

a cartoon - young Cain - just killed Bro Able standing over his body, expression contempt -
Adam seated nearby - hand behind in hand -
we comforting Adam saying "now Adam, dont carry on so
This New Generation must find a way to solve its own problems."
When men seek a solution outside God's Law, it is Tragedy & Sin."
MERCY RETURNS

Matt. 5:7

So. No. - Oct 11, 70 WXRI P.M

INTRODUCTION:

This Beatitude is in the midst of this message which Jesus is giving. Indeed the absence of mercy in our temper and our disposition shows that our righteousness is nothing more than ceremony.

Saul who was blameless in touching the law as to righteousness, was utterly without this Christian virtue of a holy heart. He had no mercy. He had the exterior form of religion of his day, but he was destitute of that inward power. He persecuted men, rather than showing mercy upon them.

Therefore, at the outset - I want you to be conscious, that a man to be merciful must be right in the first place.

He must be rightly adjusted with the fountain of all mercy, Jesus Christ.

As long as Jesus lived on the earth, he poured forth his mercy upon men. Those who hated him, those who were wrong and sinful, but note this - when Jesus left this world, the church took up His blessed work. Hence, it is the business of the Christian church to carry on this work which he was so interested in.

Do not miss the point, he is talking about a Christian man. And he is looking at things in a Christian way. He is dealing with his disposition. The Sermon on the Mount is not an ideal - taken at random, for men to try to understand. But it is a message of the inner change in a man.

Someone asked an old Deacon if he were a Christian. And he answered, more

truly than he realized when he said, in spots. Now when you analyze what he said, many people today are Christians in certain areas of their lives. They may accept some of the general ideas of Christianity. Some may even go to church. Some may be pretty regular. Others may think that they are right respectable. They are fairly honest and fairly moral. They seem to be loyal citizens, of the country and of the government.

The thing hinges upon, are you a Christian? Inwardly there is no strong faith in some people, that they really belong to Jesus Christ - simply because they have never taken Jesus Christ seriously.

If you had lived during the days of the crucifixion, you probably would have been with Peter in his denial. Many people whom I'm talking too tonight would have been with Judas in his betrayal. Others of you would have taken sides with the crowd other than with the Christ. Jesus then comes to probe into your problem like a physician. He is pressing into your life. However, you are so self-centered that you are saying, "my house, my problems, my troubles, my feelings, my family". You are like the rich young ruler, he wanted to follow Jesus. He was told to sell all that he had. The real test was the test of his willingness to share with others.

Looking into your own heart, do you have a willingness to share mercy toward others. That is one of the great truths, that you have experienced God's mercy.

The Bible is so wonderful. I wish that we had time to just go through the Bible and pick out the passages on mercy. The greatest attribute of Heaven is mercy. And as Lord Byron says, mercy is for the merciful.

Psa. 23:6 - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

Psa. 51:1 - "Have mercy upon me, oh God, according to thy loving kindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercy.

Psa. 103:17 - "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."

Prov. 3:3 - "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck, write them upon thine table of thy heart."

Prov. 11:17 - "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul."

Mic. 6:8 - "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

These and multitudes of others speak.

There is a wonderful Christian hymn, Hark, the Herald Angels Sing. Glory to the newborn King.

Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinner reconciled.

I. A Searching Statement

Here is one of the most searching statements in the Bible. And it is a searching statement for you. Congratulations, that is, for the man who is merciful. And this is a kind of test to which we are subjected. And that's why I say it is a searching test.

For it truly tells what our Christian profession ought to be. Is there humbling experience - it is like stepping up to a mirror to behold your face. You are beholding God's pattern for the Christian man. He has talked about those who were poor in spirit. The Gospel places the primary emphasis upon being rather than doing. The Gospel puts great weight upon your attitude as well as upon your actions.

In a nutshell you have to be a Christian before you can act as Christians. The fundamental point - being is more important. Congratulations. Blessed are you. We are Christians, and our actions are the outcome of this. We are controlled by this. The Holy Spirit is within. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. The very center of my life is controlled by this fact. It is not just a coating on surface.

In the Old Testament the word Mercy is often characterized by (kindness,) loving kindness, one who is inclined to be gracious. To show kindness.

In the New Testament we find that some of the chief words are pity and compassion.

Note - this is an essential quality of God, Exo. 34:6, 7. It is his delight. He is the father of mercies, 2 Cor. 1:3.

He is (rich) in mercy. Eph. 2:4. Full of mercy. Full of pity and merciful. James 5:11.

Mercy is associated with (forgiveness) Exo. 34:7. Numb. 14:18.

God is merciful with his (forbearance) Psa. 145:8 That is he is merciful,

slow to anger, and of great loving kindness. Rom. 2:4.

He shows mercy in his covenant. I Kings 8:23. With his faithfulness.
Psa. 89:24. Mercy and truth are united. Prov. 3:3.

God's mercy goes forth to all. Psa. 145:9. Jehovah is good to all
and his tender mercy is over all his works.

His mercy shows itself in pity and in help. Exo. 3:7.

Psa. 86, Eph. 2:4.

His mercy is ever-lasting. I Chron. 16:34. Psa. 105.

Mercy is used of man as well as of God and is required on man's part, toward
man and beast. Deut. 25:4.

Psa. 37:21

Be merciful even as your father is merciful. Luke 6:36.

It is associated with grace, the freeness of God's love is the central point.
In view of misery, it is able to give relief. All of this about God's mercy leads
us to see that his pardon is offered to the offenders.

I I. Circumstances With Awaken Mercy.

There are certain things that bring mercy into action.

First, sin is the thing that awakens mercy. The psalmist said, Oh God,
according to thy loving kindness. According to the multitude of thy tender
mercies. Blot out my transgressions against thee.

Against thee and thee only have I sinned.

Suffering also awakens mercy. Luke 10:37. We have the story of the Samaritan. As is told of our Lord, the priest passed by. The Levite passed by, but the Samaritan came and showed mercy upon the man who had been robbed and cared for the man. This is the time when mercy is needed and awakened.

Mercy is also awakened when there are (infirmities). Heb. 2:17. Heb. 10:15.

Our Lord Jesus is a merciful high priest who has been touched with the feelings of our infirmities. And this is the thing that calls forth mercy.

In New York State in a cemetery there is a marker with one word. Forgiven. There is no other mark on the stone - just that word. In our imagination, the circumstances behind that word perhaps - it was a son who had brought shame and disgrace upon his family. It could have been a daughter, who bore the seed of a moment's passion in her body - which cost her both virtue and her life. It could have been an undisciplined husband, who brought heartaches and sorrow to the family.

The secret is sealed with the stone - there is only one word - forgiven. For that word has in it a miracle. It seems to touch Heaven and somehow blot out earth's sadness. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. It seems to say that here in this grave is someone who needed mercy. And therefore, the word "forgiven" was placed on the stone.

Forgive my debts - I am the guilty one. I bear some of the blame. I must be forgiven. Words are most difficult. And men find it a problem to come to the right circumstances through which they will have mercy awakened. For example,

Col. John Donelson. After her divorce from her first husband, whom she had married in Virginia.

In the campaign in 1928 it was discovered that the divorce decree had not been granted by the Virginia Courts. And General Jackson and his wife were the subjects of personal attacks by his political opponents and his wife lived to see her husband elected president. But she did not live long enough to go to the White House.

Some years later after he retired from Public life, a minister was examining him as to his faith, and the experience, with the view of baptizing him into the church. In view of the many quarrels and feuds that he had had, the minister asked, general, there is one more question which is my duty to ask you. "Do you forgive all your enemies."

Jackson responded my political enemies I can freely forgive. But as for those that have abused me, when I served my country on the field, and those who attack me for serving my country, and slaughtered my life, Doctor, that is a different case.

The minister made it clear to the general that none who harbors ill feelings could make a sincere profession of faith. Again, there was silence until at last the aged candidate said, "I will try, Doctor, to forgive all my enemies."

Now this situation of circumstances awaken mercy in the General's heart.

III. Are We Merciful Today

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 relation.

Are we merciful in our judgements.

Do you work along as one of the devil's advocates.

There is a strain and stress, and obligation which comes to every man. There are malicious people.

Many times people say, (I can forgive - but I cannot forget.) Well, is that real mercy.

There must be a hand of helpfulness stretched out. If we are to do what Jesus has done for all of us. And our maker requires this to be done - one for another. Now we may talk a great deal, but our talk is insincere if it does not bear fruit.

Some of you say, the sermon on the mount is my religion. Now the question is, are you merciful. It is a little more than just being easy going people. As some people put it. You must put this in action. Someone has transgressed against you. And you say I am going to exert my rights to this point - I am going to do this legal. This person has transgressed against me, very well, here is my opportunity. I am going to get even. The point is, you are doing the very opposite of mercy. The person may be in your power. You are not doing like the samaritan on the road.

As 2 Tim. 1:18 - The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. The (day of judgement) He will find no mercy.

Those who have no mercy on others.

Those who lived and died without repenting.

Those who said they needed no mercy because of their self-righteousness.

Those who sought no mercy, put it off, and were indifferent.

Those who scoffed at Christ and refused the Gospel.

Are you merciful today. You are not standing at the judgement bar at this very minute. You are not yet where prayer cannot be heard. You are where faith can save you. You are where the Spirit is thriving with you. You are where sin may be forgiven.

Thomas Hooker was dying. One said to him, brother, you are going to receive the reward of your laborers. He humbly replied, brother I am going to receive mercy. Are we merciful.

An infidel once was introduced to a minister. And the man said I never attend public worship. The minister said, my good man, you are making a mistake. By no means, said the man. I always spend Sunday settling up my accounts and my books. The minister said then, very calmly, you will find sir, that in the day of judgement - God will spend his time in settling your accounts.

IV. Our Opportunities To Show Mercy

Blessed are the merciful. What opportunity do we have.

First, we have the opportunity to show kindness. All about us are men that need help. We read about the world, the hunger, the poverty, the wickedness - all

about us. Some need medical care. Some need homes. Some need clothes.

Dr. Laubach once said, in my opinion the United States must make an all out effort to help the destitute out of its misery. Or it will find that the world has gone communistic because of our neglect.

2- (Second) by (doing away with our prejudices) This is another way for us to show mercy. Prejudice means pre-judgement. It means to estimate others without knowing the facts. Prejudice is a tool of the devil. And of course it is not limited to ignorant people. It is not only found among radicals. Prejudice is found in the hearts of educated people. Down through the years Jesus had dealt with this. And he dealt with it in Matt. 7:3 - when he said why behold thou - the mote that is in thy brother's eye and consider not the beam that is in our own eye. One of the great social evils of the world today is this -- if we could get rid of it.

3. (Third) another opportunity is that of [forgiveness] Now this is based on something more than just shedding of tears. Mary and Martha wept over their brother and so did our Lord over the city. But this is something of the inner life. It is the disposition of a man to profess a forgiving spirit. It is the way in which Christ looks upon men. He was willing to forgive them. He was kind in his judgements and his motive of life was to serve and forgive them.

Man's nature is to hate and this is deadly and damaging. He is to bless those that curse him. Pray for those who despitefully use him. And learn how to practice forgiveness. This is a way of expressing your mercy.

There is a story told about Gov. Oglethorpe. John Wesley spoke to him. The Gov. was be-rating a servant. And had said, I will be avenged. And then, he cried,

"I never forgive." Mr. Wesley said to him, in that case, I hope you never sin. Is that a fitting word for everyone of us - the opportunity of mercy is found in forgiveness.

I remember reading some years ago a story told by Clovis Chappell. He was telling about how men were always prone to condemn others - and this is a good point on forgiveness. He said a certain preacher was having his shoes shined. He was in a hurry. And when he thought it was about time to be finished, he looked down, only to find that his shoes were in worse condition than the beginning. He spoke very sharply to the little boy. It was then that the little fellow looked up, and showed a face wet with tears. I'm sorry sir, he said, but my mother died this morning and I am trying to make a little money to buy some flowers to put on her coffin.

The preacher saw that it was his tears falling on his shoes - that was making it impossible for him to shine them. Of course all the condemnation died in his heart.

Since that experience, he declared, I have gone about my ministry with a new outlook. Now it is as if I was walking over battlefield, after battlefield, caring for the wounded and dying.

This is being merciful and you can't be merciful without helping others. And without forgiving others. Brethren if a man be overtaken with fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thine self.

- 4 - Fourth, sharing the Gospel and witnessing to Christ.

This is one of the most important opportunities you have. All men and

women need to hear the Gospel message. And have pressed upon them the great necessity of praying that prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner".

Men are in poverty and they are desperately wicked. But we know that by the deeds of the law, shall no man be justified in his sight. That it is all based upon the mercy of God which is connected with the grace of God.

V. The Promise

The man that is merciful shall obtain mercy. Am I merciful toward others. God will be merciful toward you. If I forgive, I shall be forgiven.

You know the well known statement in the Lord's Prayer Forgive us our trespasses, or forgive us our debts, as we forgive those who trespass and are debtors against us. Now this means as you forgive and you show mercy, it is going to be shown toward you.

The parable in Matt. 18 where a cruel servant was in debt and asked by his master to pay. Now the man did not have the money. And he sought to have the master forgive it. Or to wait awhile. The man had mercy on him and eased up the debt.

But remember, this man left his master, and he went out and met someone who owed him just a small trifle of money. And he demand payment on the spot. He did not give the man any time and he had the man cast into prison. He took this unjust treatment - and it is the same way he points out that we deal with other people.

He comes and forgives and shows great mercy towards you. And you got out in

The whole doctrine of grace in the New Testament was wrapped up in this Beatitude. The striking basis of forgiveness. 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. We are reconciled through Jesus.

We are saved when we truly repent. When I realize that I am poor in spirit. I mourn over my sins, I am meek. And I show mercy.

The promise here is that supreme example of all. We need to look upon him who was upon the cross. Who never sinned, who never harmed anybody. Who preached to thieves. And he suffered on the cross. And said, Father forgive them.

They were victims of sin. Those people were mad and out of their minds. They were blind.

Now, it is today - we get angry. We show the wrong spirit. We are unlike Christ. We are unlike God who has forgiven us of everything.

David said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

I have known men and women who have said some mighty harsh things about individuals. They will not speak to them. They pass them by. I suspect when they pray, they probably do not have a great deal of confidence in their prayers. That their prayers will be answered. They feel like the unjust steward. We need the operation of grace if this promise is to be fulfilled. Merciful - not critical, malicious, quick to resent, bitter in our speech, relentless in our demands.

2 Tim. 2:1 - V. 16-18. Paul put a note into Onessomis - whom you recall

had compassion on him - who had visited him in prison in Rome. He said, may the Lord grant unto you, divine mercy, of the Lord in that day. We all need it. And we shall all need it the day of judgement.

What makes me merciful - it is the grace of God.

If I am not merciful, there is only one explanation - I never have understand the grace and the mercy of God. I must be outside of Christ. I am yet in my sins and I am unforgiven.

Let every man ask himself. I am asking you. Not to ask your brother. But in the interest of God's kingdom. Simply, are you merciful.

Now the Pharisees were very harsh and self righteous. Matt. 23:23. They showed little mercy. Luke 10:37. The more you abound in mercy - the more you resemble God - that you are a possessor of the spirit of Christ.

There is a story in the Old Testament that is so wonderful and yet we will but touch on it. It is the story of Joseph. I wish we had time to review the whole story. It is a long story - preceding the account to mention to you - Gen. 45. The settlement of Jacob and his family, in Egypt.

Joseph was visited by his brothers down in Egypt. He came to buy corn and grain. And Joseph recognized them and accused them of being spies. And he found his younger brother, Benjamin - and he made them remain - and they went back home to their father and he was greatly bereaved.

Now the meeting of Joseph and Benjamin was something. Verse 34. Joseph excused himself from their presence. He went alone and wept. When he recovered

a much as he did the others. He sent them away and then they were accused of stealing Joseph's silver cup. And the cup had been put in Benjamin's sack. At this point, Judah made a plea. He offered himself. He told the story of grief over the loss of Joseph. He told about the grief over Benjamin that would take place. And he would take the place of his young brother. Which was a great plea.

Joseph shows loving kindness. The most tender scene in all the Bible was when he disclosed himself to his brothers. And told of his affection and tenderness in greeting Benjamin.

It was too much for Joseph who could restrain himself no longer. He had all the Egyptians and the servants to withdraw. Leaving Joseph with his brethren and Joseph wept aloud. Finding sweet relief for his feelings and tears of joy. The Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh heard him. And finally, he found words. I am Joseph. And he asked, does my father yet live.

This was over-whelming. The brothers had fear.

~~Troubled~~ - dismayed.

~~Misdeeds~~ were catching up with them.

~~Had sinned~~ against Joseph.

~~Had sinned~~ against Jacob - Father.

~~Had sinned~~ against the family.

God had over-ruled evil.

Mercy was healing - Father came to Goshen. "Kissed all his brethren".

V. 14-15.

Place of atonement.

Rom. 3:25

Heb. 9:5,7