

Mount Pisgah AME Church

Rev. Jay B. Broadnax, Pastor

Bible Study, Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Developing Christian Character

Kingdom “Attitudes”: *A Study in The Beatitudes*

Matthew 5:1-12

“Blessed are the Merciful, for They Shall Receive Mercy”

Review

- The *Fruit of The Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person’s character and hence are evidence that a person is a believer in Christ.
- In his “Sermon on The Mount” Jesus introduces the characteristics and culture of “The Kingdom” that God is ushering in through Jesus. The culture of The Kingdom of God is fundamentally different from the culture of the existing world.
- What God esteems has very little to do with what human’s tend to esteem. “Blessedness” (i.e., what God counts as successful) has little to do with material possessions, political influence, or even popularity. “Blessedness” is achieved by walking in harmony with what GOD values.
- God values character. Jesus shares in *The Beatitudes* some of the character traits that God values.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God

- When we come to Christ we are humbled to realize we are all poor in spirit and in need of Christ’s salvation. Receiving it makes us eligible to partake in the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

- Disciples mourn both personal losses and also the existence of personal and societal sin.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

- Disciples are not weak, but meek: humbled by God and surrendered to Christ: Choosing to respond in alignment with God’s mission and purpose for them.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- Disciples long for both personal rightness in God’s sight, and justice in the world around them.

Blessed are The Merciful, for They Shall Receive Mercy

Mercy: English Definitions

- From Latin *merces* : Reward
- Kind and compassionate treatment, clemency
- A disposition to be forgiving and kind.
- A fortunate occurrence (e.g., “it is a *mercy* that we weren’t killed”)
- Alleviation of distress.

Mercy: Greek Word – *eleemon* (el-eh-ay’-mone) – merciful; *eleeo* (el-eh-eh’-o) – mercy

- Compassion on the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them
- The clemency (leniency) of God in providing salvation

On the surface, this is the first outwardly-focused Beatitude. Being “poor in spirit”, mourning, being meek, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness all are quests for a inner personal attitude, disposition, or way of being (although we have shown that they each also have OUTWARD implications)

This Beatitude, at first glance, deals primarily with how a person treats others.

- To show mercy to others means to alleviate their suffering. (Luke 10:25-37 – “The Good Samaritan”)
- To show mercy to others means to release them from deserved penalty (John 8:2-11)

Can you think of an occasion when you have helped to alleviate the suffering of another person? What were you thinking when you did it? What was your motivation?

Can you think of an occasion when you released someone from paying harsh consequences for their actions or behaviors? Why did you do it? Under what circumstances should this NOT be done?

One cannot discuss the Beatitude of mercy without dealing with *motive*. While one’s inner motives for having mercy are not dealt with here, they are implied by the context.

Disciples are merciful to others because they realize that they:

1. ...**HAVE** been shown mercy.
 - a. When we didn’t deserve it, Christ died for our sins and saved us from God’s wrath. (Romans 5:8-10) Consider what we were spared (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23).
 - b. What kind of ingrates would we be if we were not merciful through the forgiving of others? (Matthew 18:21-35)
2. ...**CONSTANTLY** receive mercy.
 - a. We have an advocate when we **STILL DO** sin. (1 John 1:5-2:2)
 - b. We can receive mercy in spite of our brokenness (Hebrews 4:14-16)
 - c. God’s mercies are **NEW EVERY MORNING** (Lamentations 3:22-23)
3. ...**WILL** receive mercy.
 - a. If we don’t have mercy, it demonstrates that we don’t understand God’s forgiveness. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Scriptures on Mercy:

- Hosea 6:6
- Micah 6:8
- James 2:13
- James 3:17

We must be people **LOOKING** for opportunities to show mercy if we are to show ourselves to be true disciples of Jesus Christ.