if they do enough, merciful deeds, then God will have mercy on them.

And thereby, that God, in the great day of judgment, will say, well, they've done so many good things, and so many merciful things, that I, will forgive them, and they are allowed into heaven.

That, is absolutely wrong.

And we must be sure of that. That, that is earning our own salvation, because of what we do. That obtaining, mercy on merit. Because, we have done so many things, that God is able to, to, to bless us.

[ 12 : 35 ] That is, not, what is meant here. So, please remember that. What then does it mean, if it doesn't mean that? Well, in our previous studies, of the Beatitudes, you remember that we have noted, how they follow on, one after the other.

There's order, and progression, in the Beatitudes, in each verse, that Jesus says, there's a specific position, given to each one. And it's very important, that we understand this.

Particularly, in this one. Jesus, you see, has already spoken, of being poor in spirit. He's spoken of mourning. He's spoken of being meek. He's spoken of hungering, and thirsting, after righteousness.

So, as I come, and as you come, to examine this Beatitude, blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. I come, saying, I am poor in spirit. I realize, I have no righteousness, of my own. Before the holiness, of God, I have no righteousness. Face to face, with God, I am helpless. I am in a hopeless condition. I can do nothing. That's what it means, when I come, saying, I am poor in spirit.

[ 13 : 42 ] And in addition to that, because of that, of that condition, that I have seen myself in, I mourn. I mourn, because of the sin, that is in me. I mourn, because I see myself, as I really am, in the face of a holy God.

I mourn, because I see, the blackness, of my heart, that makes me cry. I know what it is, to cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? And I want, more than anything else, to get rid, of my sin and guilt.

And because I again, see myself then, as I really am, and so helpless, and trying, and struggling, to get rid of, my sin and my guilt, I become meek. Because I see, that I have no reason, to be proud. I've got no reason, whatsoever, to be proud. Because I have seen, myself, poor, and I am now mourning. I have no reason, for taking offense, against anybody, when they accuse me, of anything, or they run me down, or they insult me, because I have, I am able to see, and understand, that no matter, how badly, even my worst enemy, thinks of me, is not nearly, as bad, as I really am. So I hunger, and thirst, after righteousness. You see how it is, that you're in that condition, that you feel yourself, of the worst, of the worst, and because of that, you want, to be better.

[ 15 : 02 ] Because you're at rock bottom, you've reached, as it were, the absolute pit, and you want, to come up, out of that. You want, you're hungering, and thirst, after righteousness, that you long for it.

You long to get, some righteousness, and you know, your own inability, to produce, this righteousness. You long, for a right, relationship, with God. You want a new nature, you want to leave, your old nature behind.

You want to, become as it were, new altogether. And it's then, that when you're, full of that great desire, that you see Christ, and you understand, what Christ, has done for you, and you experience, this new life, this payment, this tremendous joy, within you, in Christ.

You are filled, with the preciousness, of Christ. All your own sins, and your, even your righteousness, as everything, is pushed away, because you see, that you depend, absolutely, and only, on the righteousness, of Christ.

But because, he is there, because he died, for you, because he loves you, then, you are filled. Yes, but your hunger, and thirst, goes on all the time.

[ 16 : 09 ] Because, as you get a filling, so you are wanting, more and more, until finally, you will be satisfied, when you meet Christ, face to face, when you are clothed, absolutely, in his righteousness, in glory.

But you are able, to see, that you received, all this, as a free gift, that you are filled, and you receive it, as a free gift, because you come, through the steps, of seeing your own condition, and you see it, as a free gift.

And having come, this far, having seen, and experienced, these things, then my very attitude, changes. Not only my attitude, to myself, but my attitude, to my fellow man, must be different, must be changed.

I don't react, to them in the same way, as I used to. I don't react, to them in a worldly, natural way. No, because, I now, have a Christian eye. I've seen myself.

And so, I'm able to see others, in a new life. I see them, as they really are. And the emotion, that comes out, immediately, is, I pity them.

[ 17 : 14 ] I don't dislike them. I don't hate them. Because I see, that they are people, who we have to be sorry for. They are victims. They are victims, of sin.

They are victims, of a blindness. They are victims, of a lack of understanding. They are slaves, of Satan. They are walking, quite heavily, quite happily, to hell. And I look at them, and I'm lulled over them.

And I'm sorry for them, and I feel merciful, towards them, because of the new attitude, that I have before, that I, the new attitude, that I have now, compared to the attitude, that I had before.

My attitude, towards them, is one of tearful compassion. I see them, where once I was, and would be still, if it were, for the grace, and mercy of God.

Oh yes, you see, I differentiate, between the sinner, and the sin. I hate, everything, that causes, a passion to sin. I hate, everything about them. I hate the drink.

[18:11] I hate the drugs. I hate the pornography. I hate the avarice, the greed, the materialism. I hate every single thing, that takes that passion away, from the Lord Jesus Christ.

But oh, I love the sinner. I love him, because Christ, has put this love, in my heart. I can see myself, as I was before, and now, I see that passion, in the same light, as I myself, was in before.

and I see, that everybody, who is out of Christ, and everybody, is in a state of sin, and I see, that one, as one, who is to be pitied.

Now when I keep saying, I, I mean the Christian here, every one of them, must look at, because this is for the Christian, you must pity, those who are not in Christ. And again, our supreme example, for this, is the Lord Jesus Christ again.

Look at him, on the cross at Calvary. He came into this world, to seek, and to save, that which was lost. Never was there, a person, more merciful. He reached out, to the sick, and he healed them.

[19:18] He reached out, to the crippled, and he gave them strength, to get up and walk. He healed the eyes, of the blind. He healed the ears, of the deaf, and the mouths, of the dumb. He found prostitutes, and tax gatherers.

He found the riffraff, of society, and he drew them, into the circle, of his love. He saved them, and he set them, on their feet. He took the lonely, and he made them, feel loved.

He took little children, into his arms, and he loved them. Never was there, a person, on the face of the earth, with the mercy, of this one. And yet, the man of his day, took him, and nailed him, to a cross.

And there he is, nailed, and suffering agony, on the cross, and every single thing, that he ever had done, was for the good, of his fellow man. He had never done, anything that was wrong, or even in the remotest, way questionable.

It was goodness, from the moment, that he came, into this world, till the moment, he left it. And yet, there he is, suffering the death, on the cross. And yet, what does he say, as he looks, at those people, who put him there?

[20:25] Father, forgive them. Why? Why forgive them? For they know not, what they do. He pleads, the only argument, that could possibly, be pleaded for them, their ignorance.

Father, they don't know, he said. They don't know. Sin has blinded them. Satan has control, over them. They are the victims, of the power of evil.

Father, they don't know. He said, I'm saying, it's not their fault. They've been overtaken, as it were, by a force, that is greater than themselves. Father, they don't know.

Forgive them. That's what Jesus is pleading. And these people, are spitting, and throwing things at him, and they've already nailed, his hands, and his feet, to the cross. And then, the first martyr, Stephen, that we read about, in Acts, follows in his Lord's footsteps.

As he is being stoned, to death, he also, is moved by pity, for his murderers, and he cries out, Father, lay not this sin, to their charge. The same thing, he's saying, Father, they don't understand.

[21:35] He has pity for them, and he cries out, for mercy for them. Do you see, our attitude, what it should be? That's a Christian, position, towards people.

And do we see, how this cycle works? God, gives us mercy, mercy, we are merciful, and God, gives us more mercy. The one, who has received mercy, will be merciful.

The one, who has received forgiveness, will be forgiving, and will in turn, receive, continued forgiveness. Well, what it all boils down, what it all comes down to, is this.

If I am not merciful, then, I haven't really understood, the grace, and mercy of God. And I have to ask myself, am I still in my sin?

Am I still unconverted? Am I still unforgiven? Am I still outside of Christ? You see how this Sermon on the Mount, strips us, of all self-made pillows, strips us, of all self-righteousness, and gets down to, actually, showing us a mirror, of ourselves, that makes us flinch?

[22:45] This beatitude is asking you, and asking me, are you merciful? Are you sorry for every sinner? Are you a tremendous pity, for those who are still blind?

Still lost in their sins? Still rushing headlong, into a lost eternity? Does your pity, move you to do something? Does your pity, move you to come, to pray for the lost souls, in the church?

Do you remember them, when you have family worship? Do you set an example, for them, that will guide them, to heaven? Or do you go on, in your own selfish way, not caring, about the lost souls,

around about you?

Then my friend, if you don't care, about the lost souls, around about you, you're selfish, about your own life, then I ask you, have you any right, whatsoever, to call yourself a Christian? You may profess his name, you may come, to the Lord's table, you may attend, a reasonable amount, of services, but are you miserable?

Do you worry, about the lost? Do you worry, about those people, that you see, walking in the street, and they are walking, walking, walking, to the pit of hell? Do you realize, what that means?

[ 23 : 52 ] Do you realize, that all, throughout all eternity, without a break, without an end, ever, ever, ever, they will be, in the flames, of punishment? How can we not, deal with them, in a way, that shows, we understand, the lostness, and what, they are, ignorantly, going on to?

Are you miserable? Does your pity, move you, to give, to the cause, of Christ? Does it make you, move you, to preach, the gospel?

When somebody, asks you, to speak, at something, are you more, concerned about, if you, yourself, make a mess, of it, or something, like that? Or are you, more concerned, about your word, God, using you, to get, his word, across, to somebody else?

And are you, willing to say, Lord, I've got, nothing to give, I can't speak, I can't do anything? But God, tells you, that if you, obey him, then he, will give you, the enabling. This stuttering, stammering, lips, can speak, about redeeming love, no matter, what company, you're in.

Do you, prod, people? Or do you, let them go, their own way? Do you, nudge them, and say, Jesus Christ, loves you, and is calling, for you?

[ 25 : 05 ] And do you pray, for them? This is how F.B. Mayer, talks about mercy. The eyes of mercy, are deep, with compassionate, glasses, full of tears, the homes of prayers.

The feet of mercy, are soft in their tread, for they will not break, the bruised reed, nor quench, the smouldering spark, and the dimly, burning flax. The voice of mercy, is generous, to the fallen, gentle, to the weak, and gracious, to the offender.

From the heart of mercy, soothing balm, flows to the wounds of sinners, of sufferers, and of the world. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Amen. Let us pray. O Lord of heaven and earth, we ask that thou wouldst give us compassionate hearts, and that we would be able to translate the pity that thou dost give us into action.

That we would not be passive in our resistance to the evil that is around us. That we would not remain aloof from the ignorance of our fellow man, but that we would take an active part, and in example, and in actual work, that we would try to show forth the glory of Christ, who alone can save.

[ 26 : 24 ] We thank thee for thy glorious message, and we pray that nothing we would say or do would obscure the glory of Christ, and that we would be able to show forth his glory in a way that will affect our fellow man.

Bless each one of us, and bless all the faithful ministers of thine own word, those to whom thou hast entrusted thine own word. O Lord, give them strength beyond their own natural capacity.

Let them know the power of thy word. Flood their churches, we pray, with the presence of the Holy Spirit, so that men, women, and children will be brought from the darkness of their own sin into the marvelous companionship and light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask in his name. Amen. Amen.