

INTRODUCTION

“Mercy is integral to God’s redemptive work for man. From the time of the Fall, man has had no way back to God except through His merciful grace” (John MacArthur). Everything that we have – especially our standing as children of God – is because of His mercy. And nothing shows that we are beneficiaries of God’s mercy better than our own willingness to show God’s mercy to others.

SCRIPTURE

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Share with your group a time when someone showed you kindness (mercy) when you didn’t expect it or ask for it.
2. What are the five definitions of the word, *“blessed”*, given by the Preaching Team over the last five weeks? Do these definitions give you a better understanding of the Beatitudes?
3. *“Mercy”* can be defined as *“compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one’s power”* (Merriam-Webster). Mercy is NOT a feeling...it is an action that is a result of a feeling. According to William Barclay, mercy is *“the ability to get right inside the other person’s skin until we can see things with his eyes, think things with his mind, and feel things with his feelings.”* Is it difficult for you to experience mercy in this way? Why or why not?
4. Read Micah 6:8 and Luke 6:36. Though the beatitudes are not commands (but indications of a life devoted to Christ), are believers commanded to be merciful?
5. In his sermon on Sunday, David shared what being merciful looks like: *“sympathy, pity, concern, readiness to help, cheer, affection, tenderness, wisdom, counsel, good advice, support, prayer, forgiveness, comfort, care, compassion, action, your problem is my problem”*. Ray Pritchard (President of Keep Believing Ministries) states that mercy includes three elements: 1) *“I see the need – that’s recognition”*; 2) *“I am moved by the need – that’s motivation”*; and 3) *“I am moved to meet the need – that’s action.”* Using these words and elements as a guide, brainstorm with your group practical ways to show mercy.
6. What do you think it means that *“the merciful...will be shown mercy”*?

Study Questions for Community Groups

APPLICATION

Do the homework David gave on Sunday: each day this week, do an act of mercy for someone at home, at Fellowship, in your community, a stranger, and/or for someone who definitely does not deserve mercy.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Is mercy something to strive for, or is it evidence of God’s work in your life?

2. I imagine that this Beatitude must have been a difficult one for the Pharisees to hear. They were known to be judgmental and to show little mercy. Jesus’ harshest criticism was not for those who were considered “sinners”, but for this group of self-righteous religious leaders. Note what Jesus accuses the Pharisees of in the following passages:

Matthew 15:1-6 _____
Matthew 15:12-14 _____
Matthew 23:1-5a _____
Matthew 23:13-15 _____
Matthew 23:23-24 _____
Matthew 23:33-35 _____
Mark 7:5-7 _____

3. Jesus is angry with the Pharisees because they “...neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew 23:23). Like the Pharisees, do you struggle with self-righteousness, neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness?

4. Read Luke 10:25-37. Why do you think the story of the Good Samaritan is so well-known?

5. The Good Samaritan is not just a story about helping people. It’s emphasizes the need for a new heart (see Ezekiel 36:26) – a merciful heart. The priest and the Levite knew the law. They knew what they were commanded to do. Yet their hearts were hardened and they ignored someone in need. Have you ever been too busy to help someone? Did you, like the “expert in the law”, try to justify your lack of mercy? What is keeping you from being a neighbor to those in need around you?