

A CYCLE OF MERCY

Introduction:

This morning we are going to carry on through our series in the Sermon on the Mount.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN HERE THE PAST NUMBER OF WEEKS - WE HAVE LOOKING AT THE BEATITUDES!

So far we are just over halfway through!
8 Beatitudes - and this morning we move on to our 5th Beatitude!

What I want us to do this morning is take time to remember where we have been so far!
AND A GOOD WAY FOR US TO LEARN THESE BEATITUDES IS TO RECITE THEM TOGETHER!!!

So I want to try something this morning - I will take the first part of the Beatitude - IN YELLOW
And if you can finish off the rest of each Beatitude by saying the words written in WHITE!!!

We will go over the first 4 that we have looked at and do this for the next few weeks as we finish off these 8 Beatitudes we have been looking at!!!

OK SO I WILL BEGIN WITH THE FIRST YELLOW SECTION - AND YOU RESPOND WITH THE SECTIONS IN WHITE:

*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 that hunger and thirst after righteousness; **for they shall be filled***
And this mornings:
*Blessed are the merciful; **for they shall obtain mercy***

OK - AND WE WILL DO THIS AGAIN NEXT WEEK - THROUGH UNTIL WE REACH THE END OF THIS SERIES OF BEATITUDES!!!

All of this serves the purpose of helping us to take time and memorise these portions of scripture that we are looking at week after week!

AS WE BEGIN THIS MORNING I WANT TO SHARE ANOTHER PRETTY IMPORTANT AND HELPFUL TRUTH THAT I WAS STUDYING OUT THIS WEEK IN THE BEATITUDES - THEY ARE DISTINCTIVELY BROKEN UP INTO 2 SETS OF 4!!!

The first 4 which we have looked at so far deal with the internal!!

THEY ARE ALL PRINCIPLES THAT RELATE DIRECTLY TO ME - PRINCIPLES OF THE HEART AND MIND! THEY ARE CONCERNED WITH THE WAY I SEE MYSELF BEFORE GOD PERSONALLY AND INTERALLY - RATHER THAN HOW I RELATE TO OTHERS!

Poor in spirit - humility **IN MY LIFE**

Mourning - brokenness, both in the hard times in my life, and can also relate to brokenness and mourning over sin **IN MY LIFE**

Meekness - power under the control of God, giving God the reins **OF MY LIFE!**

Hunger and thirst after righteousness - a deep, longing and desperation to live for Jesus and righteousness - **IN MY LIFE!!**

And so this morning we are going to delving into the 2nd set of 4!!

AND THE SECOND SET OF 4 ARE EXTERNAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE 1ST SET OF 4!!!

And what I want you to see this morning is that there is a direct link between the 1st set and the 2nd set!

Look at the parallel and link between the 2 sets:

The 2nd set that we have are:

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the pure in heart

Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake

And so here are the links between the 2 sets:

*Those that are in poor in spirit/humble - recognise their need of mercy and are led to show mercy to others

*Those who mourn over their sin are led to purity of heart

*Those who are meek always seek to make peace

*Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are never unwilling to pay the price of being persecuted to stand for righteousness sake!!

ISN'T THAT AWESOME!!!

So the truth of the matter is - many of these beatitudes directly link one to another!!!

***THE PERSON WHO IS NOT POOR IN SPIRIT, AND DOESN'T LIVE A LIFE MARKED BY HUMILITY - IS UNLIKELY TO BE MERCIFUL TO OTHERS!**

***THE PERSON WHO DOESN'T MOURN OVER THEIR SIN, ISN'T GOING TO BE 'PURE IN HEART'**

***THE PERSON WHO ISN'T MEEK, ISN'T GOING TO BE SOMEONE WHO PROMOTES AND SEEKS PEACE**

***THE PERSON WHO ISN'T HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, MOST CERTAINLY WON'T WANT TO PAY THE PRICE OF BEING PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE!!!**

And so I begin this morning with a challenge:

MEMORISE THE FIRST 4 BEATITUDES

MEDITATE ON THEM!

And ask yourself this morning - am I portraying these internally focused beatitudes in my mindset and in my heart?

BECAUSE IF YOU ARE NOT - THEN THEY EXTERNAL BEATITUDES THAT WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE PRESENT!!!!

I ask myself, as you ask yourself this morning:

Am I living a life marked my humility? POOR IN SPIRIT

Do I mourn over my sin?

Am I living a life marked by meekness?

Do I truly have a hunger and thirst for righteousness?

IT IS NOW THAT WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE FIRST 4 - THAT WE MOVE ON THIS MORNING TO THE FIRST OF THE EXTERNALLY FOCUSED BEATITUDES!

We want to look at Matthew 5:7 this morning as we preach a message entitled:

A CYCLE OF MERCY

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

So this week - ITS ALL ABOUT MERCY!!

I could start of this message by saying exactly the same thing as I mentioned when we looked meekness!!

WHENEVER PEOPLE THINK OF MEEKNESS - They see it as weakness!!

And there are many in our world today that would say the same thing about MERCY!!!

To show mercy and be merciful to another - especially another that either caused you hurt, or is undeserving of mercy - MANY IN OUR WORLD WOULD SEE IT AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS!!!

One Roman Philosopher said this about mercy:

Mercy is the disease of the soul. It is a supreme sign of weakness. Mercy is a sign that you do not have what it takes to be a real man and especially a real roman.'

YOU THINK ABOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE WHICH RULED AND DOMINATED IN JESUS DAY AND FOR MANY YEARS AND DECADES AFTER!

They were not known at all for being merciful!!!

THE CRUEL, TORTUROUS FORM OF CRUCIFIXION FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT EPITOMISES THAT!!!

LIKE I SAID - The Romans saw mercy as weakness!

AND THEY DIDN'T LIKE TO SEE WEAKNESS IN ANY FORM!!

In fact the Romans were so merciless and sought after strength and power so much that whenever a baby was born - it would be presented to it's father and at that point the roman father would have power to decide whether he wanted the child to live or die:

BASED ON GENDER

BASED ON APPEARANCE

The roman would either:

Put his thumb up - which meant the baby would live

Put his thumb down - which meant the baby would die

THEY CRAVED POWER

THEY CRAVED AUTHORITY

THEY CRAVED STRENGTH

And any sign of weakness would be immediately eradicated!!!

AND THE ROMANS FELT EXACTLY THAT WAY WHENEVER IT CAME TO MERCY!!

Mercy is for the weak

Mercy is for the spineless

Mercy is not for real men

Mercy is not for a real roman

AND SADLY FOR MANY IN OUR WORLD TODAY - They still see mercy the same way!!!

BUT AGAIN WE FIND THAT JESUS CHRIST - FLIPS THE PICTURE!

The way things are in God's Kingdom and from God's perspective is very different and even opposite to the views of much of our world!!!!

Jesus states:

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

THE MERCIFUL ARE BLESSED

The merciful are the happy ones!!

And the promise that is made to those who show mercy - is that they will obtain mercy!!!

AND WE WILL GET INTO THAT PROMISE A LITTLE LATER IN THE MESSAGE!!!

But really this morning I want us to take time and get a Biblical understanding of exactly what Jesus is saying in this beatitude!

AND TO DO THAT - WE NEED A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF 'MERCY' AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE 'MERCIFUL'!!!

And so the first point that we want to look at this morning is:

1. Mercy Defined

I guess a very good place to begin this study on mercy is to define it!!

WHAT DOES THE WORD 'MERCIFUL' MEAN THAT JESUS USES HERE IN OUR BEATITUDE?

As we have done with all of the other beatitudes so far it is always good to look at the root of this word, and the word as it is used in the original languages!!!

THIS WAY WE CAN GET A FULLNESS OF EXACTLY WHAT THIS WORD 'MERCY' REALLY MEANS!!!

The dictionary definition for the word mercy is:

'compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; compassion, pity, or benevolence.'

Secondary definition:

'the discretionary power of a judge to pardon someone or to mitigate punishment'

THAT IS ACCURATE OF THE IDEA THAT WE HAVE IN OUR MIND WHENEVER IT COMES TO THE WORD MERCY - AND THAT IS PART OF THE MEANING BEHIND THE WORD THAT JESUS USES HERE IN THIS BEATITUDE!!!

But the biblical meaning of the word 'mercy' goes deeper and is richer than just feeling compassionate and benevolent!!!

HERE IS THE ORIGINAL WORD USED:

Eleemon (Greek) - *to sympathise, to have pity*

The Hebrew equivalent for this word however paints and even fuller picture!!!

AND IT BRINGS TRUE RICHNESS TO WHAT GOD WANTS US TO BE!

And the kind of mercy that God wants us to share!!

Chesedh (H) - *the ability to get right inside other people until we can see things with their eyes, think things with their mind and feel things with their feelings*

*it demands a deliberate effort of the will and mind

Barclay - A sympathy which is not given, as it were, from outside, but which comes from a deliberate identification with other people, until we see things as they see them, and feel things as they feel them.

AND THAT IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF MERCY THAT GOD DESIRES WE DEMONSTRATE TOWARD OTHERS!!!

A mercy that isn't only compassionate and shows pity!!!
BUT A MERCY THAT DILIGENTLY ATTEMPTS TO GET INSIDE THE OTHER PERSON AND:
Feel their emotions
See things from their perspective

Or as Barclay says:

To see things with their eyes
To think things with their mind
To feel things with their feelings

TO MAKE THE EFFORT TO GET IN TUNE AND IN SYNC WITH THE OTHER PERSON - AND THAT IN TURN HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND:

Why that person acted like they did
Why they said what they said
Why they think what they think

If we take the time to think about the word 'sympathy' which is very closely linked to this idea of mercy - WE CAN GET AN EVEN FULLER GRASP OF WHAT IS REQUIRED OF US:

Sympathy is made up of 2 root word:

'**Syn**' - together with

'**Paschein**' - to experience or to suffer

'**Sympathy**' - experiencing things together with other people, going through what they are going through

**Barclay - 'This is precisely what many people do not even try to do. Most people are so concerned with their own feelings that they are not much concerned with the feelings of anyone else.'*

If we are honest with ourselves - we don't always take the time to do this!!
WE DON'T TAKE THE TIME TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PERSON - THAT WE NEED TO BE MERCIFUL TOWARDS!!!

Maybe that is someone who wronged you
Maybe someone that upset you
Maybe someone that offended you
Maybe someone you love, that said something in anger
Maybe the actions of a stranger in the street that you don't know

AS HUMAN BEINGS WE ARE VERY QUICK TO JUDGE
WE ARE VERY QUICK TO CONDEMN
WE ARE VERY QUICK TO ANGER
VERY QUICK TO COME TO NEGATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Especially in circumstances whenever someone else affects our life negatively through their:
Actions
Words
Deeds

As Barclay stated - we are often so concerned with our own feelings that we often aren't concerned enough about the feelings of others!

We think about what that person did
RATHER THAN WHY THEY DID IT, AND WHAT CAUSED THEM TO DO IT

RATHER THAN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THEIR LIFE, AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM, TO CAUSE THEM TO THINK THE WAY THEY DO, AND LIVE THE WAY THEY LIVE!!

REALLY - If we took the time to display biblical mercy - 'chesedh' as the original word is - we would be able to:

See things as they do

Think as they think

Feel as they feel

AND GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHY THAT PERSON IS WHO HE IS, AND WHY HE DOES WHAT HE DOES!!!

To often we are so consumed with self - and focused on ourselves - THAT WE DON'T TAKE ENOUGH TIME TO SEE THINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE AND VIEW OF ANOTHER!!

When we take the time to do that - IT HELPS US TO THEN - BE MERCIFUL IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE OF THE WORD!!!

To have compassion - to someone who hurt or grieved us in some way

To pity another - that is going through a tough time

To show benevolence

AS CHRISTIANS ESPECIALLY THAT KNOW JESUS - THIS IS SOMETHING WE NEED TO WORK AT MORE THAN EVER!!!

Our world needs people that display this kind of mercy!

PEOPLE THAT CARE MORE ABOUT OTHERS FEELINGS THAN THEIR OWN

PEOPLE THAT TRY TO SEE THINGS FROM OTHERS PERSPECTIVE, NOT JUST FOCUSING IN OUR OURSELVES

People that have mercy

People that have compassion

People that display sympathy!!

THAT TAKE TIME TO GET IN SYNC WITH SOMEONE ELSE:

What they're feeling

What they're thinking

What they're going through

AND TRY AND TRULY UNDERSTAND THINGS FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW - Not just our own!!

HAVING THIS KIND OF ATTITUDE WOULD DRASTICALLY CHANGE OUR WAY OF LIFE!

It would change the way we respond to grievances

It would change the way we respond to the offence of others

It would change the way we respond to the hurt that others cause

It would change the way we respond to the way others think and the things that they do which effects our lives!!

Having this attitude would:

***MAKE FORGIVENESS AND TOLERANCE EASIER**

Let's be honest:

Forgiveness isn't always easy to give!

Tolerance isn't always easy to have!

But if I truly display this biblical kind of mercy that 'gets inside other people' - IT CAN ONLY HELP ME TO BE FORGIVING AND TOLERANT!!!

KEY THOUGHT - There is always a reason why people think and act like they do - if we knew that reason it would be so much easier to understand and sympathise and forgive

French Proverb - *to know all is to forgive all*

*but we will never 'know all' until we make a deliberate effort/attempt to get inside that persons mind

SO THAT IS - MERCY DEFINED:

In it's simplest form:

Mercy = compassion, pity

In it's most intricate form it involves even more:

Chesedh (H) - *the ability to get right inside other people until we can see things with their eyes, think things with their mind and feel things with their feelings*

AND EVEN IN JUST DEFINING THE WORD 'MERCY' - WHAT A CHALLENGE THAT BRINGS!!

Am I truly going this?

Is this the way I deal with others?

Trying to see things from their perspective?

Think as they think

See as they see

Feel as they feel

AND IN TURN - DO I THEN LET THAT HELP ME - IN BEING MORE FORGIVING AND MORE TOLERANT IN MY DEALINGS WITH OTHERS?

But let's move on this morning:

2. Mercy Illustrated

Throughout the Bible there are many vivid illustrations of mercy!!

Many different people in the Bible that demonstrate for us what we should be doing, and the mercy that should mark our dealings with others.

I JUST WANT TO LOOK AT A FEW THIS MORNING:

One of the greatest passages in the Bible where we can see mercy extended - IS IN LUKE 10!!!

We see the story of the Good Samaritan:

JEWISH MAN TRAVELLING FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO

He is left for dead when thieves attack him!

They stripe him of his clothes

Take his possessions

Leave him beaten and wounded

HALF DEAD THE BIBLE SAYS

The story continues that 3 different people come across the hurting, wounded, beaten man:

PRIEST - He passed by on the other side

LEVITE - Came and looked on him, before passing by on the other side

Lastly:

SAMARITAN - He had compassion on him

Luke 10:33-35 - *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 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. 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.*

TO GIVE YOU SOME BACKGROUND:

Jews and Samaritans didn't get along!
The Jews didn't like the Samaritans

IN GENERAL THE JEWS SAW THE SAMARITANS AS HALF-BREEDS!!

They weren't purely Jewish!
Their heritage was tainted!

AND THE JEWS ACTUALLY REFERRED TO THE SAMARITANS AS DOGS!!!

So as we think of our story:

The Samaritan shouldn't have had much motivation to want to help the Jewish man!!

IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE LOOKING AT THE STORY FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE IF:

The Priest helped him
The Levite helped him

But the Samaritan?

HE HAD MANY REASONS NOT TO HELP
NOT TO SHOW COMPASSION
NOT TO BE MERCIFUL!!

Yet Jesus sums up the whole story in v.36-37 like this:

Luke 10:36-37 - *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

Luke 10:37 - the Good Samaritan showed mercy when there were many reasons he could have given not to

He showed 'chesedh'

He got inside the mindset and the life of the beaten up Jew!

Was able to sympathise

Was able to offer compassion - where many other Samaritans may not!!

He let himself:

Feel as the beaten man felt

See as the beaten man saw

AND IT MOVED HIM TO ACTION!!!

His mercy moved him to help!

To show compassion

To show love and tenderness

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT BIBLICAL MERCY LOOKS LIKE!!

To feel deeply for another - so much so that it can't help but move us into action!!!

FRIENDS - True biblical mercy - WILL ALWAYS MOVE US TO ACTION!

And that is what we see in every illustration!!

Firstly the good samaritan!

SECONDLY:

God Himself!!!

GOD HIMSELF IS THE GREATEST ILLUSTRATION OF MERCY BEING DEMONSTRATED:

2 Corinthians 1:3 - *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

He is that Father of mercies. And as Father of mercies look at what Ephesians 2:4 tells us:

Ephesians 2:4-6 - *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

WHAT AMAZING VERSES!!!

God who is rich in mercy!!!

TOOK ACTION!!!

He didn't leave us helpless

He didn't leave us hopeless

He didn't leave us hell bound!

BUT RATHER - HIS MERCY MOVED HIM TO ACTION!

And His mercy moved Him to step into our broken, merciless world - IN THE FORM OF JESUS!!!!

And through this act - whenever we place our faith and trust in Jesus - HE MOVES US FROM DEATH TO LIFE!!!

'We were dead in sins'

'Hath quickened us together with Christ'

'Hath raised us up together and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'

WHAT INCREDIBLE MERCY THAT IS!!

And there is no greater illustration of 'chesedh' than that:

Chesedh (H) - *the ability to get right inside other people until we can see things with their eyes, think things with their mind and feel things with their feelings*

In order to get right inside the mind of humanity

To see with their eyes

Think with their mind

Feel with their feelings

GOD LITERALLY CAME INSIDE HUMAN KIND - AND TOOK ON HIMSELF HUMAN FORM IN THE PERSON OF JESUS!!!

He felt how we felt

He experienced what we experience

He suffered as we suffer

He saw as we see

AND IN THE GREATEST ACT OF MERCY GOD GOT RIGHT INSIDE THE MINDSET OF HUMANITY BY BECOMING MAN! IN THE PERSON OF JESUS!!!

And furthermore - He went on to demonstrate the greatest act of mercy the world would ever see -
IN OFFERING US HIS LIFE! SACRIFICING HIMSELF ON THE CROSS FOR THE VERY SINS
OF ALL HUMANITY!!!

And to offer us hope!
To offer us life
To offer us forgiveness and redemption
To offer us relationship!!

AND REALLY - We have done nothing to deserve such mercy!

On our side - there is nothing that we can boast of - to be able to say that we have earned and
deserve the mercy of God!!!

YET GOD EXTENDS THAT MERCY TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US!!

That we can all know life, hope, forgiveness, redemption and relationship through Jesus!!!
If we will simply place our faith and trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross!
REALISING THAT WE ARE UNDESERVING
REALISING THAT WE ARE HELPLESS
REALISING THAT WITHOUT HIM WE ARE LOST AND HELL-BOUND!

And throw ourselves upon his mercy and love!!!

Never a truer song can be sung today than:

Mercy there was grace and grace was free
Pardon there was multiplied to me
There my burdened soul found liberty
At Calvary

WHAT INCREDIBLE MERCY GOD SHOWED FIRST IN BECOMING ONE OF US
AND SECONDLY IN DYING FOR US!!!

**And now for every single one of us - JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF
MERCY THAT WE HAVE!**

And we strive to emulate his example:

Hebrews 2:17 - *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he
might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the
sins of the people.*

HE IS OUR MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST
HE CAME TO THIS EARTH AND BECAME LIKE US
TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR OUR SINS!

So that we could know Him personally and know forgiveness and relationship with Him - through
the His merciful, selfless death on the cross!!!

JESUS/GOD HIMSELF SHOWED US VIVIDLY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE MERCIFUL!

To get right inside the mind of another!

And as He showed mercy to us - He now challenges us to show mercy to one another!!!

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE!

JESUS IS OUR MOTIVATION!

JESUS IS THE ONE THAT HELPS US TO DO THAT FOR OTHERS, BECAUSE WE REALISE HE
DID THAT FOR US!!!

As Jesus:

Loved us
Had mercy on us
Forgave us!

SO TO NOW - With others (especially my fellow christian) I must strive to:

Love them
Have mercy on them
Forgive them

AS JESUS CHRIST LOVED, HAD MERCY AND FORGAVE ME!!!

We could go on with many incredible illustrations of mercy, both in God's Word, and through men and women of God down throughout history!

BUT THERE IS NO ILLUSTRATION OF MERCY GREATER THAN JESUS HIMSELF

And no motivation greater than that which is found in Jesus!!

JESUS ILLUSTRATED AND EPITOMISED MERCY!

AND NOW JESUS COMMANDED AND DESIRES THAT WE LIVE LIVES MARKED BY MERCY ALSO!!!

Lastly today as we are finished:

3. Mercy Explained/Expanded

Throughout the Bible we are commanded to show and extend mercy:

Colossians 3:12 - *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

I want to close out by expanding our understanding of how we can be 'merciful'

2 thoughts:

a. Mercy involves action

WE SEE THIS IN THE GOOD SAMARITAN:

Mercy moved him to action

Cared for the wounded Jewish man
Clothes him
Housed him
Fed him
Asked for regular reports regarding his well-being

MERCY INVOLVES ACTION!!!

Friends - if we are going to truly live out biblical mercy - **it isn't an emotion which remains internal - it moves us to external action to help others!**

BEST WAY TO BE MERCIFUL - ACT! DO! MERCY IS ABOUT ACTION/ MERCY INVOLVES ACTION

Through physical acts!

As Jesus commands:

Feed the hungry
Clothe the naked

Visit the sick and imprisoned
Give any other practical help that is needed

MERCY INVOLVES ACTION!
Mercy moved the Good Samaritan to action
Mercy moved God into action
Mercy moved Jesus into action
And mercy should move us to action!!

But 2nd and just as important:

b. Mercy involved a change in attitude

If I truly put on a mindset of mercy and displaying mercy to others - IT WILL CHANGE MY ATTITUDE!

It will change how I act and how I feel towards others!!!

PUTTING ON BIBLICAL MERCY WILL HELP ME TO KEEP UNGODLY ATTITUDES AWAY FROM MY HEART AND MIND:
Mercy doesn't hold grudges
Mercy doesn't hold unforgiveness
Mercy doesn't hold hatred
Mercy doesn't hold malice and envy
Mercy doesn't hold jealousy
Mercy doesn't harbour resentment
Mercy doesn't take advantage of others
Mercy doesn't publicly humiliate another

John MacArthur puts it this way:

'The vindictive, heartless, indifferent are not subjects of Christ's Kingdom. When they pass need by on the other side, as the priest and Levite did in the story of the Good Samaritan, they show they have passed Christ by'

REALLY WE SHOULD BE ASKING OURSELVES - WHICH CHARACTER IN THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE ARE YOU?

Would you be the good samaritan who goes out of his way to know mercy to someone that he has numerous reasons not to?

Or would you be like the priest and levite who are too self-consumed with their own lives and their own feelings - TO SHOW MERCY TO ANOTHER!!!

Friends:
Mercy shows pity
Mercy shows understanding
Mercy shows forgiveness
Mercy shows love
Mercy shows care and compassion
Mercy wants to share another's burden
Mercy offers help and counsel where possible

TRUE, BIBLICAL MERCY:
Involves Action
Involves a change in attitude

It is likely if you struggle with:

Bitterness

Jealousy

Grudge-holding

Hatred

Unforgiveness

Malice

Resentment

YOU NEED THIS MESSAGE!

YOU NEED TO DO BUSINESS WITH JESUS TODAY - AND ASK HIM TO HELP YOU CULTIVATE A HEART AND MIND AND LIFE MARKED BY MERCY!!!

Because in the heart of the merciful - there is no place for these things!!!

MAY WE STRIVE TO PUT ON MERCY

AND PUT OFF ALL THESE OTHER DESTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES!!!

Conclusion - GOD'S CYCLE OF MERCY!

As we close - what we see promoted throughout the Bible and especially here in our beatitude is what I call - A CYCLE OF MERCY!!!

'We cannot have the blessing apart from the blesser. We cannot even meet the condition apart from the One who has set the condition. We are blessed by God when we are merciful to others, and we are able to be merciful to others because we have already received salvation's mercy. And when we share the mercy received, we shall receive mercy even beyond what we already have' - John MacArthur

Let me break down exactly what that quote is saying:

FOR US AS CHRISTIANS - WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THE SAVING MERCY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!!!

The mercy of God that was given freely through the person of Jesus on the cross!!
AS CHRISTIANS - WE HAVE PERSONALLY RECEIVED THAT MERCY FROM GOD!!!

And it is that mercy that now ought to motivate us to show mercy to others!!!

AS CHRIST WAS MERCIFUL - HE COMMANDS US TO BE MERCIFUL
AS CHRIST FORGAVE - HE COMMANDS US TO FORGIVE
AS CHRIST LOVED AND CARED - WE ARE TO LOVE AND CARE!!!

And so the cycle of mercy continues!!
WE KNOW PERSONALLY THE SAVING MERCY OF GOD!
NOW WE ARE CALLED TO BE MERCIFUL - AS HE WAS MERCIFUL!!!

And the great promise of this beatitude is that - WHENEVER WE DEMONSTRATE MERCY IN OUR OWN LIVES - TO OTHERS - GOD IN TURN WILL BESTOW MERCY UPON MERCY TO US!!!

At first we knew His **saving mercy!**
Which caused us to strive to be merciful to others
Which then continues the cycle of mercy - in that we then continuously experience - **GOD'S SUSTAINING MERCY** - THROUGHOUT OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE!!!

That as we are merciful to others - we will receive greater mercy still from the hand of Almighty God in our everyday life as a christian!!!

ARE YOU GOING TO CONTINUE THE CYCLE OF MERCY?

Are you going to be merciful to others as God, in Christ, showed you mercy?

John MacArthur shares a great challenge in saying:

'Mercy to others is a mark of salvation. When we do not show it, we may be disciplined until we do. When we hold back mercy, God restricts His flow of mercy to us, and we forfeit blessing. The presence of chastening and the absence of blessing attend an unmerciful believe'

WHAT A SOBERING THOUGHT THAT IS!

When we hold back mercy - God may restrict His flow of mercy to us and we forfeit blessing!

NOTE - **This isn't speaking of mercy in salvation** - that is already settled!

But mercy in sanctification! That is - mercy in living out the every day christian life!

I close with this even more challenging thought, and it ought to motivate us as we think of the mercy we have already been given - and the mercy which we should freely seek to extend to others:

'If we have received from a holy God unlimited mercy that cancels our unplayable debt of sin - we who had no righteousness but were poor in spirit, mourning over our load of sin in beggarly, helpless condition, wretched and doomed, meek before Almighty God, hungry and thirsty for a righteousness we did not have and could not attain - it surely follows that we should be merciful to others!' - MacArthur

FRIENDS - God is rich in mercy toward us!! NOW IT IS OUR TURN IN THE CYCLE TO BE RICH IN MERCY TOWARD OTHERS!!!

To show mercy to others as God showed us mercy!!!

AND THE INCREDIBLE PROMISE OF GOD IS THAT HE WILL BESTOW YET MORE, CONTINUAL SUSTAINING MERCY, THAT WILL FLOW INTO OUR EVERY DAY CHRISTIAN LIFE!!!

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy