

Receiving God's Mercy

From Brokenness to Blessing #5 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - September 3, 2023 - 1 Peter 2:9-12

INTRO: Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, "From Brokenness to Blessing." The series is based on the eight blessings or beatitudes that Jesus declared in His Sermon on the Mount. These eight blessings of Jesus turn worldly wisdom upside down!

This week we're looking at the 5th beatitude:

Matthew 5:7 (ESV) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

To be "blessed" means to be supremely happy, completely content. Blessed to the max (macro)! Jesus said that those who are merciful people are truly blessed, that will themselves be shown mercy.

As we look back over the previous beatitudes, we see how we have come to this step:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit"

"Blessed are those who mourn"

"Blessed are the meek"

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"

Now in this step, we are being changed by the mercy of God. Because of this we should be a people of great mercy. We are to be God's great conduit of mercy to the world.

Need: Mercy is defined as compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm. Mercy is choosing to forgive when you have every right to punish.

Now you might be asking yourself, "How can I show mercy to this person or that person?" "You don't know what he did ... what she said ... you don't know the level of pain I was put through." You might be thinking to yourself, "I have been shown little mercy from others in my life, when I fail or mess up everyone holds me over the fire for it. How can I possibly receive this blessing from Jesus when mercy is foreign to me?"

ILL: C.S. Lewis put this very well when he wrote, "To forgive the incessant provocations of daily life - to keep on forgiving the bossy mother-in-law, the bullying husband, the nagging wife, the selfish daughter, the deceitful son - how can we do it?"

Trans: How can we do it? Well ... we can't, not alone. We can only be merciful when we have first received God's mercy.

BODY: In 1 Peter chapter 2, the apostle Peter expounds on Jesus' 5th beatitude and instructed the believers scattered throughout Asia that since they had received God's mercy for themselves they could now live His mercy out among the nations. We can understand how receiving God's mercy empowers us to be merciful. How does receiving God's mercy empower us to be merciful? The text gives three reasons to be merciful by God's mercy.

Read text: 1 Peter 2:9-12 (ESV) ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

How Receiving God's Mercy Empowers us to Be Merciful:

1. Because by God's mercy we are His chosen people.

EXP: (9-10) Peter is charging the believers here to know who they are; a new people, a changed people, God's very own. He has poured out mercy on you. This piece of Scripture is an exhortation for believers.

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"Chosen" (9) - chosen, elect, picked out, choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellence .

"Race" (9) - born, country(-man), diversity, generation, kind(-red), nation, offspring, stock, tribe or family. You are God's chosen family.

"Royal priesthood" (9) - the priestly fraternity, the order of the priest. Believers you are not merely bystanders watching some professional Christians do the work. Oh no, you are a royal priesthood. Every Christian is a representative.

"Holy nation" (9) - sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), saint.

"God's own people (possession)" (10) - preservation:—obtain(-ing), peculiar, purchased, possession, saving. You are His purchased possession. He paid the ultimate price for you so that you would. Understand friends, you are so valuable that God paid a high price as Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT) ... You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.

"Received mercy" (10) - to be compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace):—have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, shew) mercy (on), to help the afflicted, to bring help to the wretched, to experience mercy. In Christ, we have now received mercy and are experiencing it too. This is a beautiful statement that Peter makes that seems like the logical conclusion of Jesus' beauty:

A	Blessed are the merciful
B	for they shall receive mercy
B'	Having received mercy
A'	Be merciful

This is truly the standard or highlight of God's mercy to us, that He would take a filthy sinful people and make them a holy nation. That God would purchase a broken vessel and fully restore it.

ARG: **Being merciful begins with receiving mercy, with understanding the mercy that God has shown to you and the new person that you now are through the cross of Christ. You are no longer what you were, but are brand new in Jesus as the Scriptures say:**

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

This mercy is greater than we can know, making us more than just new but also God's very family:

Romans 8:15-17 (ESV) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

ILL: I heard an idea from last week's testimony that God is restoring old cars out of a junk yard. In fact, that is a very good picture of what God is doing in us. Me and my wife love that show fixer upper. It is such a joy to watch Chip and Joanna turn a dump of a house into something beautiful. I love the process! Which makes me think that I should love the process of restoration in me. God has done something far greater, He has taken the enemies of God and made them sons and daughters.

APP: In order to be merciful, to receive this promised blessing, we must first receive mercy. Will you decide to put down your guard before God and receive His mercy for you? He is ready to restore you, to adopt you into His own family and pour out His grace mercy. Will you receive it? Will you begin living as child of God, no longer what you were, but in the mercy of Christ?

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2. Because by God's mercy we can overcome our sinful passions.

EXP: (11) This feels like a therefore or a so. Having received mercy now I urge you ...

"I urge you" (παρακαλέω, *parakalēō*) - to call alongside, to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation):—beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort(-ation), intreat, pray.

"Sojourners and exiles" - a by-dweller (alien resident):—foreigner, sojourn, stranger, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship. You are merely passing through in this life, this is not your home.

"Abstain" (Imperative) - to hold one's self off, refrain, abstain. By God's mercy we can pull away from our hurts, habits and hangups. God has not left us, but has empowered us to overcome our fleshly desires.

"Passions of the flesh" (ἐπιθυμία, *epithumía*) - literally an over-desire, a craving that is overbearing, a longing (especially for what is forbidden), desire, lust (after) something unregenerate, carnal, fleshly.

"Wage war" (στρατεύομαι, *strateúomai*) - to serve in a military campaign, to contend with carnal inclinations, soldier, go to war(-fare). There is a war for your attention, there is a battle going on for your soul. Christ enables us take our eyes off of our sin and put them on Him, by His mercy we can overcome. This reminds me of a song we once sang, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Look full in his wonderful face; And the things of earth will grow strangely dim; In the light of his glory and grace."

ARG: **How is possible to abstain from our sinful passions? This is the beauty of Christ's saving grace, the power doesn't come from us but from Him. So walk with Him:**

Galatians 5:16 ESV But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

He is the giver of salvation, He is the sustainer, the guard:

2 Thessalonians 3:3 ESV But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

His love for us is never-ending, His mercies continue to pour out for us if we draw near to Him:

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NLT) The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

ILL: Now this may sound a little new age, but there are truths in therapies like positive self talk. People use phrases like, "I am smart, I am kind, I am important ..." to overcome negativity that causes them to live less effectively. "*Through repetition of affirming statements, the brain can form new neural pathways, which create physical connections to these repeated thoughts.*" (Dr. Brindusa Vanta) The apostle Peter has reminded us of a far superior way of thinking, not self talk but from God:

"I am a holy nation, I am chosen by God, I am loved by God, I am His son/daughter, His mercy is never-ending for me." This way of thinking empowers us to overcome our sin. Instead of "I am a drunk, I am always angry, I am always depressed, I will never succeed ... no, I am His and He is greater."

APP: Are you experiencing this mercy from Jesus that empowers you to overcome sin? Your hurts, habits and hangups are not simply overcome by your willpower, as you have probably already discovered. We need someone to carry the weight, an advocate to pull us through, and that comes only through Jesus. Draw close to Him, receive His mercies anew every morning and overcome those temptations.

3. Because by God's mercy we can live honorably.

EXP: (12) So now because of God's everlasting mercy for us that helps us overcome sinful ways, we can live honorably in this life. Those we interact with will see God's mercy on display and glorify Him.

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"Keep your conduct" (Imperative) - manner of life, conduct, behavior, deportment, even conversation. The way we live and the way we talk reveals the way we think about God's mercy. Is the way you act and talk informed by the mercies of God poured out for you?

"Gentiles" (ἔθνος, *ethnos*) - a tribe, nation, people group, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles. The people outside of the Christian faith.

"Honorable" - beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable, morally good, noble, honorable, conferring honor. Would people say of your conduct that it is admirable, noble, honorable?

"Glorify God" - to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate, hold in honor. The way in which you live honorably causes the lost world to honor God.

ARG: **Our power to live a lifestyle of honor and mercy come from God and are also imitating Him:**

Luke 6:36-37 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

What does it look like to live this lifestyle of mercy as God's chosen people, how do we put His mercy on display:

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

ILL: **The parable of the unforgiving debtor.** (Matthew 18:21-35) The issue with the way we live towards others is not that they don't deserve judgement at times or that they haven't committed offenses towards us that deserve justice. The issue is that we are holding a debt over others that we ourselves had forgiven hundred fold. We can see so easily how foolish this servant is, but God has done this very thing with us. We have been forgiven an eternal un-payable debt and yet we hold others to their small debts.

We have been shown mercy because God loves us not because we are righteous. Likewise we show others mercy not because they are righteous but because we love God:

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

APP: Do the mercies of God impact the way you live? Has your own forgiveness by God caused you to be forgiving towards others? The reason that others will glorify God through your conduct is that when they see you return evil with good it will cause them to question. When you "Bless those who curse you and pray for those who hurt you" (Luke 6:28), you begin to break down their walls before a holy God. Remember you are His people, His holy priesthood, His representatives to a fallen world. The way you show mercy points them to our merciful God.

CONCLUSION: We can only be merciful when we have first received God's mercy. Having received that mercy when can begin to overcome the passions of our flesh and live honorably among the lost.

This is where our Celebrate Recovery ministry comes in. It's a place where you can spend time with other believers who are learning to RECEIVE GOD'S MERCY and overcome hurts, habits, and hangups. In CR we lead people through 8 steps to recovery. Here are the first five we've covered thus far:

R.E.C.O.V.E.R.Y: (8 principles based on the Beatitudes)

Realize I'm not God. I admit I'm powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable. This is the "reality" step. "I've got a problem. I need help."

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Earnestly believe that God exists. I believe that I matter to him and that he alone has the power to help me recover. The "hope" step. "God's the answer."

Conciously choose to commit. I commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. The "commitment" step. "I'm giving my life to Jesus"

Openly examine and confess my faults. I confess my sins to God, to myself, and to someone I trust. The Housecleaning Step. "I'm casting my sin, my shame, my guilt on my Savior Jesus Christ!"

Voluntarily submit to make changes by God's power. I submit myself to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. The Transformation Step.

Will you take the transformation step? Will receive God's mercy and be merciful by:

- Believing that we are His chosen people
- Overcoming sinful desires by His power
- Living honorably.

Let's pray.