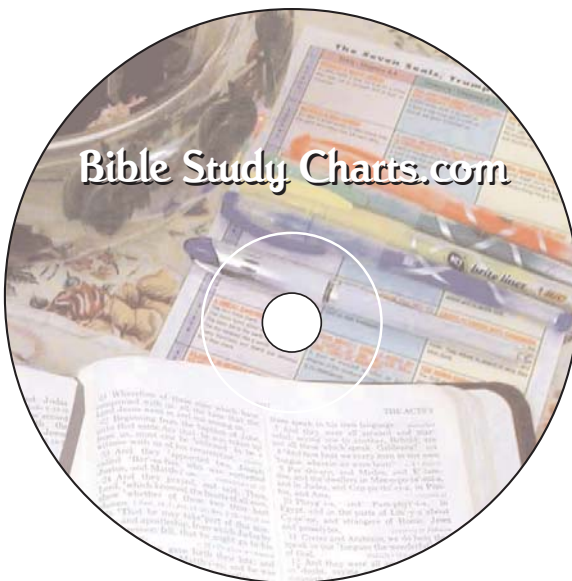


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Blessed are the Merciful

I. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7

The word itself, *merciful*, is from the Greek *eliamosuna*, from which we get the word *eleemosynary*, which means *benefactory*. The word is used in this form only one other time in the New Testament. The other is in Hebrews 2:17 "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." Jesus Christ is the great illustration of mercy. He is the high priest who intercedes for us, and it is from Him that mercy comes.

The verb form of *mercy* is very common in Scripture. In Matthew 6:3 it is used concerning almsgiving. The Hebrew synonym would be *chesed*, which means "to have mercy on, to succor the afflicted, to give help to the wretched, and to rescue the miserable." Anything you do that is of benefit to someone in need is mercy.

We think of mercy so much in terms of forgiveness in salvation, but it is really a much broader term. It goes beyond compassion. It goes beyond sympathy. It means sympathy and compassion in action toward anyone in need. When our Lord talks about it here, the real *eliamosuma* is not the weak sympathy that carnal selfishness feels but never does anything about. It is not the silent, passive pity that never seems to help in a tangible way. It is genuine compassion with a pure, unselfish motive that reaches out to help.

In other words, Jesus was saying to them, "The people in my kingdom aren't takers; they're givers. The people in my kingdom aren't the ones who set themselves above everybody--they're the people who stoop to help."

Mercy is seeing a man without food and giving him food. Mercy is seeing a person begging for love and giving him love. Mercy is seeing someone lonely and giving him company. Mercy is *meeting* the need, not just feeling it.

II. THE SOURCE OF MERCY.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful., Luke 6:36

Nothing can rival the Cross for mercy, for it fulfilled Christ's role as a merciful High Priest. Hebrews 2:17

The mercy of God is manifested:

1. In the sending His only begotten Son. Luke 1:78
2. In salvation. Titus 3:5
3. In long-suffering. Lamentation 3:22; Daniel 9:9
4. To His people. Deuteronomy 32:43; 1 Kings 8:23
5. To them that fear Him. Psalms 103:17; Luke 1:50
6. To repentant sinners. Psalms 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7; Luke 15:18-20
7. To the afflicted. Isaiah 49:13; 54:7
8. To the fatherless. Hosea 14:3
9. Who quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) Ephesians 2:5
10. With everlasting kindness. Isaiah 54:8

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MERCY.

Mercy is special. It is more than forgiveness. It is less than love. It is different from grace. And it is one with justice. The merciful one not only hears the insults of evil men, but His heart also reaches out to them in compassion.

It was mercy in Abraham after he had been wronged by his nephew Lot that caused him to go and secure Lot's deliverance. [Genesis 13-14](#)

It was mercy in Joseph after being treat so badly by his brothers that caused him to accept them and meet their needs. [Genesis 37-42](#)

It was mercy in Moses, after Miriam had rebelled against him and the Lord had given her leprosy, that made him cry, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." [Numbers 12:13](#)

It was mercy in David that twice caused him to spare the life of Saul. [1 Samuel 24;26](#)

The merciful are those who reach out, not those who grasp and take. God help us to hear the voice of our God who tells us to be merciful.

IV. THE SUBSTANCE OF MERCY.

How can we be merciful? By looking after the spiritual needs of others through pity, prodding, prayer and preaching.

We must look at the lost with pity, not lording it over them or thinking ourselves better. Stephen said as they cast stones and crushed out his life, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" [Acts 7:60](#). He was pitying their souls.

Next we can prod. Prodding means to confront people about their sin in order that God might give them forgiveness. They have to hear the gospel. Mercy prods. There has to be confrontation about sin before there can be the realization of sinfulness.

Next we can pray. Prayer for the souls of those without God is an act of mercy. Do we pray for the lost? Do we pray for Christians who are walking in disobedience? Our prayer is an act of mercy; for it releases God's blessings.

Finally, we can preach, Preaching the gospel is the most necessary and merciful thing we can do for the lost soul.

V. THE SEQUEL TO MERCY.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. [Matthew 5:7](#)

The sequel to mercy is obtaining mercy. What a beautiful thing. Do you see the cycle? God gives us mercy, we are merciful, and God gives us more mercy. [Second Samuel 22:26](#) says the same thing, that it is the merciful who receives mercy. [James 2:13](#) says it negatively, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy."

But now we must be warned of something, and this is critical: Some people think being merciful is how we get saved. This is the error of the Roman Catholic Church, that God is satisfied and gives mercy when we do merciful deeds. We do not get mercy for merit.

The one who has received mercy will be merciful. The one who has received forgiveness will be forgiving.