

## Seeing the Needy and Seeing God: The Beatitudes, pt. 3

### Matthew 5:7-8

I. What do you see? “If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light

A. “Blessed are the merciful...” they gaze at suffering people and take the suffering into their heart... they allow themselves to feel deeply the pain of others; when they are sinned against, they have no desire for revenge... rather, they gaze at the sinner with eyes of compassion and love to bring relief through forgiveness

WILLFUL IGNORANCE... the great obstacle to compassion; “I never knew”

B. Blessed are the pure in heart... their eyes will someday gaze on God’s glorious face

II. An Introduction to the Beatitudes

A. “Beatitudes” = Only this person is truly happy and truly approved

B. The quest of happiness... universal concern

C. Beatitudes a survey of true Christian character

#### General Lesson of Beatitudes

1. **ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE LIKE THIS** (not just “saints”)

2. **ALL CHRISTIANS ARE MEANT TO MANIFEST ALL OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS, ALL THE TIME** (not just “poor in spirit”, or “meek”)

3. **NONE OF THESE DESCRIPTIONS REFERS TO A NATURAL TENDENCY IN ANY PERSON!** Only the Spirit can produce them

D. Fundamental Difference between Christian & Non-Christian

**BOTTOM LINE:** Xian/Non-Xian belong to two entirely different Kingdoms

III. The Beatitudes

**A. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."**

**B. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."**

**C. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."**

1. Meaning of Meekness

Illus.: tamed horse... bronco-busting; Western heroes!!

Def'n: Meekness is power under control for the benefit of others

SELF-CONTROLLED DESIRE TO SEE OTHERS' INTERESTS ADVANCE AHEAD OF YOUR OWN

**D. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied."**

1. Most certain test of salvation... WHAT DO YOU LONG FOR?

Lloyd-Jones: "If this verse is to you one of the most blessed statements in all of Scripture, you can be quite certain you are a Christian. If it is not, then you had better examine your foundations again."

2. What is RIGHTEOUSNESS?

a. HUNGER & THIRST FOR SALVATION RIGHTEOUSNESS

b. HUNGER & THIRST FOR SANCTIFICATION RIGHTEOUSNESS

Summary: First four have all shown human need and lack... they are all also inner characteristics which are preparatory for the last four... the first four are the start of the work of God's grace on a soul... the last four see the completion of this work

**E. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."**

1. Jesus' world like ours: unmerciful

a. Romans absolutely despised mercy & saw it as a weakness

b. Jewish religious leaders also had nothing but contempt for it (woman caught in adultery)

c. Jesus' death a combination of political merciless [ROMANS] and religious mercilessness [JEWS]

LONG AND BEAUTIFUL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH... A HISTORY OF MERCY

Relief for the poor... care for the sick... hospitals built... orphans sheltered... sinners forgiven

2. "Mercy" in the heart of God:

a. context is SIN... position of total weakness, connected to begging

b. ONE NEVER **DEMANDS** MERCY... one can only beg for it

c. consistently connected with the very heart of God:

***Exodus 34:5-6 "The the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with Moses and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.'"***

d. his mercy is eternal, as Psalm 136 tells us again and again... 26 times it tells us

***"His mercy endures forever"***

e. mercy is God's motive for forgiving sin

***Isaiah 55:6-7*** *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

***Lamentations 3:22-23*** *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

3. Jesus: Mercy incarnate

a. Merciful miracles

***Matthew 9:27*** *"As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!'"*

***Matthew 15:22*** *"A Canaanite woman came to him crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession.'"*

***Matthew 17:14-15*** *"When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 'Lord, have mercy on my son,' he said. 'He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water.'"*

THEREFORE: mercy here deals with alleviating physical suffering because of Jesus' heart of compassion

b. Merciful precepts

***Matthew 9:10-13*** *"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and 'sinners' came and ate with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?' <sup>12</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

[When the Pharisees condemned the disciples for eating grain on the Sabbath]

***Matthew 12:7*** *"If you had learned what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent."*

***Luke 15... the Prodigal Son... a beautiful demonstration of mercy in action***

c. Merciful atonement

***Titus 3:4-5*** *"But when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."*

4. DEF'N: What is "mercy" and how is it different from grace?

- a. frequently synonymous... BUT
- b. grace is a loving response when the opposite of love is deserved
- c. mercy is a loving response prompted by someone's misery and helplessness
- d. grace answers to the undeserving; mercy answer to the miserable

Illus. Mercy deals with fruit of sin, grace with sin itself

5. Mercy and compassion: STRONG LINK

- a. compassion marries your heart with heart of another

***Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn."***

- b. out of that compassion comes forgiveness for the sinner, help for the needy

***Hebrews 4:15-16 We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."***

- c. compassion comes out of shared experiences... we know what it is to suffer as a sinner, so we can be merciful to others

6. LOGICAL FLOW: How does being merciful fit into the Sermon

- a. spiritual beggars cannot BUT be merciful to other sufferers
- b. the Pharisees had no mercy, because they felt they needed none

***Luke 7:47 "He who is forgiven much loves much; he who has been forgiven little loves little."***

- c. we are so ready to forgive others because we know how much God has forgiven us
- d. THEREFORE, we can actually LOVE mercy

***Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***

We actually wrap our love up with the state of another... we feel the same need they have, and when it is relieved, we feel the same joy... we're not just to be merciful, we're to LOVE mercy

- 7. Spiritual beggars see all things spiritually... we appraise every situation as directly related to man's spiritual problem... mercy NOT desire to ignore sin

Illus.: 100 years ago, most "merciful acts" done by Christians in name of Christ; now many are done by non-Christians; liberals in Hollywood consumed by desire to minister to AIDS patients... but not to deal truthfully with root cause of sin; Christians should do both

### 8. RESULT: They will receive mercy (Judgment Day)

a. NOT to be interpreted legalistically:

"The only way to obtain mercy from God is to show it to others..."

b. NO... if you are truly saved, mercy will flow from you

**Matthew 18:33** *"Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"*

9. DIAGNOSIS: How merciful are you?

- a. When you see the misery of another sinner, do you stand aloof and cluck judgment on them?
- b. Are you gentle or hard-nosed to the downtrodden?
- c. Helpful or callous to backsliders?
- d. What do you think of one of our members who hasn't been to church in years?
- e. When you see a man addicted to drugs, do you judge or reach out?
- f. When someone sins against you, are you eager to forgive that person from your heart, or do you hold out and make them suffer?

### F. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

1. What is "Purity"?

Illus: Ivory soap claims to be 99 44/100ths % pure

- a. purity means singleness of composition
- b. it means no mixtures, no additives

2. What is the "heart?"

a. That which thinks

**Genesis 6:5** *"The Lord saw that every inclination of the thought's of man's heart was only evil all the time."*

**Matthew 5:28** *"I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

**Matthew 6:21** *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

b. That which feels

**Matthew 22:37** *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*

**Romans 9:2** *“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.”*

c. That which wants

**Proverb 6:25** *“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.”*

d. That which chooses or decides

**Hebrews 3:8** *So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert...”*

e. That which believes

**Romans 10:9** *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your hearts that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

3. Purity of heart = complete singleness of heart... holiness to the Lord

What you think, what you feel, what you desire, what you choose, what you believe... all focused totally on God...**HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**

a. understand natural state of heart

**Matthew 15:19** *“Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander... these are what makes a man unclean.”*

b. Jeremiah equally clear about this:

**Jeremiah 17:9** *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it. I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind the reward a man according to his conduct..”*

THAT IS: NATURALLY WHAT WE THINK, WHAT WE FEEL, WHAT WE DESIRE, WHAT WE CHOOSE, WHAT WE BELIEVE is evil to the core of our being

4. Judgment Day: the secrets of the heart will be revealed

**Daniel 7:9-10** *“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten*

*thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.*

- a. does God really care about what I think about?? YES

***Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.***

- b. he searches your thought deeply and carefully, to see if they are pure

***Hebrews 4:13 “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.”***

***1 Corinthians 4:5 “[The Lord] will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts.”***

- 5. SELF-DIAGNOSIS: Is your heart PURE?

- a. What do you think about when your mind slips to neutral?

If your thoughts of the last 24 hours were made into a movie and all your friends and neighbors could see it, what would they see?

- b. What moves you emotionally? Do spiritual things move you inside?
- c. What do you choose? What decisions do you make? Are they out of obedience to an invisible God?
- d. What do you believe? Do you simply accept God’s Word as authority and believe it, or do doubts rise in your minds?

***James 1:6-8 “He who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man is... a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”***

Two-headed monster!! One mind believes God, the other does not believe! Blown and tossed... Double-mindedness is the exact opposite of purity of heart!

**Without purity of heart, we are not what we seem to be; People like that are rightly called “hypocrites”... putting on masks to cover our true selves... Pharisees were “whitewashed tombs”... looked good outside, rotten inside**

- 6. Ongoing purification of the heart is absolutely essential... without it, we will never see God face to face

***Psalms 24:3 “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.”***

**Hebrews 12:14** *“Make every effort to be holy... without holiness no one will see the Lord.”*

7. REWARD?? Face to face vision of God

*“... for they shall see God!!!”*

Start out a spiritual beggar, end up seeing God face to face...  
can you even measure the grace of God?!!

**Denied to Moses Exodus 33:20** *“you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”*

**John 1:18** *“No one has ever seen God, but the only begotten God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.”*

**1 John 3:2-3** *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

Application:

How do we become “pure in heart?”

- 1) Recognize this is the Holy Spirit’s work alone
- 2) Allow Him to search your thoughts, your passions, what you desire, what you choose... Pray with King David, “Search me O God and know my heart...” Be open for Him to show you sin and impurity
- 3) Confess your sin to God and grieve over it... say, “God, I recognize that my heart is deceitful and impure... forgive me, O Lord...”
- 4) Be a spiritual beggar... start asking God every day, with ever-increasing fervency “God, make me truly pure within... only you can do it, O Lord.”
- 5) Concentrate on your thought life... don’t allow your mind to wander, but keep your thoughts fixed on God, His Word, His rewards... “Set your hearts on things above, not on earthly things” Colossians 3:1

- 6) Give careful attention to invisible acts of worship to God... secret prayer life, secret acts of giving that no one will ever see or know about