

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – February 20, 2022

Theme: The Beatitudes Topic: Blessed are the Merciful

Main Texts: Matthew 5:1-7; 18:21-35

Key verse: Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: The fifth attribute of a citizen of God’s kingdom, as captured in the Beatitudes, is **Mercy**. The ATS Bible Dictionary defines mercy as ‘The divine goodness exercised towards the wretched and the guilty, in harmony with truth and justice.’ Mercy is a popular theme in both the Old and the New Testaments in the Bible. The Bible Concordance shows mercy as occurring a total of 467 times in the Bible. *Eleemon* is the Greek word which is translated as *mercy* in Matthew 5:7. It means ‘to have pity on’, to ‘show compassion’ or to ‘be merciful.’ Another Greek word which is translated as mercy in the New Testament is ‘*Oiktirmos*.’ This is the word translated as mercy in Romans 12:1. And it refers to the divine forbearance in showing compassion and passing over sins.

1. Read Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 145:8-9. (a) Considering that Jesus’ audience on the Mount was familiar with these passages, how do you think they received this beatitude of mercy? (b) When you read passages like 1 Timothy 1:13-16; Hebrews 4:16; James 2:13, how does it make you feel concerning how you have tended to relate to this attribute of mercy? (c) What image of God do you find in the verses in (a) and (b) above?

Not only is mercy an attribute of God, but it also manifests in virtually all His interactions with humans – believers and unbelievers alike. In Matthew 18:21-35, Apostle Peter had a question on an aspect of our human interactions – forgiveness. So, he asked to know what the appropriate number of times would be to forgive a brother or sister. To answer his question, our Lord Jesus tells a story of two people who were so indebted to the extent that the bankruptcy order issued against them included they and their family members as possible assets to be sold to satisfy their debt. Their only other remedy was for their creditor to forgive their debt! Sadly, the servant who owed millions and who obtained mercy from his creditor refused to forgive his fellow servant who owed him a few hundreds. Jesus concluded the story with, “*So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*” (Matthew 18:35 NKJV). So, when Jesus speaks of the blessedness of the merciful, He is calling our attention to something important - how we interact with fellow humans.

2. (a) The Master in this story described the unforgiving servant as wicked and withdrew his debt cancelation. What do you think of this response? (b) What is the relationship between forgiveness and mercy in this story? Why do you think this was a fitting answer to Apostle Peter’s question? (c) Why do you think mercy is important? See Proverbs 29:1; 2 Peter 3:9?

Looking at the particulars in Matthew 18:21-35, we find that the Master forgave a debt of 10,000 talents. Meanwhile, the servant only needed to forgive a debt of 100 denarii. 6,000 denarii make one talent! Another interesting aspect of the story is that the servant who owed 10,000 talents was pleading for more time instead of admitting his inability to pay. To have such a debt cancelled and to turn around and refuse to forgive a debt so small is beyond comprehension. No wonder the Master was furious and described him as wicked. Mercy is an essential attribute of God. It is associated with virtually every interaction God has with man – His forgiveness, grace, covenant, justice, faithfulness, etc. It is the driving force of Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection., and consequently, the forgiveness of our sins.

3. (a) What do you think is Jesus’ point in His story in Matthew 18:21-35 and how relevant is it to us today? (b) When you read passages like Luke 6:36; Romans 2:4; James 2:13, how does it make you feel concerning how you have tended to relate to others? (c) What is your main takeaway from this study?

Prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for Your incredible mercy to me. Help me to daily appreciate Your mercy to me and to extend same readily and willingly to others, in Jesus’ name, Amen.*