

# Blessed Are The Merciful

## Matthew 5:7

### Introduction

We have been watching the progression of the Beatitudes. First a man must be broken and miserable in his sin. But God promises to lift up the humble and feed the hungry. We must remember that this Beatitude, like all the others, is not a natural personality trait. It is a spiritual grace. This is spiritual, Christ-like mercy, and the man who has this grace is truly blessed. The recipients of His mercy are able themselves to extend mercy and are required to do so. But we must be wary of the misuse of this passage; it is not a warrant for works-based salvation.

### The Definition and Weight of Mercy

Col 3:12 describes mercies as ‘tender’, that is, coming from your guts. Thomas Watson defines mercy as “...a melting disposition whereby we lay to heart the miseries of others and are ready to be instrumental for their good.”

**Contrasts to Mercy** – It is not religious sacrifice (Matt 9:10-13). It is the opposite of gnat-straining (Matt 23:23-24), a preoccupation with trifles. This passage teaches that there is a hierarchy in the law and that mercy is a weighty matter. Great curses are brought upon those who do not have mercy (Ps 109:6-16). There is also a distinction between grace and mercy. Grace is associated with men in their sin, and mercy is associated with men in their misery.

**God’s Character** – His tender mercies are over all His works (Ps 145:9) and He always has shown mercy to those who are merciful (Ps 18:25).

**Examples** – Of course, the story of the Good Samaritan stands out as a shining example of mercifulness (Luke 10:25-37). Notice verse 33 – Mercy sees the distress, has a heart of compassion, makes an effort to help, and does so in spite of enmity. But our crowning example is God Himself in the sending of His Son (Luke 1:78).

**Earning Mercy?** The carnal mind is tempted to turn this teaching on its head.

**Context** – Remember the progression of the Beatitudes. This broken man does not think he has earned anything.

**A Contradiction in Terms** – How can you earn mercy? It would no longer be mercy – it would be “Blessed are the merciful for they shall earn what they deserve.”

**Saved to Good Works** – Scripture certainly teaches a correspondence between faith and works (Eph 2:8-10). It is not faith by good works, but faith to good works. “Blessed are the fruit trees, for they shall obtain a crop.” We are taught that we reap what we sow, and faith without works (James 4:17) is like mercy without mercy. Saying that you are merciful without acting merciful, is dead mercy. It receives condemnation (Matt 25:42).

**Pragmatic Consideration** – If we earn mercy by showing mercy, heaven will be empty.

Christ is teaching that no one receives mercy without true repentance, which of course necessitates extending mercy (Mic 6:8).

### Types of Mercy

**Soul-Mercy** – This is God’s chief mercy towards us, and should be ours towards others. Consider the state of the lost. It is hateful to remain silent (Lev 19:17). We must faithfully, gently and plainly extend the gospel from the Word of God (Luke 11:52, 1 Cor 2:2).

**Physical-Mercy** – It is easy to say “I’ll pray for you” (James 2:14-17). The scripture is loaded with instruction in this regard (Matt 15:32, Lev 25:35, Deut 14:28-29, 1 Tim 6:17-18, James 1:27).

### Rules for Mercy

**A Cheerful Giver** - Your heart ‘must not be grieved’ (Deut 15:10) when you give.

**Godly Mercy From God** - It must be done in and for Christ (Tit 1:15-16).

**Without Arrogance** - It must be done in humility (Matt 6:2).

**Responsible Giving** - It must be done prudently (Ps 112:5, Jude 22).

**Commanded to be Merciful** – The commandment is clear (Col 3:12) and in some pale way, we are reflecting the delights of God (Mic 7:18). Tender hearts reveal that we have the love of Christ in us (1 John 3:17) and so we should examine our hearts. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said “What makes me merciful is the grace of God. But the grace of God does make me merciful. If I am not merciful, there is only one explanation; I have never understood the mercy of God, I am outside of Christ. I am in my sins, unforgiven.”