

Blessed Are the Merciful

by Mark Turner

In 'Blessed Are the Merciful', Mark Turner emphasizes the importance of showing mercy as a reflection of God's love and a key characteristic of believers in the Kingdom of God.

Duration: 21:10

Topics: "Kingdom Living", "Christian Compassion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of valuing and treasuring the word of God. They express gratitude for the instruction and revelation found in the Bible, comparing it to nourishing food. The sermon then focuses on Jesus' teachings in the Beatitudes, highlighting the call to live according to the principles of the kingdom of God. The speaker emphasizes the need for compassion and reaching out to the needy, as Jesus did, contrasting it with the attitude of some religious leaders who scorned the lowly and marginalized.

Transcript

No other gods in our life but Jesus. We used to bow down to our own ways and live our own lives and be our own authority and call the shots. And boy, what a mess that got us into, right? But when we turn the control of our life over to our maker and our creator, God's actually doing something good in us and through us and making our life count for Him and for His kingdom.

That's what's exciting about being a Christian. It's worthwhile to be a Christian. There's worth in being a Christian.

There's fulfillment in being a Christian. It's what God designed you to be, was to be a lover and worshipper of Him. When you find Jesus, it all comes together.

It all fits. It all makes sense, right? Didn't make sense before, but it all makes sense now. We know why we're here.

We know where we're going. We know who we are. We have all these questions answered in Jesus Christ.

Our search is over. We found the one that our heart has been longing for. And that's awesome.

What can we say? I'd like you to turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5. We'll be looking at verses 1 through 7, focusing on verse 7 today, but let's read verses 1 through 5 of Matthew. 1 through 7 of Matthew chapter 5. And seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up on a mountain, and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Let's pray. We again consider it a privilege, Lord, to open up your powerful word this morning, God.

Your words are truth. Your words are life. Our manual to live by, Lord, we thank you for the instruction that you give us in your word.

How you reveal yourself to us in your word. Lord, help us to look at your word more and more as something precious in our lives, Lord. Something, Lord, that is our very bread and our food, Lord.

We thank you that your word is sweeter than honey in the honeycomb, Lord, as King David said. And now, Lord, guide us and direct us in this meeting, Lord. We meet you this morning in your word, in Jesus' name, amen.

Okay, Jesus is talking here. And He's saying, Let's go higher, disciples, right? He wants to take them up into a mountain, into a higher place. Let's go higher, disciples.

Come on up, boys. Come on in, men, and let me show you the view. Let me show you God's perspective on how the people who belong to the kingdom of God should be acting, should be behaving.

I should give you a clue in that word, behaving. This is called the Beatitudes, right? How are we behaving when it comes to following Him? The same way 2,000 years later as disciples of Jesus, just like these disciples, the Lord is calling us to come away. He's calling us to come up.

He's calling us up to a higher place to see what it's like to live and be a part of the kingdom of God. Get away from the crowds. Get away from the hustle.

Get away from the bustle. You know, they had been involved in some ministry at this point, but now he's got them alone and kind of cloistered there, and he's going to teach them the ways, again, of the kingdom, important principles of the kingdom. And we need to search our hearts this morning and ask as well, what are our attitudes when it comes to the Beatitudes? And he starts off by saying, blessed are the poor in spirit.

And that word blessed simply means happy. Happy, holy is the Christian who recognizes his utter spiritual bankruptcy apart from God's grace. That's what that means.

He's basically saying, do we have a humble and correct estimation of ourselves, or do we think more highly of ourselves than we ought? Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who sense their own poverty of spirit. As Paul said, I am what I am by the grace of God. That's poverty of spirit, that's poor in spirit, where you recognize that everything you have is from the Lord, and everything you are is because of God.

It's humility. That's a part of the Beatitudes. Are you walking in humility today? Secondly, Jesus said, blessed are those who mourn.

Happy and holy are those who don't take sin lightly in their lives, but grieve and break over their sin, who mourn over it and despise it and seek true change through repentance. God's comfort is for them. It's talking about not our attitude toward grief, per se, but toward sin in our life.

Do we grieve over sin in our life? Do we mourn over that because we've broken God's law and God's heart? We've hurt the Lord, and we mourn over that. We weep over that. We grieve over that, and that should lead us to repentance, godly sorrow leading us to repentance.

And the Lord says, you will be comforted in that when you're broken, and you confess, and you yield to me. I'll comfort you. The Holy Spirit is our comforter.

He went on to say, blessed are the meek. What be our attitude when it comes to self-control? It's basically what he's saying there. Self-control, blessed are the meek.

Are we under the control of God? Are we under the government of God? Are we out of control? We know where that comes from, by being self-willed. Whenever we put our will in opposition to God's will, then at that point, we're no longer meek, are we? We're prideful, and we're stubborn. But blessed are the meek, those who are under the control and government of God.

Actually, the word meek was used by the Greeks to describe a horse that had been broken. So have you been broken, or have you come under his control, the master's control? Or are you bucking the rider, per se? He wants the reins. He wants to rule over us.

And that's a daily decision that we make, to give him our will, right? It's a daily thing. We're not getting born again, again. We're not getting saved again.

We're simply saying, Lord, be the Lord of my thoughts, my words, my actions, and my attitudes. Be the Lord over all of me today. Have control over every area of my life.

I don't wanna be in control, Lord. I want you to control all of those areas. Live through me, love through me, speak through me.

And he will. That's the cool thing about Jesus. He does.

He lives his life through us. I can't live the Christian life, but Jesus can live it through me. But that takes a willing, humble heart, doesn't it? And then he said, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Are we seeking God's righteousness rather than attempting a righteousness of our own, which we do on occasion, right? Maybe every now and then. We often become self-righteous, don't we? In our decisions or, well, I'm right and you're wrong and so forth, or esteeming ourselves higher than we ought. But seeking his righteousness and not our own, Jesus says, will satisfy our hunger and thirst for a right relationship with God.

When you're seeking his righteousness, you'll be filled with more of him. Now in verse seven, we come to the verse that I really want to focus on this morning, and that is blessed are the merciful. Happy, truly joyful, contented, properly fitted and functioning in the body of Christ is the believer who not only has

received God's mercy in his life, but who's also extending that same mercy to others around him as well.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. To those who show mercy, mercy will be given to him in return, right? That's a law of God's kingdom. But the hard and plackable man who deals in stern justice alone will be dealt with in the same way when failure comes in his life.

If you want to be judgmental and stern and all of that, that's going to come back your way. We reap what we sow, right? The Bible says. But if you sow seeds of mercy, you'll reap the fruit of mercy.

James 2.13 says that mercy triumphs over judgment. Mercy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5, what is mercy? We're going to find out this morning.

Mercy is really compassion. Mercy is that compassion which causes one to help the weak, to help the sick, or to help the poor. It's God's love and action in our lives.

It's our faith put to action. It's putting really feet to our faith, if you will. It's a tender concern for others reflected in a desire to treat others gently as the Lord treats us.

That's what mercy is. You know, mercy comes from a very interesting Latin word called misericordia, misericordia. It's composed of two words, miserans, meaning pitting and cor, C-O-R, meaning the heart, or miseria cordis, pain of heart.

That's what it means in the Latin, pain of heart. So a merciful man or woman enters into the miseries of his neighbor and feels for and mourns for him and then does something about it. You just don't empathize with them.

Well, sympathy is one thing. You move from sympathy, where you're kind of distant looking at them, then that moves to empathy, where you start feeling for them. And then you take the next step by doing something about it because faith without works is dead, right? And that's what Jesus is talking about here.

Another definition could be active kindness, not an act of kindness, but active kindness. Kindness in action, kindness that's active, that's not stagnant. Mercy is one of God's important and necessary and critical beatitudes found in those who belong to his kingdom.

I wanna give you some scriptures about what God says about mercy. Exodus 34, five, the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Moses and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands.

When the Lord appeared to Moses, what was the very first thing he declared about himself to Moses that he would declare to the nation of Israel? I am merciful, I'm a merciful God. Proverbs 3.3, let not mercy and truth forsake you, bind them around your neck and write them on the tablet of your heart. Proverbs 14.21, he who despises his neighbor's sins, but he who has mercy on the poor, happy as he.

Proverbs 14.31, he who oppresses the poor reproaches his maker, but he who honors him has mercy on the needy. Proverbs 21.21, he who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor. Hosea 6.6, I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Micah 6.8, he has shown you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you? Three things, to do justly and to what? To love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. We're to love mercy, not just

look at it, not just have good feelings about it, we're to love it and we're to do something about it. Now, of course, Jesus Christ was the very embodiment of mercy, right? All that the Father showed and shared about mercy and shared about compassion and kindness was fully and clearly seen in who? In Jesus.

Jesus said, he that has seen me has seen the Father. Wanna know what the Father's like? Just look at me, Jesus said. So, Jesus not only taught about mercy, he lived mercy.

He was the Messiah of mercy. He was the master of mercy. Matter of fact, for three years, Jesus had the biggest mercy ministry ever seen by man up until that time.

He modeled the Beatitudes for us, didn't he? And then he told us to follow in his footsteps as his church. Again, we are the visible representation of the invisible Christ. How does the world see Jesus? In us, as we follow in his footsteps, they're drawn to the kingdom, they're drawn to salvation, they're drawn to the Lord.

Two such instances of mercy shown by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, which we'll be studying shortly with Pastor Patter found in Matthew 9, 27. When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, son of David, have mercy on us. And when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him and Jesus said to them, do you believe that I'm able to do this? And they said to him, yes, Lord.

Then he touched their eyes saying, according to your faith, let it be to you. And their eyes were opened. Another time Jesus showed mercy was in Matthew 15, 22, where it says, and behold, a woman, and let me add a very concerned mother as well, of Canaan came from that region and cried out to him saying, have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

My daughter is severely demon possessed. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and urged him saying, send her away for she cries out after us.

But he answered and said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshiped him saying, Lord, help me. Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs. And she said, yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith.

Let it be to you as you desire. And her daughter was healed from that very hour. So before we had the movie, The Passion of Christ, we have the script before us here in Matthew, the compassion of Christ, right? Matthew 14, 14 says, when Jesus went out, he saw a great multitude, he was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick.

In Matthew chapter 20, another two pair of blind men came from Jericho saying, Lord, have mercy on us. Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

In Mark 141, a leper came to Jesus, knelt down before him. And it says, Jesus moved with compassion, put out his hand and touched him. And the leprosy left.

And then in Mark 5, remember the fellow who had the legion, who had hundreds or thousands of demons within him and was living in the tombs and was cutting himself day and night and screaming out and

terrified the people all around him. Well, Jesus just didn't pass by that guy. Jesus showed up when that guy ran out and he healed him.

It says, after that, after he healed him, go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how he has had compassion on you. The Lord was moved with compassion when he saw that man demon possessed. I wonder if we have compassion in those who are demon possessed today.

And they're around, folks. Nothing's changed in 2,000 years. But it's become very evident to me in my study in this teaching that three different things came when Jesus was around, help, healing, and hope.

When he showed up on the scene, help, healing, and hope, he reached out to the needy. Compassion is what made Jesus Christ stand out from so many of the religious rulers of the day. You know, many of the religious rulers of that day had come to scorn the lowly, the poor, and the infirmed and to disdain the widows and the fatherless and the orphans.

That's what had happened by this time. That's why Jesus had to show up and straighten things out. But God had warned the people all the way back in Exodus 22, 22 that you shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child because God says in Psalm 146, nine that the Lord watches over the strangers.

He relieves the fatherless and the widow, but the way of the wicked, he turns upside down. In Isaiah 47, six, God spoke through Isaiah to Israel and said that I was angry with my people. I have profaned my inheritance and given them into your hand.

You showed them no mercy. On the elderly, you laid your yoke very heavily. Sad.

Ezekiel 22, six, and speaking of the sins of Jerusalem, look, the princes of Israel, each one has used his power to shed blood in you. In you, they have made light of father and mother. In your midst, they oppressed the stranger.

In you, they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. But Psalm 68, five says that God is a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy habitation. Yet sadly again, by the time Jesus had arrived on the scene, mistreatment of the elderly and the widows and the less fortunate had degraded to all time lows, even to the point where Jesus publicly rebuked the religious leaders in Matthew 23, 14, where he said, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses and for pretense you make long prayers.

You will receive the greater condemnation. Why? They were devouring widows' houses. What does that mean? Scribes back then often served as estate planners for widows, unfortunately, which gave them the opportunity to convince distraught widows that they would be serving God by supporting the temple or the scribe's own holy work.

In either case, the scribe benefited monetarily and effectively robbed the widow of her husband's legacy to her. That's pretty low. That's why Jesus said woe to you for doing something as despicable as ripping off a widow's legacy that her husband has left her.

And again, sadly, not much has changed in 2,000 years. Widows, orphans, and the fatherless are still some of the main victims of physical and emotional abuse and of financial scams and rip-off artists today. Who will defend them? That's the question I wanna ask you today.

Who will defend them? Guess what? Jesus said that the church is to help defend them. We have that mandate from God, but are we responding? 13 years ago, and coming back from Guam as a missionary to work on staff here, the Lord gave me a vision one day while sitting in my office of something that gripped my very soul and has changed my very life. He gave me a vision of elderly people, of disabled and disfigured people, a vision of those bound in wheelchairs, bedridden, demented, diseased, many full of fear, failing in faith, lonely, depressed, discouraged, many just existing for the moment, but still, like back in Jesus' time, crying out and saying, and I could see this clearly in this vision.

I could see this. They were saying, Lord, have mercy on us. I could hear them saying, help me, Lord, help me.

Someone come and help me. And I said to the Lord, what do you mean by this? And he told me to open the blinds to my office, which just happened to look directly at a nursing home on top of the hill near the church there at the vineyard. And he said to me, you go and be my loving arms and hands and feet in loving the unlovable.

You go and touch the untouchables that now call the nursing home their permanent home. Go and give, the Lord told me. Go and show my mercy.

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