

- 1) Ok, let's continue our look into the details of the Beatitudes.

Matthew 5:7–12 (ESV)

⁷“**Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.** (5)

- 2) **Merciful** – the concept of mercy is seen throughout scripture.

- a) Mercy has many definitions.
 - i) Normally we first think of forgiveness of an offender, but it can be much more.
 - ii) It is giving food to the hungry, comfort to the bereaved, love to the rejected, and companionship to the lonely.
- b) It is therefore one of the loveliest and noblest of all virtues.
- c) Part of what Christ describes here is the act of being selfless.
- i) If there was one requirement for being pleasing to God that describes what we need to become, it is selfless.
- d) In Matthew 9, Christ gives one of the most insightful explanations of mercy in all scripture.
 - i) He does this by dealing with a vivid example of someone not showing mercy.

Matthew 9:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “**Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.** ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- e) To see the impact of this passage, we must first understand that in the mindset of any Pharisee there were basically two types of people – righteous and sinner:
 - i) The righteous were those who kept the law with the same seriousness and purity standards they upheld.
 - (1) To be clear, they did NOT believe these righteous folks were sinless.
 - ii) “Sinners” were everyone else who did not keep the law with the same seriousness and purity standards they did.
 - iii) With this definition, obviously, lots of folks fell into this category.

To this point, we really don't have a problem. Truth is, we sort of look at the saved and unsaved as a like set of two groups, right?

- f) So, what this meant to the Pharisees and what really precipitated the question they asked was their attitude and actions toward these “sinners.”
 - i) Pharisees avoided close fellowship with “sinners,” especially table fellowship, and generally had little to do with them.
 - ii) In fact, there was a list of no-no's.
 - (1) No shared meals.
 - (2) No close social fellowship.
 - (3) No intimate association.

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- (4) No approval of their lifestyle or religious laxity.
- (5) And surely, no treating them as “righteous” equals.

- iii) Probably, they did not have any close friends who were “sinners.”
- iv) These no-no’s were especially true for Rabbis – teachers of the Law.
- v) To call this what it actually was – it was a **boundary of holiness** in Pharisaical thinking.
- vi) This did not mean they never spoke to “sinners,” taught them in public, or in any way wished them harm.

- (1) However, there was a disdain for these folks as is obvious by the tenor of the question.

- g) So, Jesus answers the question they had put to His disciples:

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- h) First, Jesus strikes the comparison between well and sick which should translate in essence to sinners vs. the righteous in the mind of the Pharisees.
- i) Then He uses a very simple but meaningful phrase, “Go and learn.”
 - i) In first-century Jewish teaching, that phrase as He used it was a very stern rabbinic corrective.
 - ii) It was used by Rabbis as a way of saying to someone, “You have misunderstood Scripture.”
- j) In this case the scripture is Hosea 6:6 which He quotes from the Septuagint ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’
- k) The complete verse in the Septuagint reads:

Hosea 6:7 (Brenton LXX En)

⁷ For I will *have* mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than whole-burnt-offerings. (note – LXX verse numbering is off from normal translations by 1)

- l) If you go to that scripture Hosea 6:6, most all of your translations are a little different text. For example, the ESV has:

Hosea 6:6 (ESV)

⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

- i) With either of these translations, it is plain to see the God does not want ritual obedience without covenant loyalty or religious activity without compassion or mercy.
- m) So, when Jesus says ¹³ “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice’” we see that Jesus is addressing the problem that is indicated by the question the Pharisees asked.
- n) Jesus then adds, “For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”
 - i) One paraphrase I read I thought was really appropriate:

“My mission is to show mercy and bring repentance to those who know they need God—not to affirm those who think they’re already righteous.”

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- o) So, when Jesus says ¹³ “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice’” we see that Jesus is addressing the problem that is indicated by the question the Pharisees asked.
- p) We said a moment ago that mercy had several definitions forgiveness of an offender, giving food to the hungry, comfort to the bereaved, love to the rejected, and companionship to the lonely.

What definition(s) of mercy were the Pharisees to learn from reevaluating scriptures?

Are there groups that we consider “sinners” in the same way and with the same attitude (disdain) as the Pharisees did? i.e. do they fall outside our “boundary of holiness.” Or, do we not have a “boundary of holiness?”

- q) This beatitude promises mercy for the merciful.

How are ways you feel you receive mercy – first from God and then from our brothers and sisters?

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (6)

- 3) **Pure in Heart** - Throughout Scripture, the heart is used metaphorically to represent:
 - i) the inner person
 - ii) the seat of motives and attitudes
 - iii) and the center of the personality.
- b) Pure is from a word meaning to cleanse of dirt, filth, and contamination.
- c) So, we might rephrase this to say:

“Blessed are those who have cleansed their hearts of worldly contamination.”

- d) In context, then it is pertaining to being free from moral guilt, pure, free from sin.²
 - i) I would add here – NOT SINLESS but free from sin in our hearts.
 - (1) By that I mean that it may be beyond just keeping our sins fesse'd up.
 - (2) It is also keeping our hearts from harboring or holding on to sinful things.

Can we achieve this purity of heart on our own?

If YES, then how?

If NO, then why not and how do we?

- e) This beatitude promises the pure in heart will see God.

What are ways you feel you see God – AND – do you feel it is related to the purity of your heart?

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (7)

² William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 489, 288, 254

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- 4) **Peacemaker** – pertaining to an endeavor to reconcile persons who have disagreements, making peace.¹³
 - a) We are not a peacemaker by just staying out of or not engaging in conflict ourselves.
 - i) Being a peacemaker involves action not just passive compliance.
 - b) People can accomplish absence of strife but only one who belongs to the true maker of peace can be a peacemaker of the type Christ refers to here.

Is there a limit on the types of conflicts we should be peacemakers for or is it just any conflict we see arise?

- c) I think there is possibly another facet of peacemaking we must consider – making the effort to live in peace.
 - i) This is beyond just staying out of or not engaging in conflict.
 - ii) It is trying to be at peace with those around us when they desire conflict – perhaps like turning the other cheek.
 - iii) This may be seriously difficult because in some cases, the conflict seems to be relentless.
 - iv) Paul uses the term “live in peace” in the benediction of 1 Cor 13 and 1 Thes 5.
 - v) He also says:

Romans 12:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

- d) Again, there is action on our parts – not just passivity.

When we consider Paul’s admonition, is there a time or set of circumstances when we should not try to live peaceably with all?

- e) This beatitude says we will be called sons of God.

We are sons and daughters of God. So, is there a difference in “being called sons and daughters” and the fact that we already are?

- f) Short answer is YES!
 - i) In Jewish idiom, “son of someone” often meant “one who acts like that someone.”
 - ii) It is like we would say:
 - (1) “he or she acts just like his or her father” (of course in a good way).
 - (2) Or “I can see his or her father in him or her.”