

Here is a searching statement, that is, what a test this statement is for each one of us. Those people were to be congratulated, that is, what man should be like, merciful. It is the kind of general test to which we are subjected. How we are reacting to these tests, these searching tests. They really tell us about what our Christian profession ought to be. I feel that it is good for me to be humbled. It is a good thing for me to have this mirror held up to my face. It shows me what I am and beyond that, it shows me what I am if the light of God's pattern for the Christian man. The thing that is here said about Him is that he should be poor in spirit, thus we have brought to the certain, central, primary truth about the whole Christian position. And that is this, the Christian gospel places primary emphasis upon being rather than doing. The gospel puts great weights upon our attitude that upon our actions. Essentially it centers upon what we are rather than on what we do and of course later on He is going to talk about actions. Now a Christian is something before he does anything. And we have to be Christian before we can act as Christians. Now that is a fundamental point here. Being is more important than doing. The attitude is more significant than the action. Now let us put it like this. We are not called upon as Christians to try to be or to be. We are not called upon to be a certain kind of a person. We are Christians and our actions are the

INTRODUCTION: I would like for us to see the place of this beatitude in the midst of this message which Jesus is giving. Mercy is the white flower in the stem of a righteous life. Indeed the absence of mercy in our temper and disposition shows that our righteousness is that of a ceremonialist, as that of Saul who was blameless as touching the righteousness which is that the law but who was utterly devoid of the Christian virtue of a holy heart. He had no mercy, that is of the exterior form and he was destitute of inward power. First, we must see that a man to be merciful must be right in the first place. Second he must be rightly adjusted with the fountain of all mercy, Jesus Christ. And this mercy passes through Him. The old school of ancient morality stood for 3 or 4 virtues, justice in human relations, prudent in the direction of affairs, fortitude in bearing trouble and sorrow, temperance for self-restraint, but they knew very little of mercy which is not natural to the human heart. As long as Jesus tarried among men He poured forth mercy, those that hated, those that were wrong and when He left the world, the church took up His blessed work.

We are now on the stage of the description of this beautiful He is talking about the Christian man, a change in the type

and kind of description so far as looking at the Christian in terms of his need of the consciousness of his need and this is sort of a turning point. It deals with his disposition which results from everything that has gone before in this message. We are now dealing with some of the consequences of this inner change. This is a logical sequence. And it would be ideal for us to take this sermon on the Mount at random and try to understand it.

Someone ask an odd deacon if he were a Christian and he answered more truly than he realized when he said, "In spots". Many of us are Christians in certain areas of our lives. We accept the general ideas and ideals of Christianity, we go to church, some with pretty much regularity because it seems the right thing to do. We believe that we ought to be respectable that men ought to be honest, fairly moral, that we ought to be loyal citizens to our country and our government but when the questions come "Are you a Christian?" and you put it real bluntly a lot of people are lost ~~stxxx~~ for a positive answer. Inwardly there is no strong faith that they really belong to Jesus Christ.

The simple truth is that they failed to take Christ seriously. They have failed somewhere in their dedication and their consecration. If we had lived during the days of the crucifixion we probably would have been in with Peter in his denial. Many of us would have been with Judas in his betrayal. Others would

have been taking sides with the crowd rather than with Christ. So Jesus probes deep into the heart as a physician and the great trouble is the self-centeredness of the individuals. Today we use the personal possessive pronouns, my house, my problems, my troubles, my feelings, my nerves, my family, and so on. You remember the rich young ruler, he wanted to follow Jesus. He was told that he must sell all that he had and give it to the poor. That was one of the real tests and that is one of the real tests that your willingness to share with others. If we have no mercy towards others that is one proof that we have never experienced God's mercy. Emerson says, "What you are speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say." If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, he that believeth on me as the scripture has said, out of the inmost soul flows rivers of water. Now a body of water which has an inlet, the inlet may become stagnant, insect-infested ponds. When we think of Christianity as just my experience and my emotions and my joy which no desire to share with others, we have not had a genuine experience. You see this is the outflowing beauty that Jesus emphasizes. It is unchoking to channels through which His love and His mercy may flow. Satan does not care how much you theorize about Christianity or how much you profess to know about Christ. What he opposes is that you not live for Christ.

I. A searching statement

or a trace of anger in the heart. It is a mighty task for us all but that is not all Christ's ethics requires of us. You see we must strain and stress to further the obligation under which we come. We have done what the worse men and malicious enemies have done. And many times people say, I can forgive you but I cannot forget. Well, that is not forgiveness and that is not merciful. It is not enough to stand still unresisting. There must be a hand of helpfulness stretched out. If we are to do what Jesus has done for all of us and what our Master required us to do for one another. People talk a great deal but a great deal of their talk is insincere. If they would try to live them just for a night they would perhaps pause a little longer and then some of them do before they say the Sermon on the Mount is my religion. Are we merciful? You see, it is just a little more than just being easy-going as some people put it. It is more than that because it is to pity plus the action. It is more than just Christian feeling of piety and pity but of concern, anxiety, and an effort to relieve it. Suddenly you find yourself in a position of having your power someone who has transgressed against you. Now the way to know whether you are merciful or not is to consider how you feel towards that person. Are you going to say, Well now, I'm ~~right~~ going to exert my rights to this point. I'm going to be legal. This person has transgressed against me

outcome of it. So we are not meant to control our Christianity but Christianity is meant to control us. Therefore we kind of realize that as Christianity controls us, the operation of the Holy Spirit is within. I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me. He is in control, not I. His Spirit controls me at the very center of my life, controls the very spring of my being, the source of my every activity. The Christian faith is not something on the surface of a man's life. It is not merely a kind of a coating of the near, but it is at the very center and that is why the New Testament talks about the new birth, about being born again, about the new creation, and about the new nature. It controls the thought, the outlook, the imaginations. So this searching question tells us in a sense that we are living our ordinary lives, we are declaring all the time exactly what we are. And that is why this matter is so serious. All of us are proclaiming whether or not we are poor in spirit, whether or not we mourn, whether or not we are meek, or we hunger and thirst after righteousness, whether or not our whole life is an expression of this central truth.

II. Circumstances which awaken mercy.

As we go a little deeper in this we seek to come to know why there is a love that goes deeper and reflects a new angle to this new beauty which He is here declaring. Sin is the things that

awakens mercy. Have mercy upon me, the psalmist says, O God. According to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions against thee, I say. They only have I sinned, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Forgiveness is not enough. The broken bones cry out for mending. The drunkard may be forgiven and yet have to bear the results of ~~his~~ injury to his body and his nerves, but nevertheless when such a one is forgiven he may also count on the mercy of God, pitying his palsied hand and his wrecked personality. Suffering also awakens this business of mercy. Luke, 10:37 tells us of the mercy of the stranger to which even the scribes bore an unwilling testimony. Which of these said the Lord and portray mercy. The priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan and the scribes admitted that the man who showed mercy. We must be careful to allow this mercy to flow. You see, mercy goes further. It bends down with its tender hand and gentle touch pouring in oil and wine and endeavoring by the coles of fire to it heaps on its offenders to melt his hard heart. Of course, we know that mercy many times must choose its objects because there are some organized, professional alms seekers and we know that today also we have organized charities which is a symptom of Christianity which showers mercy. Another thing that causes circumstances to be such as to

arouse mercy is that of infirmities. Hebrews 2:17, 10:15. Our Lord Jesus is a merciful and high priest touching with the feeling of our infirmities. Mercy does not wait for sorrow and need to appeal to her. She goes to seek them. She does not wait for injury to be wrought on her but mercy will climb the narrow staircases and pursue the victims of great wrong of the world. Mercy's face is beautiful. It goes to places where people turn with disgust. It's heavenly born in the heart of the Christian. Are we merciful today? You see there is no such thing as having a good fruit tree without fruit and the fruit ought to be an evidence. This is the priceless element of personal religion. It is of little worthlessness and is an inseparable link, meekness, mercifulness, peacemaker, and conduct is concluded of course, but conduct is only secondary. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Are we merciful in our judgments? If we are then we are not the devil's advocate because you know these constructive acts and motives reveal whether we are on his side or not. Is there a readiness to help? Is there a readiness to give? Is there a readiness to forgive? Not only the offenses against the society and morality but the offenses against ourselves. It is hard enough to bear the insults of the unworthy without one spot of red in the cheeks

elevate society. It cannot reach the principles of behavior which comes from the heart. Now I believe that we do have a great government, perhaps the greatest in the world, but this is not the answer. There are others that believe that we can through education remedy all of the vice in this world and suppose we educated everyone. Would they have virtue? We could put a school on every corner and we know that knowledge did not save Solomon from vice in his day. Nor others from immorality. Art and education may be fine, it may be a good taste but it will never purify the heart. We know that the savages may be better off wild and unexplored in the wilderness than to have high educated people in society and in palaces of shame.

Fourth, we may show mercy in the forgiveness of our enemies.

V. The promise.

He says now that there is a promise to those who will show mercy, he said, mercy will return to them. They shall obtain mercy. Well, are we suppose that if a man shows mercy to another, that he will be merciful to him. Well, that is not sometimes true and sometimes it is not. It does not so very much matter whether it is true or not. That is not what Jesus Christ means. All these beautitudes are God's gifts and this is God's gift too. It is His mercy which the merciful man obtains. They shall obtain mercy. When we consider, They

very, well, here comes my opportunity. You see, now this is the very opposite of mercy. This person is in your power. Is there indictive spirit or is there a spirit of pity and of sorrow. A spirit like of kindness to your enemies, in distress. The robbers of the Samaritan man who was helped by the Samaritan lying by the roadside, they had no compassion on him, they took advantage of him.

IV. Our opportunities to show mercy.

As Christians we have a lot of opportunities and areas in which we can show mercy. First, in acts of kindness. All over about us there are men who need help. When we read from time to time how that over half of the world's population is hungry, poor, wretched, illiterate, they are unable to read or write, how that in some parts of the world they still use methods of manufacturing and farming that are thousands of years old, and how that many people in this world are more than just slaves to big landlords. They need, four, cloth homes, medical care. They need love and we know that in this world there are people who devour widows' houses and we may debate about this world dying in misery. Dr. Laubach said, In my opinion the U. S. must make an all out effort to help the destitute half of the world out of it's misery or it will find that the world has gone Communist because of our neglect. Perhaps we cannot go in the far away lands but we can give to

missionaries, to charitable causes, hospitals, educational institutions, orphanages, You will ask God to show you, you will find people in your own community who need physical help.

2 Second, doing away with our prejudices. Well, all our this world there are nationalism arising, color lines are being broken down. Prejudice means prejudging. It means making a estimate of others without knowing the facts. Prejudice is a mark of weakness, not of strength. It is the tool of the bigot but never a device of the true Christian. Prejudice is measured by computing distance between our own biased opinions and the real truth. To be perfectly honest before God, we would have no prejudice if we would open our hearts and minds to Him. But people are prejudiced about educational systems. They are prejudiced about things that have grown up with envy, down through the years. We know that Jesus hated this very things when He said, Why beholdest thou the mote that is in our brother's eye, Matt. 7:3, and consider not the beam that is in your own eyes. The greatest social evil that is in the world today is prejudice. I seriously doubt ~~that~~ if we would be prejudiced against one, if we had all the facts in hand, how can we get rid of this? Of course, we know that as Saul of Tarsus, he was prejudiced against everything and everybody until he had a spiritual re-birth and when that happened to him he changed. The logic of Greece would not do for

Paul. The culture of Rome could not do what he needed. It was only the experience of grace on the Damascus road that melted away his prejudice.

3 Third, we have the opportunity of showing mercy by sharing the gospel and witnessing to Christ. Man's spiritual poverty is more wretched than his physical poverty. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. When we think of all the immortality, the greed, the selfishness, the prejudice, the suffering, the hatred, all of this stems out of the human heart; one source. Go ye into all the world, that be little word. There are some men who believe that government is the things that we need. They believe that to organize humanity with democracy would be to solve all the vice and the crimes and the ignorance and the poverty of this present age in which we live. But we know that by the deeds of the law shall no man, no flesh be justified in His sight. History has proven that in their origin vice and virtue lies beyond the reach and scope of civil law. Many statesmen believe that our type of democracy should be imposed upon all the nations of the world and that democracy would be a cure-all for all the ills of the world. So we have gone out to the pagan nations to try to westernize them and they are not prepared for it. We have been trying to sell the ideas by giving them gifts, and we know that this has helped very little. But law cannot

church without even shaking hands or being a gentleman. You know I suspect that when that man prays that he probably has no confidence in his prayers that they will be answered. The unjust steward you see is that unrighteous cruel servant would not forgive the servant that was under him, he was a man who had never understood forgiveness or his relationship to his master. Therefore he was not forgiven for the one condition of forgiveness is repentance. And repentance means among other things that I realize that I have no claim upon God at all and that it is only His grace and mercy that forgives. This is the operation of grace, of God's grace in the hearts of forgiveness. Whether we ever receive forgiveness or not by whether we forgive or not. If I am forgiven I shall forgive. None of us has by nature a forgiving spirit and if you now have such a spirit, you have it for one reason only. You have seen what God has done for you in spite of what you deserve and what you say. Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy. We know that if we are merciful let anyone be censorious or critical or vindictive or malicious or quick to resent a wrong bitter and uncharitable in speech, relentless in demanding a repayment and the time will come when that soul will need mercy from his fellows as Adonidezek said, 3 score and 10 kings having their thumbs gathered their meet under my table,

shall obtain mercy, if I am merciful toward others, God will be merciful toward me. If I forgive, I shall be forgiven. Now I wonder on the surface if that is a true statement. First, we know the well-known statement in the Lord's Prayer, and some people will not pray the Lord's prayer because of this statement. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. Or forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Now there are those who interpret that to mean that if you forgive you will be forgiven if you do not forgive then you will not be forgiven. There is a similar parable in the debtor, Mat. 18 where a cruel servant was in debt was asked by his master for payment. Now the man did not have the money and he besought his master to forgive him of the debt. The man had mercy on him and forgave him all the debt that he owed. But remember this man left the master and went out and there was somebody that owed him just a small trifle of money and he demanded payment and this man besought him to give him a little time and be patient and he would pay. But he cast him in prison. And the master of hearing of this took his servant who was unjust and treated him in the same way. In view of your action, he says, I am going to repeal what I said to you and he cast him into prison. Her again people once begin to say, Well, does that clearly teach that I am

forgiven by God only as I forgive others and to the extent that I forgive others. I think as we interpret these two things we must see first of all that if I were to be judged strictly on those terms it would be very certain that not one of us would be forgiven of God and not one of us would see he ven. If you interpreted this strictly on a legal measure, forgiveness would be impossible. Second, the ~~second~~ second reason that this is more striking is if we put forgiveness on this basis we must cancel the whole doctrine of grace from the New Testament. We must never again say that we are saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us and that we are reconciled through Jesus Christ. Now we are only saved when we truly repent, and that means that we realize that we deserve nothing but punishment and I realize that I am poor in spirit and that I must face God. I mourn because of this sin that is within me. I am meek now that I have experienced this true view of myself. Nobody can hurt me, nobody else can insult me nobody else can ever say anything bad about me. I have seen myself and my greatest enemy does not know the worst about me. I am seen myself as something very hateful and I have hungered and thirsted after righteousness. I no longer see men as I used to see them. I see them now with the Christian eye.

In this promise, we see the supreme example of all as we

Look at Him upon the cross, who never sinned, who never harmed anyone, who preached truth, who came to seek that which was lost, he was nailed and He suffered the cross, and He said Father, forgive them. Why? For they know not what they do. They are victims of sin, He says. This was the same way that Stephen prayed for the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge. These people were mad and out of their minds. They are blinded by the god of this world and they are sinful. Have you ever felt sorrow for people who showed from the expression on their faces the bitterness and the anger they feel. They are to be pitied. Look at the things about which they get angry. Showing that their central spirit is wrong. So unlike Christ, so unlike God who has forgiven them everything. You feel sorry for them and we should pray to God for them. If I know that I am debtor to mercy then I must show mercy.

David said, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. If you are not forgiving you brother, you can ask God for forgiveness but you will have no confidence in your prayer and your prayer will not be answered. A lady told me the other day about a man in her church who had said some harsh things and he did not like a certain thing that was being done and so because of that there were some people that he would not speak to. She said that she saw him walk by some of the men in the church and she saw him pass by the pastor of the

as I have done so God has given me back. On the other hand, these who are tender and gentle in their judgment, patient in and forbearing in disposition, peaceable and easy to be in-ods treated, quick to forgive the wrongdoer and to repara the wrongdoer will never be in need of mercy. In II Tim 2:1&16-18 Paul inserts a note about Onesiphorus whom he recalls as one who had compassion on him and who visited him at a prison in Rome. Then he adds, the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. We all need it and we shall as all need it at the end, at the day of judgment, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the deeds done in the body. What makes me merciful is the grace of God. If I am not merciful, there is only one explanation. I have never understood the grace and the mercy of God. I am outside of Christ, I am yet in my sins and I am unforgiven. Let every man examine himself. I am not asking you what sort of life you are living, I am not asking you whether you do this that or the other, I am not asking you whether you have some general interest in the Kingdom of God and in the church. I am simply asking you this, Are you merciful? Are you sorry for every sinner even though that sinner offends you? Have I your pity upon all. The Romans despised pity, the stoics did not have great compassion, the Pharisees were harsh and were

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Luke 10:37. The more you abound in mercy, the more you are conformed to the precepts of the scripture. The more you abound in mercy, the more will you resemble God. The more we abound in mercy, the more eminently we appear to possess the spirit of Christ. Even our attitude toward animals will be softened and no longer do we ask the question, does this man deserve relief or does he deserve our mercy, but the simple question is does he suffer. We will go further than our pity as a sufferer and a sinner, but we will show him simply because he is a sinner. This will cause us to hide self. We will become very much like the silk worm which weaves her curious work, hides herself within the silk, and is not seen and so we shall hide our pride and our vain glory. Are we merciful in judgments of others? Are we merciful in our speech, do we not take pleasure in sharp criticism, are we merciful to our employees? Mercy has a certain soft, sweet, tender, gentle, gracious atmosphere in which the whole man lives and breathes. It is very much like the iceberg that floats down into the tropical streams. They live in a soft sunshine of their own making and in it all the simple charities of life which are like the common flowers that adorn and make sweet the woods and the fields. Their speech is delightful as the songs of the birds, as delightful as the soft murmur of such streams as gently flow through the meadows. This mercy come from the

inward beauty of a man's soul.

- W.A. - 11/17/50
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