

## Three Godly Virtues

Matthew 5:7-9

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### THE PROGRESSION OF THE BEATITUDES

The first three Beatitudes show how a man stands as a sinner in relation to God – spiritually bankrupt, broken over our sin, and meekly humble. The fourth Beatitude contains the promise of God’s provision of righteousness for the man who comes to him in desperation – panting and starving for righteousness. We must come to God like the deer in Psalm 42:1-2.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Psalms 42:1-2*

The first four Beatitudes deal with the inner man. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth Beatitudes on the other hand mark a turning point in Jesus’ sermon and demonstrate the character (Romans 8:29, 12:1-2) of a genuinely converted person especially in relation to how he interacts with others. These are the practical Beatitudes. Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” Matthew 5:7-9. The man who has tasted of the goodness of God’s righteousness is to show mercy to others; he is to be pure in heart; and he is to be a peacemaker. It’s interesting also to notice that there is a correlation between the first four Beatitudes and the four that follow:

Those who are poor in spirit and recognize their need for mercy (v.3)	Are merciful to others (v. 7).
Those who mourn and are broken over their sin (v.4)	Pursue purity of heart (v. 8).
Those who are meek (v.5)	Seek to make peace with others (v. 9).
Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v.6)	Are never unwilling to pay the price of being persecuted for righteousness’ sake (v. 10).

Four things we need to be aware of as we look at the qualities:

1. A merciful, pure in heart, and peacemaking man is the result of divine grace.
2. We can understand these qualities only because we have seen them exhibited in the life of Christ.
3. Because we have seen these qualities personified in the life of Christ, we too are to demonstrate them to others.
4. We can only live out these three qualities as we pursue lives that are yielded in submission to Christ.

## **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL**

What does it mean to be merciful? To understand mercy correctly, we must first understand something of God's mercy that has been shown to us. We typically define mercy as God withholding what we rightly deserve. Another way to say that would be God not treating us as our sins deserve (Psalm 103:10).

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4–7*

*He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5–7*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:2–3*

## **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE MERCIFUL BECAUSE OF THE MERCY THEY'VE BEEN SHOWN**

1. Jesus felt mercy when he looked out over the multitudes.  
When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36
2. Jesus expressed mercy as he hung on the cross.  
And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34

### 3. God is compassionate towards His children.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Psalms 103:13–14

Because we have been the recipients of such lavish mercy from God, we in turn are to show mercy to others. Christians are to be distinctly different in how they relate to others. We are to show tender compassion to others. We are to show pity to those who are struggling under the burden of sin and its effects, knowing that we too struggle under the same burden. In Romans 9:22-23 Paul calls the redeemed “vessels of mercy”. He said, “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.”

We don't want to be the unforgiving servant of Matthew 18...

*Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. Matthew 18:23–35*

### OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE MERCY

1. How do you respond when you hear of another person who is struggling in sin? Do you pity them?
2. How do you respond when you encounter a discouraged brother or sister?
2. How do you respond when someone offends you and needs your forgiveness?

We are never more like Christ than when we are forgiving those who have sinned against us...

Let me say a brief final word concerning verse 7. This Beatitude has been problematic for some who see Jesus saying that receiving mercy from God depends on our showing mercy to others. If that were the case, if we were dealt with on those terms, no man would ever see heaven. What Jesus is saying is that we are to show mercy to others *because* of the lavish mercy that God has shown us. If we are not merciful to others, we show that we either understand very little about the mercy by which we have been saved, or that we have never received God's mercy.

## **BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART**

Purity of heart should be the desire of every blood bought sinner in response to the grace that has been given him at the cross. In 1 Timothy 1:5 Paul tells us, "The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith"

## **JESUS ALWAYS TARGETS OUR HEARTS**

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Matthew 23:25–28*

*But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." Matthew 15:18–20*

What is the heart? The heart in Scripture is the inner person. It is where you relate to God. It is the seat of your thoughts, motives, desires, cravings, intentions, and affections. Your heart is your worship center. Your heart is where you fear, have peace, rejoice, trust, believe, grow weary, and take courage. It's also the place where you make excuses, lust, hold bitterness, envy, compare yourself to others, defend yourself, and lie to yourself. Your heart is the fountain of who you are. Solomon gave us great wisdom when he encouraged us in Proverbs 4:23 saying, "Above all else, guard your heart, for from it flow the springs of life."

Jeremiah gives us insight into our hearts in Jeremiah 17:9-10. He says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." The writer of Hebrews tells us that God's Word opens our hearts and lays them bare before Him. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of

spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” Hebrews 4:12–13.

#### GOD IS AT WORK IN THE LIFE OF EVERY BELIEVER TO PURIFY HIS HEART

1. God purifies our hearts through the blood of Christ spilled on Calvary’s hill.  
How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9:14
2. God purifies our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit.  
He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5
3. God purifies our hearts as we seek Him in faith.  
And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Acts 15:8–9
4. God purifies our hearts through His Word.  
Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. John 15:3
5. God’s grace teaches us to seek a pure heart.  
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11–14

#### IT IS ONLY THE PURE IN HEART WHO WILL SEE GOD

In Psalm 24:3-5 David asks, “Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

#### **BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS**

Where do wars begin? James tells us, “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You

covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask” James 4:1-2. Wherever there are two sinners in close proximity there will be conflict. Conflict is the result of viewing another person as an obstacle to you getting what you want instead of a divinely appointed sanctification tool from God.

It is important to say a few things about what being a peacemaker isn't. A peacemaker isn't a pacifist. He doesn't make peace with sin in this world, he makes war with it. He doesn't make peace with lies and heresy, he exposes them. Jesus isn't saying that we are never to enter into conflict. Speaking of Himself He said, “Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law” Luke 12:51–53.

Christians are to be characterized as peacemakers. We are not longer at war with God (Romans 5:1), and that changes not only our relationship with God, but also our relationships with others. We are not to live as selfish, demanding, angry, troublemakers anymore. We want others to come to know peace with God. We are to do all that we can to live at peace with all men without compromising the truth.

#### THE LIFE OF A PEACEMAKER IN ROMANS 12

1. A peacemaker deals with the pride of his own heart. (v. 16)  
Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.
2. A peacemaker doesn't return evil for evil. (v. 17)  
Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
3. A peacemaker does all he can to live at peace with others. (v. 18)  
If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
4. A peacemaker doesn't seek his own revenge. (v. 19)  
Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

#### FIVE PRACTICAL NECESSITIES FOR BEING A PEACEMAKER

1. Be quick to listen and slow to speak.  
James says, “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” James 1:19–20.

2. Own your part of any conflict.

Peacemakers are willing to say, "I sinned; I was wrong; will you please forgive me?" Blaming others and refusing to take responsibility for your part of a conflict is prideful not peacemaking. It takes two to tango. Conflict is always the result of two sinners whose desires are in opposition - usually selfishly instead of surrendered to the Lordship of Christ.

3. Be ready to forgive, even when it is difficult.

It's undoubted that it can be difficult at times to forgive others when we feel that we have been wronged. A sober reflection on the sinfulness and wickedness of your own heart and God's gracious forgiveness should motivate you to forgive others. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:23, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

4. Be willing to work hard to lovingly resolve problems.

5. Be prepared to do good even when your efforts at peacemaking are rejected.

God has called you to be a peacemaker regardless of how others respond. Jesus didn't say, "Seek peace only with those who make it easy for you!"