

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:7

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "It would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

This is the essence of mercy. Mercy is compassion on someone based on **their need**. It is not justice, for mercy extends compassion on others despite their deserving it. The Bible tells us that God's people should extend mercy to others and then be able to receive mercy in turn. What is our Lord teaching us?

WHEN UNDERSTOOD PROPERLY, BEING MERCIFUL SHOULD BE A NATURAL PART OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

Consider what Jesus has said. In verse three we see a person who realizes that they are unable to save themselves, that they are wretched and sinful. But this quality alone, without the other beatitudes will not lead one to Christ.

But when we add the second beatitude, we can see that the spiritual man will not only realize his spiritual poverty but will also mourn over that sinful condition and desire to have God's healing of his sin sickness.

The meek will gladly be willing to submit their lives to the will of God. This will naturally create this hunger to do the will of the Lord.

Because the Christian has sought after God, based on a realization of his own sinfulness and humbly has submitted his life to God-

- He will not be haughty toward others but will be willing to extend the same kind mercy toward them that he received from God. Mercy here can be equated with the extension of forgiveness.
- This is not a mercifulness that will wink at or condone sin and rebellion against God. Rather, it is the spirit that seeks to extend forgiveness whenever possible. It does not hold a grudge or remember a slight done toward it.

WHAT IS THE BASIS OF OUR EXTENDING MERCY TOWARD OTHERS?

A realization of our utter helplessness before God.

Isaiah 64:6 - *“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”*

Romans 3:9-10 *“What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;”*

We are all under sin, we are all lost without God’s mercy, we all need His forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:7-9 *“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

It is out of our gratefulness for what God’s has done for us that we can forgive others. A realization that our continued mercy extended to us by God is **contingent on our extending mercy toward others**. This is not a grudging “have to” forgiveness of others, but is a willing forgiveness based upon the joy we have in being forgiven.

The New Testament is full of passages that show the relationship between our forgiveness of others and our own forgiveness by God.

Matthew 6:12, 14-15 - *“¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Matthew 18:21-35 Parable of the wicked servant.

James 2:13 - *“For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”* (ESV).

What does mercy imply?

It implies that we do not seek revenge on others who have done harm against us. We do not hold a grudge. We seek no retribution.

Romans 12:19 - *“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

It implies a loving attitude toward those who have transgressed against us and have not sought our forgiveness.

Rom 12:20-21 - *“To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

It implies an eagerness to forgive those who repent and seek forgiveness.

Luke 23:34 - *“And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.”*

Acts 7:59-60 - *“And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

Luke 15:20-22 *“And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him,*

‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.’”

THE GREAT BLESSING - “THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY”

It is a principle that usually holds true in the life. We reap what we sow.

Proverbs 18:24 - *“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”*

A person usually “reaps what he sows” in this life as well as eternity. Galatians 6:7-8. *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

Those who constantly set higher standards for forgiveness toward others than they are willing to hold themselves to will have others extend the same treatment toward them.

The merciful will receive the mercy of God on Judgement Day.

Matthew 6:14 - *“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,”*

When understood in the light of the earlier beatitudes, *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”* issued by the Lord to the faithful in Matthew 25:31-46 is not toward those whom have worked and deserved to be saved. It is toward those who have obediently depended upon the mercy of God and given mercy toward others. They enjoy the blessedness of a Father who has extended mercy toward them.

CONCLUSION

When we show a merciful attitude toward those who have sinned against us, we are merely imitating God. Let us extend mercy toward those who transgress against us.