



Old Testament Reading: Daniel 9:1-19 – New Testament Reading: Titus 3:1-7

Behold The King
“Life in the Kingdom of God” # 7
Matthew 5:7

From the very beginning, God declared that those who would believe in Him should become like His Son, Jesus Christ.

- In Romans 8:29, the Apostle Paul wrote, *“For whom He foreknew, He did also*

predestinate to become conformed to the image of His Son.”

- In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described the characteristics of His life. We know them as “The Beatitudes” – attitudes Jesus manifested while He was on the earth and attitudes that will be manifested in the lives of those who receive Him as their Savior.
- Those attitudes are humility, repentance, meekness, spiritual hunger, mercy, purity, peacemaking, enduring persecution.
- Since each beatitude flows from the spiritual maturity of the one before it, it is only those whose “hunger and thirst” for righteousness is being filled by Christ who can understand the mercy they have received from God and, therefore, can be merciful to others.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS THE CALL TO EVERY BELIEVER

- When we were “born again” spiritually, God gave us everything we would need to develop into fully devoted disciples of Christ. *“God’s divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us.”* – 2 Peter 1:3
- It is the responsibility of every “born again” believer to “flesh out” that which God imparted to them – *“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love.”* – 2 Peter 1:5-7
- Therefore, the essence of spiritual maturity is to become an effective witness for Christ by being fruitful in the knowledge of His Word.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS THE GOAL OF EVERY PASTOR

- Pastors are to *“Equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure that belongs to the fullness of Christ.”* – Ephesians 4:11-13
- Pastors are to *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that does not*

need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:15

- Pastors are to *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” – 2 Timothy 4:2*
- Pastors are to *“Admonish and teach every man with all wisdom, that he might present every man, complete in Christ, that they would become mature in their understanding of their salvation and fully assured of the will of God for their lives.”*
Colossians 1:28-29, 4:12
- Pastors are to “make disciples” – *“And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” – 2 Timothy 2:2*

***“Christianity without Discipleship
is always Christianity without Christ.”***

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PASTOR WAYNE’S JOURNEY TOWARD SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- He accepted Christ at the age of nine, and while that decision was confirmed many times and in many ways over the years, it was also confronted because of his lack of spiritual growth.
- When he was 24 years old, a man challenged him to surrender his life unto the Lordship of Christ. Around the same time, four men took the time to show him how to mature in his faith through a daily time in prayer and personal Bible study.
- Later, God called him to attend Bible College to prepare for the ministry, and since that day, He has challenged everyone to make that same life-changing decision.
- The reason for his “intense appeal” for every believer to fully surrender their lives unto the Lordship of Christ is because he knows what he missed for those first 15 years, what he almost lost because of his pursuit of worldly goals, and what joy and

blessings await those who are willing to take that next step.

“A person can be saved and never grow spiritually, but who would want to face Jesus Christ with that kind of selfishness?”

The “beatitudes” outline the pathway to spiritual maturity.

- To be ***“poor in spirit”*** – is to recognize our inability to provide our own way into the kingdom of God – that we need a Savior.
- To ***“mourn”*** – is to see our sins from God’s perspective and to realize what those sins have kept us from.
- To become ***“meek”*** – is to humble ourselves before God and realize, were it not for the grace of God, we would have never been allowed into God’s kingdom.
- To ***“hunger and thirst for righteousness”*** – is the evidence that we have taken those first three steps. God imputes our sin to Christ and the righteousness of Christ to us. Being pure of sin, we are accepted in God’s presence, and we long to know more.
- The evidence we are filled with the righteousness of Christ is that we have the same mercy toward others as God had for us.

1. The Context of the Beatitude –

Jesus’ main purpose for this sermon was to teach His disciples to become “fishers of men,” and to do that, **He had to contrast the failed religion of Judaism with the kingdom of God.**

- Judaism was based upon one’s outward obedience to the laws God had given the Jews, as well as the 613 laws the Pharisees had added. It was superficial “acts of self-righteousness” to draw attention to themselves, and to make them appear to be holy.
- **The fruit of religion** is false righteousness that always leads to legalism – following the rules without a true relationship.

- **The fruit of imputed righteousness** is true righteousness – it is the outward expression of the inward transformation that proves one’s relationship with God.

2. The Content of the Beatitude –

“A Christian IS something before he DOES something!”
Martin Lloyd Jones

The Greek word that is translated as “mercy” in verse 7 means more than the absence of punishment. **Mercy is compassion in action.**

- Seeing how lost man was separated from God because of his sins, Jesus said it was necessary for Him to be a **“merciful high priest,”** and to do what was necessary to make reconciliation for the sins of the people – Hebrews 2:17
- The companion word for **“mercy”** in the Greek edition of the Old Testament is **“chesed,”** which means **“to have mercy.”**
- The expanded meaning includes: **“To succor the afflicted; to give help to the wretched; to rescue the miserable.”**
- Mercy goes beyond sympathy and even beyond forgiveness.
- Mercy looks beyond a person’s faults and failures and does what is required to meet their needs, regardless of the costs.
- Citizens of God’s kingdom will never think they are better than anyone, but rather they will be willing to stoop down and serve everyone – especially those who don’t deserve it.

With that new understanding of “mercy,” let us rethink Paul’s words in Ephesians 2:1-4 regarding our own salvation:

- Verse 1 – **“And you hath He quickened”** – by the grace of God, we were “born again”

by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Verse 1-3 – we were ***“Dead in trespasses and sins”*** because we were just like everyone else in the world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the lust of the mind – we were by nature children of wrath – i.e., we deserved the wrath of God.
- Verse 4 – ***“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us”*** – it was God’s mercy that motivated Him to forgive us, redeem us, and save us because of His great love for us.
- **Therefore, God’s mercy upon us was His love expressed to us – it was His compassion in action.**

Questions:

- What did we deserve from God, seeing that we were born with a sin nature and that we had expressed that sin nature by sinning, either in attitude or action?

- God said the ***“wages of sin is death,”*** and in this context, death means eternal separation from God.
- What did God give to us because of His great love for us? _____
- On the day we were saved, we didn’t receive what we deserved, because of His mercy, but we received what we didn’t deserve, because of His grace.
- What did we deserve the next time we sinned? _____
- What did we get because of His mercy? _____
- ***“It is the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions they fail not; they are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.”*** Lamentations 3:22-23

We have been saved by His grace, but it is because of His mercy that we are being

saved today and will be saved tomorrow, and the next day, until we are SAFE in His presence, forever!

3. The Conduct of the Beatitude –

Many have turned this beatitude into a humanistic, reciprocal virtue – *“If I’m merciful to others, they will be merciful unto me.”* However, there are two major problems with that view:

- Mercy is the undeserved compassion of God, or else it is not mercy. God’s mercy cannot be earned, deserved, or merited; it is given because it is needed, not because it is deserved.
- Jesus was the most merciful man that ever lived on this earth, and yet those to whom He showed the greatest mercy were the ones who hurled insults at Him, spit in His face, cursed Him, mocked Him, screamed for His death, and watched as they nailed Him to the cross.

To be a citizen in the kingdom of God, you must receive God’s mercy through these five steps:

- Admitting you are a sinner and in need of a Savior.
- Repenting of your sins with tears and anguish.
- Becoming meek and humble before God.
- Hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of Christ.
- Realizing, each time you sin, God gives you more of His mercy.

The evidence that we have taken those five steps is that we are merciful to those who have not yet traveled that same pathway, those who are still in bondage to their sin.

- **If that mercy is there**, you may be sure you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, and you are a Christian.
- **If that mercy is NOT there**, you may have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior to

obtain God's forgiveness for your sins, but you have not surrendered your life unto Him as your Lord, giving Him full authority over your life.

- Many have come to this point in their journey and turned back because they think the price of obedience is too great. *For some reason, they seem to forget the price of disobedience.*
- **Until we empty ourselves of ourselves and allow God to fill us with Himself, we will never know the joy of our salvation or have the ability to be merciful unto others.**