



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study: **MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S MERCY**
Matthew 5:7

Christ is building an edifice of truth. He presents the eternal message of heaven with an orderliness and progression that cannot be re-adjusted. Acceptable acts of mercy follow the spiritual experiences Christ taught in the first four beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-6). Grace and mercy are not fruits that grow out of the heart of the natural, fallen man. Love is not a natural fruit. A fallen natural man begins to receive the grace and mercy of God when he turns away from his sins. It is repentance that brings the mercy of God to the heart of man. Christ's message reveals that mercy shown before poverty of spirit, mourning and repentance, meekness and lowliness of character, thirst and hunger for righteousness cannot get anyone to heaven. Mercy shown before entrance into the kingdom has no recognition by God. You can only show acceptable acts of mercy after you have been filled with God's righteousness through repentance and faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Mercy that manifests from a righteous character is different from a natural man's. Mercy shown to maintain good relationship with others or in the process of child training, and in almsgiving though necessary, cannot take anybody to heaven except rooted in God's grace.

This beatitude, mercy, follows the blessedness of:

(i) kingdom benefits for the poor in spirit (ii) divine comfort for the mourners (iii) the inheritance of the meek (iv) imputed and imparted righteousness for the hungry and thirsty. This is mercy manifested as a fruit of the Spirit from a heart made righteous by the divine hand of God. **"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"** (Matthew 5:7). We must possess the mercy and truth of God. Then, we must demonstrate it, live by it, act it out and walk in the mercy and love of God. When we, as believers, stretch out the hand of grace, love and mercy to other people, we will find mercy and favour in the sight of God and of men (2 Samuel 22:26,27; Proverbs 3:3,4).

THE PATTERN OF GOD'S MANIFESTATION OF MERCY

Matthew 5:7; Isaiah 55:6,7; Proverbs 28:13; Ephesians 2:1-4,10; 1 Peter 1:3; Luke 1:72,77,78; Deuteronomy 13:17,18; Jude 20,21; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; Hebrews 4:14-16.

The life of Christ is the interpretation of His message. He demonstrated all the messages He preached. And as believers, we need to read and watch Christ to see and follow a pattern of how He showed mercy to people. This will help us to refrain from sentiments in most of our dealings with people. Christ related with people differently including His disciples.

God shows mercy to those who repent of their sins. Following God's pattern, the believer does not give to sinners (smokers, drunkards, drug addicts, etc.) the money they need for them to continue in their evil. **"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isaiah 55:7). The reason He shows us mercy at salvation is because we could not pay the price. When we come to God, pleading with a repentant heart for forgiveness and mercy, He forgives. The forgiven sinner is created unto good works. As such, God does not expect him to return to the old lifestyle of sin. The mercy of God is available to those who repent of their sins. God's mercy does not just come to us. We must seek and look for it because His mercy is not cheap or meant to be wasted.

God's manifestation of mercy begins with forgiveness and salvation. And it continues and increases as we faithfully serve Him in obedience to His Word. He always grants us mercy according to His truth. God never contradicts His truth so as to show us mercy. Christians must hold to this truth and pattern revealed in His Word in showing mercy to others. This will guide us into wholesome manifestation of mercy as well as prevent us from falling prey to the enemy who might take advantage of our ignorance. Many references of the Scripture connect and associate mercy with truth to reveal God's pattern to us. They include: (i) Psalm 25:10 – the mercy of God is for those that keep the truth: you cannot abandon the truth while seeking the mercy of God if you are following His pattern; (ii) Psalm 57:3 – we cannot deviate from the truth in order to show or emphasise the importance of mercy because there exists an inseparable connection between mercy and truth; (iii) Psalm 61:7 – it is mercy and truth that preserve the church: mercy alone cannot do it; (iv) Psalm 85:10 – we show mercy on the basis of truth; (v) Psalm 89:14 – we must be guided by mercy and truth – special blessings are for those who obey the truth. And we cannot show mercy in isolation of the truth of the Word of God; (vi) Proverbs 16:6 – we don't abandon the truth and allow the spread of evil

in the church while trying to show mercy; (vii) Proverbs 20:28 – mercy and truth uphold the leadership of the church. Thus, we cannot dissociate mercy from truth. Mercy always goes with sound doctrine, pure worship, righteousness and holiness.

PERSONAL GRATITUDE AND THE MINISTRY OF MERCY

Matthew 5:7;1 John 4:10,11,19-21;Ephesians 4:32; 5:1,2;Romans 12:1,8-21;Colossians 3:12,13;Luke 6:36; 2 Chronicles 19:1,2.

Mercy is favour undeserved that we receive from God after repentance. And because we have received mercy from God, we are so grateful to Him. It is this personal gratitude that leads us into the ministry of mercy. “**Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another**” (1 John 4:11). We ought to show mercy to others as a proof of our gratitude to God, who first had mercy upon us and forgave our sins. God generally shows mercy to all. He allows the sun to shine and the rain to fall for the good of the just and the unjust. He also allows all to enjoy some material blessings. But this divine benevolence, without repentance on the part of sinners, will not be of any eternal good to them. We must continue to show mercy and to do it the way Christ did it. “**And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you**” (Ephesians 4:32).

Believers have received many-sided and manifold mercies of God. They are duty-bound to show mercy to others with cheerfulness because it proceeds from a grateful heart. Pride and self are not part of the manifestation of God-kind of mercy. Humility and diligence are components of mercy. We show mercy to enemies by giving them material things to enjoy but we do not accommodate them in our houses. If we do, they will pose a great danger to, and are capable of destroying our families and ministries. Jesus is the greatest model of His own message. He did not reveal to Judas Iscariot deep secrets of the kingdom as He did to Peter, James and John, though all of them enjoyed material things commonly in His presence. Believers should follow this pattern of Christ in Scripture. We must be wise to balance mercy with truth; we must show mercy on the basis of truth.

PROMISES OF GREAT MANIFESTATION OF MERCY

Matthew 5:7; Proverbs 3:3,4; 11:16,17,25; 21:21; Psalms 37:25,26; 41:1-3; 112:4-9; Isaiah 58:10-12.

If we are merciful, we will obtain mercy. “**Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**” When we obey God in showing mercy to other people, we will find mercy and favour in the sight of God and men. We will also find life and honour. As we show mercy, the blessings of the Lord will become abundant in our lives. “**I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed**” (Psalm 37:25, 26). As the Lord uses us in the ministry of mercy to bring restoration and peace, our lives will witness divine visitation of mercy. Following the pattern of Scripture and the way of Christ in showing mercy makes it possible for merciful people not to stop coming our ways.

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