

DISCUSSION GUIDE

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:7

The Beatitudes — Week 5

ICEBREAKER: What's someone's idiosyncrasy that really bothers you?

OVERVIEW: In the fifth beatitude Jesus says that a key to happiness is to be merciful. In Scripture we see that God is merciful and He commands us to be like Him. Mercy is expressed in three primary ways in the Bible: Helping the needy, evangelizing the lost, and forgiving the sinner. In this discussion we will go deeper with how to grow in mercy.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. How has God been merciful to you?
3. When was the last time someone other than God was merciful to you?
4. What is the opposite of mercy?
5. Read Matthew 12:1-8 and answer the questions:
 - a. Why did the Pharisees criticize the disciples?
 - b. Why did Jesus bring up David?
 - c. Why did Jesus talk about the priests?

- d. Jesus claimed to be greater than the temple, and to be the Lord of the Sabbath? What did He mean?
- e. Why did Jesus say to the Pharisees, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice"?
- f. How can you avoid making the same mistake as the Pharisees?

6. Author Jerry Bridges wrote, "Mercy seeks to meet the physical needs of others." Can you think of anyone who has a need you can meet? How can you grow in this expression of mercy — helping the needy?
7. The Puritan Thomas Watson called evangelism "soul-mercy". How is evangelism an act of mercy? Can you think of someone who needs to hear the gospel? What can you do to get the gospel to them?
8. Theologian Charles Quarles said, "Mercy involves more than generous giving to the needy. It also involves forgiving others for their sins as an expression of gratitude to God for His gracious forgiveness." Can you think of anyone you need to forgive? Explain. What does forgiveness look like in real life?
9. Why is it so important for Christians to be merciful?
10. How does mercy lead to a happier life?

The Last Word: "To overcome evil with good and answer malice with mercy is truly heroic and renders religion glorious in the eyes of all." Thomas Watson

