

Poured Out: New Mercies We Need

Matthew 5:7

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Do you ever feel like you are ever in desperate need of the mercy of God? Of course you do. It does not matter who you are. Whether you are a Christian or not a Christian, everyone craves God's mercy at some point in their lives. We want it, we need it, and we would perish without it. It is like an eternal well-spring from which we drink our fill when our souls are parched and dry from being poured out. Mercy is not only an overflowing well of our Savior, but it is also a gift that we both give to others and receive from others.

Last week we learned in v. 6 that Christ fills us with His righteousness. Now that we have been filled, His righteousness should overflow from us by showing mercy to others who need it.

This really is our main point this morning: *Showing mercy to others is evidence of being filled with Christ's righteousness.*

So, what we are going to do is ask questions of our text and unpack it for greater understanding so that we become more like Jesus.

Remember, the Beatitudes describe our conversion. They are describing our transformation from an unbeliever to a believer, from not being a disciple to being a disciple. They describe how we are emptied out of ourselves and our sin and filled with the righteousness of Christ so that we overflow or, as I have been saying—poured out.

So, let's get to work on v. 7:

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

We begin with the question: *What is mercy?* The late pastor/theologian James Montgomery Boice says we often get mercy and grace confused. So, he asks the question:

What makes mercy different than grace? . . . Grace is love when love is underserved. Mercy is grace in action. Mercy is love reaching out to help those who are helpless and who need salvation. Mercy identifies with the miserable in their misery.¹

I think this is a good definition. We can say mercy is the grace moved with compassion to help those in misery. Mercy is when we see the misery of another person, have pity on him or her, then, filled with a heart of compassion, enter into their misery and distress with practical help and love.

Turn to Luke 10:25. In this text, Jesus was asked how to inherit eternal life, and He responded with the Great Commandment, but then to help His hearers understand, He followed His explanation with the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*. Listen to what He says:

²⁵ Then, an expert in the law stood up to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ "What is written in the law?" he asked him. "How do you read it?" ²⁷ He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ "You've answered correctly," he told him.

¹ James M. Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Expositional Commentary: Matthew 5-7*, 45.

“Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus took up the question and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him. When I come back I’ll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.’ ³⁶ “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷ “The one who showed mercy to him,” he said. Then Jesus told him, “Go and do the same.”

After the Lawyer answered the question about how to inherit eternal life correctly, Jesus told him, “Do this, and you will live.” But the Lawyer was not satisfied. He did this because he only wanted to love certain people. So, he asked, “Who is my neighbor?”

Then Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and at the end, Jesus told him the same thing He said after he answered the first question correctly, “Go and do the same.”

Why would Jesus give the same answer? Because inheriting eternal life, or we can say loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, is more than head knowledge. The heart must be changed. To be loved unconditionally by God means you are so transformed by His love that you love others in the same manner. The grace, mercy, and compassion that was given you by God overflow in grace, mercy, and compassion to others, even if they are your enemy.

This leads me to my next question: *Why does v. 7 sound like you earn mercy?* Did this question come to your mind as you read v. 7? It certainly sounds like that was what Jesus was saying, doesn’t it? It sounds like He is saying that mercy is something you earn by being merciful.

Listen, if we earn mercy by being merciful, then we are all in trouble because we will never be merciful enough. We will never show enough mercy to others in order to earn mercy. The truth is: You can’t earn God’s mercy.

So, how do we explain this verse? It is like this, v. 7 is interpreted by vv. 3-6. *Context, context, context—Right?* Remember, our context of v. 7. Context always helps us understand the correct interpretation of our text.

Remember, God’s approval and blessing upon us empties us so that we may be filled with the righteousness of Christ. Christ’s righteousness was imputed to us by our faith in Jesus’ substitutionary death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. In other words, God’s grace moves Him to mercy, and He comes in Christ to save us from our misery. So, when we give mercy to others, it is because we have had the mercy of Christ given to us, and now He calls us to be merciful.

Let’s get some more context from another place in the Bible. Ephesians 2:8-10 will help us:

For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Here is how this works. God's grace is a gift. The faith to believe in Christ's death and resurrection is a gift. So, by the gift of grace and faith, we are saved. God's grace caused Him to have mercy upon us, and so God came in Christ and laid His life for us on the cross. We didn't earn our salvation. The faith to believe in Jesus is a gift of grace and mercy from God. Even the grace He gives us is a gift. This is how we are saved.

Yet, there's more. Verse 10 tells us that Jesus' gift of grace and faith overflows in good works. Another way to understand this is that Jesus purchased our good works by His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. So, our works are not earning anything but instead a result of Jesus' work on our behalf.

So, let's answer our question this way. The mercy we show others is evidence of Christ first giving us His mercy. *The mercy that saves us is the mercy that sanctifies us and shapes us into the image of Christ. We give mercy to others because mercy has been given to us. We don't earn mercy. We overflow with mercy to others because Christ's mercy has filled us.*

Now let's make some application: *What does mercy look like in our relationships with others and specifically in our church?*

One of our greatest needs is mercy given to others. When we practice mercy, it will be one of the most visible acts of ministry we do. It will be felt by those who receive it and seen by those inside and outside the church. A church that practices genuine mercy displays the glory of God and is a strong witness to an unbelieving world. Jesus tells us in John's Gospel that the world will know we are His disciples when we love one another.

So, how is mercy practically expressed in our church and even our relationships at large?

First, showing mercy means showing up. It is a merciful person who shows up when suffering comes into another's life. Showing mercy means you are willing to walk through that suffering with them. Showing mercy means having your life distressed by the weakness and distress of others. It means you don't walk on the other side of the road when you see them lying there in pain. Showing mercy means you show up when needed.

Second, showing mercy means being inconvenienced. It may mean you get involved in someone's misery even when it means inconvenience and sacrifice. This is often the case when we show mercy to others. Rarely is mercy something you put on your calendar. Usually, it comes at the most inconvenient time, but because you have been shown mercy, you can't help but want to show mercy even though it is not a good time.

Third, let's apply showing mercy to our marriages. Showing mercy might mean you will persevere with a spouse who has more weaknesses than you realized when you married him/her. Isn't that the way it goes when you get married? You realize that your spouse has far more flaws than you thought. *Therein lies the problem, we are really good at seeing the irritating flaws in others and completely miss our own flaws.* Showing mercy means you will show love and compassion and bear with your spouse as you both move toward the image of Christ in your relationship.

Fourth, mercy means we are willing to suffer with and for others for God's glory and the sake of the gospel. Showing mercy is rarely easy. However, if you belong to Christ, your desire is to show mercy because Christ gave you mercy. The question we need to ask ourselves is: *Do our relationships demonstrate a willingness to suffer for another's sake?*

Fifth, mercy means you are committed to persevering. Mercy jumps in and gets involved and does not look for a way out when the going gets tough. Mercy that does not persevere is not mercy. We are called to persevere through painful things in order to be part of what God is doing. *In your relationships, where are you struggling with God's call to persevere in mercy?*

Sixth, mercy means you live with a commitment to forgive. Think about it this way. Whenever you are involved with people who need mercy (that is all of us), you will be sinned against. When I commit myself to love you, your sin and struggles, your sin will become my first-hand experience. However, because Christ has been merciful to me, it means I remind myself of the mercy of forgiveness that Christ has given me so that I am able to forgive others. When I remind myself of how, in the gospel, I am forgiven, I find Jesus gives me the mercy to forgive.

Are there people in your life you are struggling to forgive? Listen, learning to forgive can be a difficult thing. It is not uncommon to struggle to forgive someone who has greatly hurt you or even abused you. Yet, when we understand the holiness of God, our sin, and the work of Christ on the cross to pay our debt of sin against God, we find the mercy to forgive others, even if the hurt is deep.

Listen, if you are struggling to forgive—don't struggle alone. Ask for help from Pastor Eric or me. We will be glad to meet with you and pastor you through this.

Here is the bottom line on showing mercy to others. A commitment to being merciful will reveal the treasures of your heart. The reason we struggle giving mercy to others is that we fail to apply the gospel to our own lives. In other words, we forget the mercy shown to us.

When we forget the mercy given to us, we become like the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35:

²¹ Then Peter approached him and asked, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? As many as seven times?" ²² "I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven. ²³ "For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle accounts, one who owed ten thousand talents was brought before him. ²⁵ Since he did not have the money to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had to be sold to pay the debt. ²⁶ "At this, the servant fell facedown before him and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ Then the master of that servant had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan. ²⁸ "That servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, 'Pay what you owe!' ²⁹ "At this, his fellow servant fell down and began begging him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' ³⁰ But he wasn't willing. Instead, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened. ³² Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And because he was angry, his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay for everything that was owed. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to you unless every one of you forgives his brother or sister from your heart."

Bottom line: The struggle with mercy is not a struggle with the second greatest command, "love your neighbor," but a struggle with the first greatest command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind." Amen, or a moan—right?

We struggle to express mercy to others because we do not have God at the center of our affections! This is a painful spiritual truth that must be responded to by the admission that we are still spiritually bankrupt and should mourn and cry out to God for help, hope, and strength.

Here is what happens; when you extend mercy to others, you begin to see the contents of your heart. You will see how unmerciful you are. You will see selfishness, impatience, and unforgiveness in your heart. In essence, you will realize how much you still need the grace and mercy of Christ.

Then instead of choking the life out of someone you love with your words and your actions, you will fall at the feet of the Savior and beg for forgiveness, grace, and mercy. You will see it is more mercy you need.

Conclusion: Friends, the prophet Jeremiah craved the Lord's mercy. After Judah had been destroyed by Babylon, everything he held dear had been annihilated. Jeremiah's heart and soul were broken and bitter. As a result, he wrote the Book of Lamentations as his lament for all he lost.

The book is short. It is only five chapters. Four chapters are strictly lament, chapters 1-2 and chapters 4-5. Chapter three, however, is strategically placed in the middle of the book to show that even in his grief, his hope was anchored in God. In the middle of Lamentations 3 is the heart of Jeremiah's hope. Lamentations 3:22-23 reads:

²² *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

These two verses were the inspiration for one of the most beloved hymns ever written—*Great is Thy Faithfulness*. Thomas Chisholm wrote the poem that became the song in the early 1900s. Chisholm looked back on his life, that had been filled with poverty. Chisholm struggled to make a living because he lived in chronic physical pain. However, as he looked back, he saw the mercy of God in his suffering. The famous refrain of the hymn goes like this:

*Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see:
all I have needed thy hand hath provided--
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

I love this hymn, but I think I would like to tweak one line of it. Instead of saying: "*Morning by morning, new mercies I see,*" I think I would like to read with more desperation, "*Morning by morning, new mercies I need.*"

Are you like me? You see, this is how I often feel. Morning by morning new mercies I need. I need the mercy of Christ so desperately.

Sometimes I struggle to recognize the mercies of God. I know I need them, but sometimes I just don't see them. It is not that God does not give them. I think He does. The problem is mine. I don't always see them, and so therefore, I need to ask the Lord to help me see His blessed mercies.

Brothers and sisters, here is what I know—Jesus is a Merciful Savior, and He will fill you and me with His mercies if we ask. Jesus is faithful to the end, and He will do it. This is not just a comforting thought—it is a comforting truth.