

Being Merciful, and Pure in Heart

Matthew 5:7-8

Introduction

In the Beatitudes the list of blessings starts and ends with “the Kingdom of Heaven.” This is because the Kingdom of Heaven is the general description of the salvation we receive through Christ, and the rest of the list gives the details.

But remember the order of these commands. Anyone can turn to Jesus and admit that he is poor in spirit. And when we do that, and mourn before Jesus by faith, Jesus forgives and comforts us — and this supernaturally changes us — so we find the rest of the list happening in us.

What does it mean to be merciful? (5:7)

To be merciful means to do good for others, even if they have cost us (Mat 18:33-35), and even if they can do nothing in return for us (Luke 10:37).

Jesus can’t mean that only the perfectly merciful will receive mercy — because he taught that every day his followers would need to confess their sins (Mat 6:12). So Jesus is talking about growing in being merciful.

How can we grow in being merciful? (5:3-4)

By being poor in spirit (admitting to Jesus that we deserve God’s judgment) and mourning (confessing our sin and trusting Jesus) — when we do that Jesus will lavish His comfort on us. As a result we will overflow with mercy towards others.

We should not act mercifully in order to earn mercy from God. First we are poor in spirit and mourn — which brings God’s mercy — then this transforms us so we show mercy and by that are assured that we will continue receiving God’s mercy.

What does it mean to be pure in heart? (5:8)

It means having a heart filled with love for God and what flows from love for God. It’s not that we feel love ONLY for God. It’s that we feel love for God most of all, and all other loves (for sunsets, veggie burritos) increase our love for God.

How can we purify our hearts? (5:3-4)

By admitting before Jesus that we are poor in spirit and mourning for our sin — which will bring His comfort — which when we taste it will fill us with more love for God than anything else.

What happen to the pure in heart? (5:8)

They will see God.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

Do you agree that the order of the Beatitudes is important? Why or why not?

What's a situation in which your heart has not been merciful? What did you do about it? What would you do about it now that you have been studying the Beatitudes?

What's wrong with saying — I'll show mercy, and then as a result I will earn God's mercy? How does the order of the Beatitudes help us see that we can never earn mercy from God?

Do you see how being poor in spirit before Jesus, mourning for your sin before Jesus, and being comforted by Jesus will so fill you that you are merciful? Why or why not? How have you experienced this? What can you do to experience this more?

Does it make sense that purity of heart doesn't mean having no other love or joy than God? But that other joys and loves can increase our love for God? Why or why not? Why is this important to understand?

What are some heart-impurities you are dealing with now? What's wrong with trying NOT to feel jealous, NOT to feel greedy? How is it different to start with being poor in spirit before Jesus and mourning our sin before Jesus and then being comforted by Jesus?

Is it really true that only those who are (not perfectly, but growingly) pure in heart will see God? Why or why not? How does this impact you?

What are you going to do differently because of these Scriptures?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



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