

Matthew 5 (Part 5) :7

Blessed Are The Merciful

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

As we are looking into this latest beatitude, which is what we find in verse 7, blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. It's always important, I think, to define the word that we're going to be looking at, which is mercy. And I find that there are some people who kind of misuse, well I don't know about misuse, but the word kind of morphs into some other words like compassion and kindness. And we'll talk about a mission of mercy, you know, we're gonna go help this family that's going through a hard time, so it's kind of a mission of mercy. Really that's not inappropriate or incorrect necessarily, but it doesn't do the full justice to what the word means.

So what does it mean when Jesus says to us, blessed are the merciful, when we say show mercy to people? What's he talking about? I find that sometimes the best way to define a word is to compare it with another word that we're maybe pretty familiar with, such as grace. And I think most of you guys know what grace is, although a lot of people mistake grace and mercy, all right? Let me put a little simple definition up on the screen for you, because grace is basically getting what we don't deserve.

When God blesses you, okay, don't ever think that God blesses you because you're such a good person. He doesn't. He blesses you because he's a good God. And what that is, is that's grace, okay? Grace is when God blesses you apart from what you deserve, all right?

So again, that's grace, but it's not necessarily mercy. Mercy, on the other hand, is not getting what we do deserve. In other words, you and I have sinned, right? The Bible says we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and so that means we deserve judgment, but we don't get it. We get love, we get forgiveness, we get eternal life.

That is getting, okay, or not getting what we do deserve. We deserve judgment, we don't get it. Grace, again, is getting what we don't deserve. He gives us blessings. We don't deserve it, but we get them anyway.

Do you know God's looking for people that are just willing to chill and just accept his blessings? And just, you know, instead of going around going, oh God, I don't deserve this. He's like, I know. Just take it. Okay, that's hard for us to do.

Mercy's tough too, although not as tough. I kind of like the idea of not getting what I do deserve, you know? I really kind of like that a lot. I mean, it's kind of like getting away with murder in a weird sort of a way. This is something that Paul obviously talked about, the Apostle Paul.

In fact, there's one passage in Titus where he encompasses kind of both of these ideas of grace, getting what we don't deserve, and mercy, not getting what we do deserve. I'll put it up on the screen for you. It's Titus 3.5, and it says this. He saved us, okay? God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done.

So the first thing Paul points out is we don't deserve what he gave us. That's grace, okay? But it goes beyond grace. He also says that it is because of his mercy also, which is not receiving what we do deserve. He goes on to say he saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

So do you see how you see both of those concepts of grace and mercy in the same passage? So let's kind of redefine now our definitions of grace and mercy, shall we? How about something like this? God gives us eternal life even though we don't deserve it, and that's grace. Okay, fair enough?

But let's go on to the other definition. God does not give us condemnation and judgment even though we deserve it. That's mercy. All right, now I think we're coming up with a little better definition of what these words mean. And now you see why when someone simply uses mercy as the idea of doing a benevolent or kind act, it doesn't really tell the whole story.

And again, we'll hear that a lot. We're going on a mission of mercy. They took food to this impoverished land. It was a mission of mercy. Well, yeah, that's one definition, but really that's more leaning on just the side of kindness.

It was a mission of kindness, a mission of compassion. There's nothing wrong with saying we're going on a mission of compassion. And that really is closer to what's really happening. A mission of mercy means I'm going to go to these people and not give them what they deserve. I'm not going to give them what they do deserve.

Okay? So mercy always assumes something that you did wrong, but you're not getting what you deserve because of what you did wrong. That's why going on a mission of mercy to help people with food

isn't really telling the whole story because they really haven't done anything wrong. We're just going to be nice. All right.

Well, okay. Having established the definition of mercy, having established through Titus, that you and I have been saved through God's mercy. He did not give us what we deserved, which was judgment, hell, right? Separation from him. Let me declare to you a truth of God's word that literally permeates the New Testament.

You ready for this? In light of God's mercy to you, he wants you and I to go do the same for other people. Now let me define who those other people are, okay? Well, first of all, who did God show mercy to? Those who offended him, those who sinned against him, those who wronged him.

He didn't give them, us, what we deserve. Now he says, you go do the same. So who are you going to go do this to? People who've hurt you, people who've offended you, people who have sinned against you. Okay?

That's who he wants you to show mercy to. That's tough for us, you see. Really tough. Because although we love God's mercy, we love it when he doesn't give us what we do deserve. It's a little bit tougher for us to do that for other people because we have this kind of sense of justice, you know?

Have you ever noticed that children just come up with this from their very early, you know, ages of life? If somebody seems to get by with something, and they really deserve punishment, but they kind of like get away with it. Oh, kids are just, I mean, not about themselves, but about their, maybe their siblings. You know, if they get by with it, they're like, yeah. Right?

I remember when I got away with stuff, you know, I tell you, I never forget one time when I was about 15 years old. I did tell my dad about this later on. My dad used to, my dad was a, was a high school superintendent, pretty much through most of my school years. And he always had school cars that he would bring home and kind of leave in the driveway. And one time, one weekend, he and my mom had to go off to some meeting thing for the whole weekend.

And they left me home alone. I was the last of the four kids. My brother, I think was home at the time too, but yeah, he would have been about 17, but he was a busy kid. So I was home alone. And the last thing my dad said to me before he left was, Hey Paul, when we get back out the car and leave, would you take the school car?

Again, I was like 15. He said, would you take the school? It was an old station wagon. Would you take it and put it in the garage? I said, sure, I'll take care of it for you.

Have a good weekend. Yeah, really dumb. I was 15 years old. Uh, I liked driving fast and I loved the sound of squealing tires on pavement. And so I called my buddy, we got a car for the weekend, buddy.

So come on over. So he came over, we proceeded to go out. Do you guys know what, do you guys know what neutral drops are? It was something we, this is an old, we would, you put the car in reverse and you go in, you go for a while and then you put it in neutral and then you drop it down into low and hit the gas. You know, we were, we did that like for a whole afternoon with this ugly station wagon school car.

Well, eventually, uh, we realized the transmission wasn't working so good. And we could bear, I mean, we had like one forward gear. And, uh, so I thought we better get this thing back. So we limped back to the house and I put it in the garage, put down the garage door. And when my dad came home after that weekend, I said to him, I said, Hey dad, You might want to check on that car because when I put it in the garage it was kind of clunking, making a clunking sound, you know.

Now the next comment by my dad was either gonna set me free or fry me for life and I waited for that next comment. It could have been, really I've never had a problem with that car, did you go out and drive it? He didn't say that. He said yeah, it's been having problems. I was like, yes, I got away with it.

We love that. I did not get what I deserved. Right? Yes. But you know what?

I've had other people in my life who I've seen them do things wrong. And when I do, I look at them and I go, they better pay. You know how it is like we're like that, aren't we? We want to see other people pay, but we ourselves, oh, we love it when we get off scot-free. So here we are at this next beatitude and Jesus comes to us and he says, my children, I love you with an everlasting love and I have shown you a kind of mercy that is absolutely beyond what you can imagine.

You don't even know how much you have offended me. You don't know how much your sin has offended a holy God. And yet I have wiped off your sin from your slate. I have completely removed it. I have treated you like it no longer exists.

That's mercy. I didn't give you what you deserved. Now, children, in light, or shall we say in the shadow of what I have done for you, go and do the same to others. Wow. What is so hard about that is that we often lose sight of that shadow of God's mercy.

We forget the depth to which we have been forgiven, how much he has removed our sin from our lives. And we are so quick then to hold other things against people. Jesus taught about this. I want to show you another passage here from later on in Matthew. So skip ahead to the 18th chapter of Matthew, would you please?

Matthew chapter 18. Is Hector in the room? Could we have the fan just moving a little bit, just kind of move the air? All right, skip down to verse 21. Now, we're gonna read this whole section here, so don't read it, don't read ahead.

Give me your attention as we're going through this. Let's read the first couple of verses. It says, Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times? And Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven, as it is also rendered.

Now, let me just tell you what's going on here. Give me your attention for just a moment. Peter probably thought that he was being pretty generous here, because you see, the popular rabbinical teaching during this time was that you were really under obligation to forgive someone, if they came and asked, up to three times. Yep, they come the first time, they ask for forgiveness, you must forgive them. Second time, you must forgive them.

Third time, absolutely, you must forgive them. Then fourth time, they offend you, they come to ask for forgiveness, you are under no obligation to forgive them, according to the teachings of the rabbis. So Peter, you know, knew that. So he's trying to be extra generous, and he says to the Lord, so what do you think? Seven times?

I mean, Peter's probably thinking, I'll take the popular rabbinical teaching, I'll double it and add one. Seven times, that sounds like a very gracious, merciful thing for me to do. Jesus comes back, he says, no, how about 77 times, or 70 times 7, or whatever? What Jesus is basically saying is, as often as your brother comes and asks for forgiveness, you are to forgive him. As often as he comes, you are to forgive him.

And so then, you know, it's one thing for Jesus to say that to you and I, you need to forgive. But it's a whole other thing together to say, here's why you are to forgive. He tells the next story to establish the foundation of why. Here's why you are to forgive. Look with me now, beginning in verse 23.

It says, therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants, and as he began the settlement, a man who owed him 10,000 talents was brought to him. And by the way,

10,000 talents is an absolutely astronomical amount of money that this man could not physically repay in his lifetime. What does that remind you of? That remind you of you? Right?

It should. That should remind you of you. We stand before God owing a debt that we can't possibly repay. Okay? In other words, there's nothing you can do that's good enough.

There's nothing you can pay that is powerful enough for you to repay the debt that you owe God. You with me? So Jesus is making this sound just like life for you and I. So he goes on, and it says that since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him.

Be patient with me, he begged, and I'll pay back everything. Notice how he gets on his knees, cries out for patience, and it says the servant's master took pity on him, and this is amazing, canceled the debt and let him go. Now that it seems crazy to me. It's like, why wouldn't the master say something like, okay, all right, ten thousand talents, there's no way you can possibly, tell you what, let's, I'm gonna rewrite the contract for one talent or or whatever it might be, and then you just pay that off and we're, we're good. No, this, this master responds with compassion.

Now once again, why? Why is Jesus telling the story that way? Because that's the way God treated us, right? We have a debt that we can't repay, possibly ever, and God takes mercy upon us, right? And he says, I'm wiping out your debt.

All of it. Hundred percent, wiping it out, okay? Wow. It's pretty crazy, but Jesus is telling the story because he wants you and I to understand, this is about, this is about us, too. This is how God has treated us.

All right, so he goes on. It says that the servants, excuse me, but when the, verse 28, but when the servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and by comparison, that's a few bucks. We'll call it, we'll call it five dollars, okay? Just for the sake of interest. So he owes him five bucks, and he, it says that he, he, he goes to him and he grabs this man by the throat, okay?

And he says, pay back what you owe me. Starts choking him. Verse 29, look what his fellow servant does. Same exact thing. Fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, be patient with me, and I will pay you back.

Same words. But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison, which is debtor's prison, until he could pay back the debt. And when the other servant saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and went and told their master everything that had happened. And then the master called the servant in.

You wicked servant, he said. I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. And then look at verse 33. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you? And in anger, his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed.

And then we have this final, rather sobering verse. This is how my heavenly father will treat each of you, unless you forgive your brother from your heart. Wow. Wow, that's crazy powerful. Now, okay.

It's important that we understand something about this forgiveness that Jesus is talking about. This forgiveness where this man... refuses to show mercy to a fellow servant. And then Jesus ends it up by saying, this is how my heavenly Father is going to treat you unless you forgive your brother from your heart. Now, you need to understand something.

We're not talking about the forgiveness of eternal life here. What I mean by that is that when a person comes to know Jesus as their Savior, they ask for forgiveness, they come and they say, Lord, forgive me of all of my sin, and God forgives you past, present and future, you are forgiven. Have you ever asked yourself the question, why do I need to then keep asking forgiveness? I mean, if he if he forgave me, and then when I came to him and confessed my sin, why do I keep having to ask? Because you know, Jesus taught us to say in the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, right?

Why? Why do we got to keep doing that? Is it so we'll get saved again? In other words, when I sin, do I lose my salvation that I asked for previously? And now I've got to come and ask for forgiveness again, so that he'll save me again?

No, that's not what's going on. When you're saved, you're saved. And nothing changes about that. But you need to ask for forgiveness, so that there's nothing between you that rift between you is settled. I use the same example of my wife and I.

Believe me, in 34 years of marriage, I've made my share of mistakes, hurting Sue's feelings. But when I do, it's not like we're instantly no longer husband and wife, we're still married, right? I don't have to go and remarry her, just because I offended her or I did something wrong. But I do need to resolve the issue. Because now there's an issue between us, there's a rift between us, right?

And that's not good between a husband and a wife. So I go to my wife, and I say, honey, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have spoken to you like that. I shouldn't have done what I did. I apologize. Would you please forgive me?

And my lovely wife has never yet refused to forgive me once she forgives me. And, and, and what happens then is now our relationship is being healed. You see that rift between us is being healed. Well, it's the same with God. You come to know Christ as your Savior.

When you confess your sins, you lay before me, you say, I need you as the Savior of my life, you're born again. That's not going to change. Now, you're not going to be unborn again, because you sin. But there's going to be a rift between you and God. So Jesus taught us to come to him on a regular basis and say, Lord, forgive me, forgive the debts that I, I have, you know, and that you have against me, as I forgive those who have debts also against me and that sort of thing.

So this is what we're taught to do. And this is what Jesus is talking about here, when he refers to this, this lack of forgiveness, that is, is going to be in the life of an individual who refuses to forgive their brothers. He is talking here about a situation where this child of God now loses sight of the fact that God has shown them mercy, and they now are refusing to show mercy to other people. And so Jesus says, there's a very sobering reality to that, when we come to God, and we say, Hey, Lord, I know that you love me, I know that I'm saved, I know I'm a child of God, I ask you to forgive me. Jesus says that God the Father is going to withhold that forgiveness because you have withheld forgiveness with others.

Okay. And that's a very serious thing, because it means there will remain that breach in the relationship. There will remain that that issue between you and God. See, this whole idea of forgiving, like we've been forgiven is something that the Bible talks a lot about. I'll show you a couple of passages here on the screen.

The first one is from Ephesians. And it goes like this, be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, but then look at how it ends. Just as in Christ, God forgave you. Now, isn't doesn't that lend a whole lot more power to that? It's one thing to say to somebody, hey, you need to forgive that person.

You need to be kind and compassionate and forgive them for the debt that they have, and so forth. But it's another thing to say, forgive that person in the same way you have been forgiven. Right? That's, that's a different situation now, because it gives us a standard by which we are to forgive. And then there's another

passage from Colossians chapter three, Paul writes, bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

And then he says this at the end again, forgive as the Lord forgave you. See, once again, the standard has been set for you and I for how we are to show mercy. It is the Lord's example that we're to follow. It's not your neighbor's example, or my example, or the other person's example, however good or bad those examples may be. It's the Lord's example that you are to follow.

So you are to forgive like you've been forgiven. You are to show mercy, like you have received mercy. It's really hard, isn't it when people have heard, when people have heard us, when people have done things to really, I mean, really make life miserable for us. You know who I think about when I think about somebody who had life made miserable for him? I think of King David.

And the reason I think of David is because, you know, Bible scholars and teachers are a little unsure on how long David ran for his life from King Saul, but we think it was somewhere between 13 and 15 years. 13 and 15 years, somewhere between that there, David ran for his life because Saul was jealous of him and was hunting him down like a dog. That's a long time. Believe me, that's a long time. I have a hard time camping for just a few days sometimes.

And yet he's out living in caves for 13 to 15 years. Well, you just want that to be over, don't you? Do you know that God gave him, on two separate occasions, God gave David a total open door potential of just ending it just like that. He could have killed Saul on two occasions. On one that really comes to mind, you'll remember that Saul and his army was out hunting down David like they usually did.

And they all, they couldn't find him one day. So they decided to go to sleep. They all slept down in this kind of this valley thing. And David and his men crept up over the top of this ridge and they saw David, or excuse me, they saw Saul and his whole army sleeping. And the Bible says that David and one of his other men crept down into the camp of Saul.

And nobody woke up. And there was Saul's spear in the ground next to his head. And David's companion that he came along with, came to him and said, David, this is the day. This is the day that God has given you. He's given your enemy into your hands.

Now just get rid of him. No more running. No more living in caves. No more living like a, like an animal being hunted. Just, just be done with it.

And if you're a little squeamish about it, I'll take care of it. He said, seriously, I'll just, all it'll take is just I'll pick up a spear and just, just one quick thrust. He's dead. And it's over. The battle is over.

Now think about this guys. Can you imagine 15 years being on the run? How tempting it is to just get rid of it? Because you know what? This jerk deserves it.

He deserves what he gets. I've done nothing wrong to this man. I have been nothing but faithful. I've been nothing but honest. I've been nothing but true.

And he has hunted me like a dog for these 15 years. And I'm sick of it. And I'm going to put an end to it now. And here's why he deserves it. Grab that spear.

Wham, that's it done. And I can justify it all day long because he deserves what he gets. And besides, God gave him into my hands. But that's not what David did. David took the spear and he left everyone just the way they were.

He went back up on the ridge and he called out to Saul from up on that ridge and to his men. They woke up and he showed Saul his spear. Is this yours? I came down into your camp while you slept. God gave you into my hands.

And even though you deserved to have this spear run through your heart, I spared you. I spared you. That's mercy. You know what I see in David's life after that point I see God's mercy You know David was not a paragon of virtue He was a he was a cool guy, and we like to like him, but he had his problems I mean David had his pretty serious moral failures You know I mean taking another man's wife impregnating her and then arranging the circumstances of a battle so that the woman's husband Would be caught in the crossfire of heavy battle and die So that David could have the woman for himself, that's pretty serious stuff And that's what David did and there were other things David did that were pretty questionable and Yet you know what we see over and over again in David's life, and sometimes it's hard to justify it in our minds But we see God's blessing We see the opposite of judgment We see God's mercy why Because David was a man who showed mercy And what Jesus says in this beatitude we see borne out in the life of David and many other people since then Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy They understand how much mercy God has poured into their lives And they pour it into the others and as a result they to reap Mercy and that is the promise of this passage There are a couple other things That I want to say about mercy and forgiveness that I think are important to add here on kind of the tail end of what we're doing number one People can abuse the request for mercy if you have been convicted of a sinful behavior in your life, and you've decided finally to cut it out of your life and Perhaps there is a

person in your life Who is now not real happy with you? Because you've cut sin out of your life And they're coming to you and they're putting pressure on you to forgive them and what they mean by that is I want you to Accept me back so that we can keep sinning like we did before that's called emotional Manipulation and that's not what God is talking about here when he talks about extending mercy, okay?

I have talked to so many people where this sort of a Scenario is going on and someone will come to them say hey you need to forgive me You know where you've got a situation where maybe there's two people living together outside of marriage and one of them finally gets convicted and says You know what we're not going to do this anymore. You got to move out And so the person moves out But then they put pressure on the first person saying you need to forgive me and what they're saying is I want to be able To come back into your home and have sex with you whenever I want and I'm gonna I'm gonna disguise it under the idea of forgiveness and mercy Listen God does want you to be a person of mercy. He also wants you to be pure Sexually pure and if somebody's putting that kind of a minute emotional manipulation on you that is wrong with a capital W I can't begin to tell you how wrong all right, so please don't get Misconstrued on this whole idea of mercy there's another aspect of forgiveness and the showing of mercy that I want to Possibly correct I have met a lot of Christians over the years who will not show mercy To someone because they believe that if they do forgive That means they have to go back and open themselves up to the same offenses or abuse That caused the thing in the first place in other words We will talk to them about forgiveness, and they'll say I just can't forgive them And I'll say why can't you forgive them? And they'll say I can't forgive them because if I do I'm just gonna have to invite this person back into my life And it'll start all over again, and I always correct that I say where in the world did you get that idea? That that's not that's not what forgiveness is all about forgiveness is releasing a debt that someone owes I want you to remember something about King David in the example that we talked about here a moment ago in This in fact in this very example that I cited to you after David Held up Saul's spear and showed him that he could have killed him if he'd wanted to but he instead showed mercy Saul Really poured out his heart to David in that instance, and he said David.

You're a righteous man. You're more righteous than I am God is gonna bless you. I know it and He basically in a sense said I'm sorry And he proved it by picking up his army and going home. He no longer pursued David after that point But I want you to know something about David He didn't go back home David didn't go back to Jerusalem. He didn't go back and take up residence in his house again and say well.

It's all good It's all patched up between Saul, and I I forgave him and so we're good now. He didn't do that. He stayed out In the wilderness you know why because Saul still couldn't be trusted Listen forgiving

someone does not Include necessarily that you have to trust someone if someone isn't trustworthy You know and they've proved it over the years they may come to you and say please forgive me for what I've done You are totally free To forgive them and you need to for you to be free and for you to walk in obedience to the Word of God You need to forgive them, but you don't need to open yourself up to trusting them again if they're not trustworthy David didn't and I cite that as a biblical example David knew better than to just go home and pretend like everything was okay But he also did something else that was very important. He forgave he truly forgave Saul For hunting him for all those years and when David finally took the throne do you know what he did as king he? Searched through the land for some of Saul's descendants So he could show kindness to them He searched for them.

He looked for them He put out the word go find some of Saul's Relatives so that I can bless them. He finally found a guy you remember He found a guy by the name of Mephibosheth He was crippled in his legs, and he he gets this message King David wants to see you I bet Mephibosheth thought this is the end of my life He thought I'm gonna go I'm gonna stand before the king He'll probably say off with your head, and that'll be it, and I'm sure I'm sure he thought that was it And he's got in the presence of King David and David said I want to bless you And he gave him land and He gave him servants, and he said you will be cared for for the rest of your life It's weird you know In other words what David said is I am NOT going to give you what you deserve I'm gonna bless you because God hasn't given me what I deserved and instead God has blessed my life Not crazy David is really truly an amazing example not perfect by any means but amazing nonetheless So please understand people these two ideas of forgiveness number one Forgiveness is never to be a tool of someone to manipulate you into doing something. You know is wrong and Secondly forgiveness does not Mandate that you go back into an abusive situation so that that person can just hurt you again but You still need to forgive you still need to release the debt and That means You owe me nothing I came before God and I cried out to him about a debt that was bigger than this one between me and you I Cried out to him, and I said Lord forgive me, and he said I'm removing this debt from you So now I'm looking at you And I'm looking at this little debt that that that you have against me, and I'm gonna say the same thing The debt is gone It's gone Why do we do that Because Jesus showed us the pattern of how we're to treat other people and He gives us the strength to do it, too so God has been merciful to you Go and do likewise You You