



Good Hope Baptist Church

Pastor Josh Franklin

Bible Study and Prayer Wednesdays 6:45pm – 8pm

The Beautiful Attitudes pt. 5– *Compassion in Action*

Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

John Macarthur says, “The first four beatitudes deal entirely with inner principles, principles of the heart and mind. They are concerned with the way we see ourselves before God. The last four are outward manifestations of those attitudes. Those who in poverty of spirit recognize their need of mercy are led to show mercy to others (v. 7). Those who mourn over their sin are led to purity of heart (v. 8). Those who are meek always seek to make peace (v. 9). And those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are never unwilling to pay the price of being persecuted for righteousness' sake (v. 10).”

What does Mercy Mean? The basic idea of the Greek word translated *merciful* is "to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable." Mercy is "God's attitude toward those in a state of distress."

Mercy is “Not giving someone what they deserve.”
Grace is “God giving someone what he does not deserve.”

Mercy Is Compassion in Action - We must never imagine that we are merciful because we *feel* compassionate toward someone in distress. Mercy means *active* goodwill. This was well understood by the nineteenth-century preacher who happened across a friend whose horse had just been accidentally killed. While a crowd of onlookers expressed empty words of sympathy, the preacher stepped forward and said to the loudest sympathizer, "I am sorry five pounds. How much are you sorry?" And then he passed the hat. True mercy demands action.

Mercy Is Forgiving - New Testament scholar Robert Guelich has shown that especially in this Beatitude *merciful* describes one who forgives and pardons another who is in the wrong. An inspiring display of this forgiving aspect of mercy in Scripture is that of Joseph to his brothers. The only reason they had not murdered him as a boy was that as they were ready to perform the act, they saw an approaching caravan and decided to sell him into slavery instead. Years later, when Joseph had his guilty brothers literally "at his mercy," he showed them exactly that. There was *compassion* as he wept for their misery, and then *action* as he met their needs. There was *forgiveness* as he restored them all to his grace, saying, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

Why Are the Merciful “Blessed”?

The reason the merciful are blessed is that "they will be shown mercy." The word "they" in the phrase is emphatic: "**Blessed are the merciful, for they [they alone] will be shown mercy.**" Other Scriptures teach the same idea. James says, "**Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful**" (James 2:13). Jesus

himself says, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14, 15).

***We do not earn salvation by being merciful.
We must be saved by God's mercy before we can truly be merciful.***

THE GOOD SAMARITAN – AN EXAMPLE OF MERCY (read Luke 10:29-37) - ³⁶So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" ³⁷And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

THREE CLASSES OF HUMANITY IN THE WORLD:

The Beater-Uppers - The Robbers – BEAT him up!
The Passer-Uppers - The Religious – PASS him up!
The Fixer-Uppers - The Good Samaritan – PICK him up and FIX him up!

The Robbers – What's Your is Mine, and I'll take it!
The Religious – What's Mine is Mine, and I'll keep it!
The Good Samaritan – What's Mine is Yours, and I'll share it!

God is Merciful

Lamentations 3:22 (NKJV) - Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.
(CEV) - The LORD'S kindness never fails! If he had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed.
Ephesians 2:4 - But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

I Am Merciful Because I Have Been Shown Mercy Ephesians 5:1-2 - Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us...

See also James 3:17; Romans 12:8; Colossians 3:12

From D. Martyn Lloyd Jones – Putting the first 5 Beatitudes together

I am poor in spirit – I realize that I have no righteousness; I realize that face-to-face with God and His righteousness I am utterly helpless; I can do nothing. Not only that.
I mourn because of the sin that is within me. I have come to see, as the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit, the blackness of my own heart. I know what it is to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?' and desire to be rid of this vileness that is within me. Not only that.
I am meek, which means that now that I have experienced this true view of myself, nobody else can insult me, nobody else can ever say anything too bad about me. I have seen myself as something truly hateful, and it is because of this that...
I have hungered and thirsted after righteousness. I have longed for it. I have seen that I cannot create or produce it, and that nobody else can. I have seen my desperate position in the sight of God. I have hungered and thirsted for that righteousness which will put me right with God, that will reconcile me to God, and give me a new nature and life. And I have seen it in Christ. I have been filled; I have received it all as a free gift.
Does it not follow inevitably that, if I have seen and experienced all that, my attitude towards everybody else must be completely and entirely changed? If all that is true of me, I no longer see men as I used to see them. I see them as the victims and the slaves of sin and Satan and of the way of the world. I have come to see them not simply as men whom I dislike, but as men to be pitied. I have come to see them as being governed by the god of this world, as being still where once I was, and would be yet but for the grace of God. So I am sorry for them... I see them as the slaves of hell and of Satan, and my whole attitude toward them is changed. And because of that, of course, I can be and must be merciful with respect to them. I differentiate between the sinner and his sin. I see everybody who is in a state of sin as one who is to be pitied. [p.86-87]

Extra Teaching Helps

James 3:17 - But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Romans 12:8 - ...he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Colossians 3:12 - Therefore, as *the elect of God, holy and beloved*, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Story from Kent Hughes

Years ago a small-town merchant had identical twin boys who were inseparable. They were so close that they even dressed alike. It was said that their extraordinary closeness was the reason they never married. When their father died, they took over the family business. Their relationship was considered "a model of creative collaboration."

Because he was busy, one of the brothers neglected to ring up a sale and absentmindedly left a dollar bill on top of the cash register while he went to the front of the store to wait on another customer. Remembering the dollar, he returned to deposit it only to find the bill was gone. He asked his brother if he had seen it, but the brother said he had not.

An hour later he asked his brother again, but this time with an obvious note of suspicion. His brother became angry and defensive. Every time they tried to discuss the matter, the conflict grew worse, culminating in vicious charges and countercharges. The incredible outcome was the dissolution of their partnership, the installation of a partition down the middle of the store, and two competing businesses. This continued for twenty years—an open, divisive sore in the community.

One day a car with an out-of-state license pulled up in front of the stores. A well-dressed man entered one brother's shop and asked how long the store had been there. Learning it had been twenty years, he said, "Then you are the one with whom I must settle an old score."

Some twenty years ago I was out of work, drifting from place to place, and I happened to get off a boxcar in your town. I had absolutely no money and had not eaten for three days. As I was walking down the alley behind your store, I looked in and saw a dollar bill on the top of the cash register. Everyone else was in the front of the store. I had been raised in a Christian home and I had never before in all my life stolen anything, but that morning I was so hungry I gave in to the temptation, slipped through the door, and took that dollar bill. That act has weighed on my conscience ever since, and I finally decided that I would never be at peace until I came back and faced up to that old sin and made amends. Would you let me now replace that money and pay you whatever is appropriate for damages?

When the stranger finished his confession, he was amazed to see the old store owner shaking his head in deep sorrow and beginning to weep. Finally the old man gained control and, taking the gentleman by the arm, asked him to go to the store next door and tell its owner the same story. The stranger complied. Only this time two old men who looked almost identical wept side by side.

R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word – The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 45-46.

I Can Forgive

The late Corrie ten Boom recalled in her book *The Hiding Place* a postwar meeting with a guard from the Ravensbruck concentration camp, where her sister had died and she herself had been subjected to horrible indignities.

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanchéd face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein," he said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!"

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

A man was blinded in an accident. He was a young man, spent most of his life with perfect eyesight. And then in an industrial accident he was blinded. He was bitter, confused, hurt, filled with remorse, confusion. After a while, he knew he had to go to a school for the blind. He dreaded it. But he went into this school, and went into the president's office. The president talked to him and said, "We're glad to have you here. We want to be a friend to you. We want to help you. You can live a very wonderful life, and not as though you had sight, but there are many things that the blind know that others don't know. We're here to help you." Then he said, "There's someone here, an instructor, who's going to show you around the campus." An instructor came in, and they greeted one another and the instructor said, "Come out on the porch with me." They went out on the porch. He said, listen, I just want to help you to get acclimated here. He said, Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to walk you around the campus first of all." He said, "Now we're going to walk down the steps." He said, "There are ten steps." He said, "Count them as we go down. There are ten that go out of this building. Count them. Try to remember how many there are." Then he said, "When we go down the steps, we're going to turn right. And as we turn right, we're going to go out through the garden." And he said, "We're going to walk through the garden, and then we're going to circle the campus." And he said, "I want you to get acquainted." So they began to walk. And he said, "Don't worry." He said, "I'll be right here at your elbow. In case anything goes wrong." That gave the young man some assurance. They went down the ten steps. They turned right. They went out into the garden. They took their time. The man felt the flowers. And smelled them. There was a water fountain there; he got a drink from the water fountain. Then they sat on a stone bench there in the garden. Then they continued their route around. And when they made the entire circuit of the campus, the young man was feeling better. He felt like, you know, I know where I am. I feel a little bit at home.

They said, "Let's go up to the dormitory, where you'll be staying. Let's go in the room." They counted the steps into the room. Showed him where all of the furniture was located, where things were put up, where things were kept. And then said, "Listen, I'm here to help you. I'm here to show you." It won't be too long before you'll catch on.

By this time the young man was feeling at home. He said, "I want to thank you so much. He said, I had so much fear when I came here. But you've been such a friend, you've helped me so much. I want to thank you." He said, "You've been very understanding." He said, "You know, it's hard for someone to understand when you're blind." Oh, he said, "I can understand. I'm blind also." You know, those who have received mercy know how to show it more than anybody else, don't they. If you haven't received mercy, no wonder you don't show mercy.

Mercy and Truth Linked Together [Adrian Rogers]

Psalm 85:10, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." All real mercy is rooted in truth. Now what I mean by that is, to show mercy is not to minimize sin. Mercy is not sentiment. When you show mercy, you withhold judgment. And, when you withhold judgment, that means that judgment is really needed, really expected. Mercy is the withholding of judgment.

Have you ever heard anybody say, **is it fair for God to do this or God to do that?** Or have they ever gotten in the silly discussion with you about whether God is fair or whether God is not fair. Friend, God is not fair. Don't ever expect God to be fair. God is not fair. Now wait a minute. I'm not finished yet. God is not fair. Do you know when I expect somebody to be fair to me, that means I have it coming to me. Give me what I have coming. Be fair. In other words, I deserve this. You see, that's fairness. You give me my part. It's like children arguing about a will. It's not fair that you get this and I don't get that. That's fairness. God doesn't deal with us

on the basis of fairness. God deals with us on the basis of mercy. We don't deserve anything. When a man is looking for fairness, he's not happy when he gets what he deserves, because he figures I deserve it. He's only mad because he didn't get it sooner, and doubly mad if somebody else gets more. I mean, that's the object. That's fairness. God is not fair. God is just and merciful.

The justice of God says that sin must be punished. That is truth. Once you see that truth, then you cry out for mercy, then you cry out for mercy. You see my dear friend, God is not some maudlin sentimentalist who just says, "tut tut, yeah you've sinned, but I'm a merciful god, I'm a merciful god, that's all right." Friend, let me tell you something, if you refuse the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, there's no hope for you.

Don't think you are going to come to the judgment one day. You refused Jesus. You trample under foot the precious blood of Jesus. And then you say, God is merciful. I'll just come to the, I'll just come to the final judgment. **And I'll just stand before God and I'll say, "Well God, that's right. I denied you. I refused you. I cursed you. I ignored you. I went my own sinful way. Here I am at the Judgment. Have mercy Lord."** Do you think you'll get mercy? **Hebrews 10:28-29 (NKJV)** ²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? **Do you think, do you think that Jesus Christ could have died in agony and blood for you, and you sit in a church building like this, and hear a preacher preach about the love of Jesus Christ that He died for you. And then do you think dear friend, that you can walk out without Christ, refuse the Lord Jesus Christ, and trample beneath your the blood of Christ.** You say, I wouldn't do that. You say, Well, I don't want that. I refuse that. **Then do you think you're going to come to the Judgment, and say, "Oh God have mercy"?**

Suppose you get sick. And you call your doctor. And you're doctor comes to you. And your doctor looks very worried. You say, Well doctor, I don't like that look on your face, give it to me straight. The doctor says, I am sorry to tell you this. But you've asked me and I'm going to tell you. I see no hope for you. You are going to die. You say, Well, now wait a minute, doctor. I don't want to die. Doctor, you've got to do something. Isn't there something that the medical art can do that can save my life? And the doctor says, Well I have read of a new serum, a disease, a medicine that may work in your case. It's very, very, very new, and very, very, very expensive. Well, you say, doctor, it's my life. You've got to do something. Well the doctor says, do you have much money? Well no doctor, I don't have any money. But doctor you just can't let me die because I don't have any money. Doctor, can't you do something. And the doctor says, well, let me see what I can do.

You are there in your home, languishing upon your sick bed. After two or three more days, the doctor comes back. His hair is disheveled; his beard has two days growth. His eyes are sunken back into his head with dark circles under his eyes. His clothing is torn. There's blood on his shirt. His hands are trembling. And you look at him and you say "Doctor, what's happened to you. Where have you been?" He said, "I went to get this medicine for you." He said "I went to several foundations and I got some money, but I didn't get enough money." Then he said, "I went to my own bank account, I took all I had out of my own bank account," have you ever known a doctor to do that? And then he said, "I didn't have enough so I mortgaged my house." And then he said, "I got the medicine, and on my way over here, I had my precious son in the car with me, and I was driving in such a way to get to you in time, that I wrecked my automobile. We've had a tragic wreck. The blood that you see on my shirt is the blood of my little boy. My son, I've just come from the morgue, my son has died. But here it is. Here's the medicine, take it, I believe you'll live." Suppose you took that vial medicine, whatever it may have been. Precious as it is, looked at it for a while, and then threw it on the floor, and it broke. And the contents ran out in the rug, never to be retrieved. And then suppose you pointed a finger in the face of that doctor and said, **"Doctor, if I die, it will be your fault. Have mercy on me doctor. Don't let me die."**

You say, that's unthinkable. I'll tell you something else mister. It will be unthinkable for you to come to the final judgment and say, **"O God, have mercy upon me, and don't let me die."** When God put His darling Son on the cross and bankrupt heaven in order to buy you salvation. Amen? Listen to me. Oh listen to me. God is a god of mercy! And if a man despised Moses' law and died under two or three mercy, of how much sorrier punishment, shall he be thought who has trampled beneath his feet the blood of the covenant, counted it an unholy thing, has done despite unto the Spirit of grace. My dear friend, the basis of mercy is truth.

Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller "Little Annie" Locked in a Dungeon

A number of years ago, in a mental institution just outside Boston, Mass., a young girl known as "Little Annie" was locked in the dungeon. This institution was one of the more enlightened ones for the treatment of the mentally disturbed. However, the doctors felt that a dungeon was the only place for those who were "hopelessly" insane. In Little Annie's case, they saw no hope for her, so she was confined to a living death in that small cage which received little light and even less hope.

About that time, an elderly nurse in the institution was nearing retirement. She felt there was hope for all of God's creatures, so she started taking her lunch into the dungeon and eating outside Little Annie's cage. She felt perhaps she could communicate some love and hope to the little girl.

In many ways, Little Annie was like an animal. On occasions, she would violently attack the person who came into her cage. At other times, she would completely ignore them.

When the elderly nurse started visiting her, Little Annie gave no indication that she was even aware of her presence. One day, the elderly nurse brought some brownies to the dungeon and left them outside the cage. Little Annie gave no hint she knew they were there, but when the nurse returned the next day, the brownies were gone. From that time on, the nurse would bring brownies when she made her Thursday visit. Soon, the doctors in the institution noticed a change was taking place. After a period of time, they decided to move Little Annie upstairs. Finally, the day came when this "hopeless case" was told she could return home. But Little Annie did not wish to leave. The place had meant so much to her she felt she could make a contribution if she stayed and worked with the other patients. The elderly nurse had seen and brought out so much in her life that Little Annie felt she could see and help develop something in others.

Many years later, Queen Victoria of England, while pinning England's highest award on a foreigner, asked Helen Keller, "How do you account for your remarkable accomplishments in life? How do you explain the fact that even though you were both blind and deaf, you were able to accomplish so much?" Without a moment's hesitation, Helen Keller said that had it not been for Anne Sullivan (Little Annie), the name of Helen Keller would have remained unknown.

It's not too well known, but Helen Keller was a normal, healthy baby before some mysterious disease left her almost helpless and hopeless. Anne Sullivan saw Helen Keller as one of God's very special people – treated her as she saw her – loved her – disciplined her – played, prayed, pushed and worked with her until the flickering candle that was her life became a beacon that helped light the pathways and lighten the burdens of people all over the world. Yes, Helen Keller influenced millions after her own life was touched by "Little Annie!"