“You Get What You Give”, Don't Worry - Be Happy! Part 5 of 8 – October 6, 2013 at SBC

 Matthew 5:7

We're in this series, on the Beatitudes -- Jesus' Secrets, . . . of Happiness. Four of these beatitudes, deal with our relationship, to God, . . . and, four of them, deal with our relationship, to each other. Today, we're going to look at **mercy**, . . . which has to do with our relationship, . . . with each other.

Matthew 5:7 – *"Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy, shown to them!"* Jesus is saying, . . . you get, what you give. It's the law, . . . of direct return. If you criticize, other people, . . . they're going to, criticize you.

If you're friendly, to other people, . . . they're going to, be friendly to you. If you're merciful, to other people, . . they'll be merciful, to you. If you want, to be happy, . . . treat people right.

What is the right way, . . to treat people? Be merciful. What is mercy? **Mercy is love, . . . in action**. It's more, than just, . . an attitude. More than just, feeling sorry, for people. It's doing something. The Bible says, God is, . . a merciful God. Psalm 145:8 – *"God is kind and merciful, slow to get angry, and full of love."*

If you want to be like God, . . . you have to learn, . . . to be merciful.

\* How do I know, if I'm showing mercy? There are, **four marks, . . . of mercy**. You can evaluate yourself, to see how merciful, a person you are. If you give it, . . . you get it. If you don't give it, . . you don't get it.

**1. If I'm Merciful, . . . I will be patient, with those, . . . who are peculiar**.I believe that, in every life, some weirdos, must fall. Maybe, their elevator, doesn't go all the way to the top, . . . a good egg, but a little cracked. How do you handle, those kinds, . . . of obnoxious people? What’s the Bible say?

I Thessalonians 5:14 – *". . . Encourage the timid, help the weak, and be patient, with everyone."* Are you patient, with everyone? I'm not. The Bible says, if I'm merciful, . . . I'll be patient, with those, who are peculiar.

How can you be patient, with those, who are peculiar? You learn, . . . their background. When you understand, where a person comes from, . . . you stop saying, "Look how far, they've got to go," . . and, start saying, "Look how far, . . . they've come!" That makes you, . . . a little more patient.

You look beneath, . . the external behavior, the goofiness, and look at, the internal pain. Because, behind every peculiar behavior, there's loneliness, hurt, depression, or a kind of anxiety, that God says, . . we need, to look at.

Romans 15:7 – *"Accept each other, in the Lord, . . . even as Christ, has accepted you."* Merciful people, . . . are accepting people. They're not quick, to criticize, to judge. They realize, that hurtful people, are hurting people.

**2. If I'm a Merciful person, . . . I'll forgive those, . . . who have fallen**. When people, make mistakes, do you rub it in? Or, do you, rub it out? When people let you down, do you hold it over their head, . . . for the rest of their life, . . . never let them, off the hook? That's, . . . not mercy.

There once was man, many years ago, whose wife, . . . did a very foolish thing, in the first six months, of their marriage – an unwise decision. She repented of it, and asked for forgiveness, . . . but, he never, . . . forgave her. He held it over her head, . . . he kept reminding her of it, . . . he used it, to justify, his own behavior, . . . he abused her, for 30 years verbally, . . . with this thing, she had done. One day, . . . she just, left him.

Colossians 3:13 – *"Be gentle, and ready to forgive, never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."* It's interesting about forgiveness, that when you're on the receiving end, it feels so right, . . . when you're called to give it, it feels so wrong. We don't want to forgive people, . . . we want justice.

Like the lady, who had her picture taken, at a photographer's. She brought it back, and said, "It doesn't, do me justice!" He said, "You don't need justice, . . . you need mercy!"

If I'm patient, I will be forgiving, to the fallen. It's a lot easier, to criticize, . . . than, it is to sympathize. It's a lot easier, to point a finger, . . . than, it is to lend, a helping hand.

**3. If I'm a Merciful person, . . . I will help those, . . . who are hurting**.

Proverbs 3:27 – *"Wherever you possibly can, do good, to those, who need it."* Mercy is, . . . practical assistance. There are people, all around you, who are hurting. When you feel sorry, for those people, . . . that's not, being like Christ. When you do something about it, . . . that's, being like Christ. When you take action, . . . when you do something, about it.

I John 3:17-18 – *"If someone who is supposed to be a Christian, has enough money to live on, . . . and, sees a brother in need, but won't help him, . . . how can God's love, be in him? Let's stop, just saying, we love people, . . . let's show it, by our actions."* That verse, . . . stabs me, . . . like a dagger.

Don't just say, we love people, . . show it! Do something, real. Let's really, help people. John Wesley's motto: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can." Help to those, who are hurting.

He is probably, one of the men, . . . who made one of the greatest impacts, . . . in the world. He started, . . . the Methodist church. He says, when you see someone hurting, . . . a merciful person, . . . does something, about it.

Somebody asked, Flip Wilson, one time, "What's your religion?" He answered, "I'm a Jehovah's bystander." He didn't want to, . . . get involved. We all know, a lot of, . . . Jehovah's bystanders.

Remember the story, of the Good Samaritan. The man who was mugged, thrown over, to the side of the road. Two guys walked by -- "I can't get involved. Sorry, about what happened, but, I can't get involved!" The third guy came, took action, took him to the Holiday Inn, left his American Express Gold Card, to take care of him, and said, "I'll pay for it all." That's mercy. Jesus is saying, Happy are those, who care enough, to get involved.

Jude 1:24 – *"Be merciful, to those, who doubt."* When you're hurting, . . that's the most likely time, you're going to doubt. When you're really hurting, you say, "Where is God? He's not hearing, . . my prayer. Maybe, He doesn't care. Maybe, He doesn't, even exist!" If you've never, had those doubts, . . . you've never been, in very much pain. If you've been in pain, . . . you know exactly, what I'm talking about.

What is the, Christ like response, . . . to people, who doubt? You don't, . . . debate them: "I'm going to prove to you, that God exists!" You don't demean them, put them down, disown them -- "You're not a Christian, if you're having doubts!" You don't, . . . desert them.

What do you do? You show, mercy. Be understanding, . . . and, supporting them. Show mercy, to those, who doubt, . . . when they're, in pain.

**4. If I'm Merciful, . . . I'll do good, . . . to my enemies**.

Luke 6:33, 35-36 – *"If you do good, to those who do good to you, what credit is that, to you! Even sinners, do that! But, love your enemies, do good to them, . . . then, your reward will be great. Be merciful, just as, your Father is!"*

If you want to be like God, . . be merciful. Do good, to those, who do evil, to you. That's exactly, the opposite, . . . of what society says. Society says, when people hurt you, . . hurt them back, get even! Gossip about them, destroy them, . . . anything you can. God says, "No, that's a reactor. Be an actor, . . not, a reactor. You not only, forgive that person, . . but be nice, to the guy." That's what Jesus would do. That's so hard to do!

Tomorrow morning, . . . you go to work. The guy who is, constantly criticizing you, . . . who is really a jerk, . . the Bible says, you're to do good, to that person. How would it be, if every time he criticized you, . . . you complimented him?

You go to school, . . . and, those people, who are putting you down, for being a Christian, . . every time they put you down, . . you build them up, say something nice to them, and encourage them. That would, . . blow their minds! That's what Jesus, says to do. That's what, . . . being merciful is. You return good, for evil.

Why? The best way, to eliminate an enemy, . . is to turn him, . . . into a friend. Smother them, . . with kindness. They don't know how to handle it, . . . because, the world does not, respond that way. They don't know, what to do with it. All of a sudden, . . . you're in control, of the situation. You're on the offense, . . . not, the defense. You're acting, . . . not reacting.

Mercy is love, in action. It's the way, God treats people. God is kind, merciful, . . . slow to anger. The rest of the verse, in the Living Bible, says *". . . His compassion is entertained, in everything that He does."*

When we meet people, who are oddballs, they just don't fit, they're heavenly sandpaper -- irritating – and, you don't get along with them, . . . you're to be patient, with those kind of people. Because, you check out, . . . their background, and realize, . . . that, hurting people, . . . hurt people.

Then, you're forgiving, to the fallen, . . . because, we all fall. We all stumble, nobody's perfect. We don't hold, a grudge. And, we help those, who are hurting, not just feel, sorry for them (like James says, *"If you see a guy without any clothes, . . . and say, be warmed, and of good cheer. See you later."* And, you don't do anything, about it.) And, then you also, do good to those, . . . who do bad to you.

That's, mercy. And, that's tough, . . . to do. It's very tough to do, and that's why, you need some very powerful motivators, . . . to become, a merciful person.

\*\*\*\* We've talked about, the Meaning of mercy, . . . the Marks of mercy. Now, I want to give you, three motivations, on why, you need, to be merciful, this week. How do I apply this, to my life? **Motives for mercy**:

**1. Because God, . . . has shown me mercy**.

Matthew 18:3 – *"Shouldn't you be merciful, to other people, just as I have been merciful, to you?"* God expects me, to do to others, . . . what He has already, . . . done for me.

When you think about those people, who really tick you off, . . . if you're having a hard time, being merciful to those people, . . . remember, what a jerk you've been, . . . with God. I think of all the flack, that God has taken from me -- all the stuff, I've done my own way, done my own thing, shined on God and said, . . . "Forget it! I'm going to do this!"

Yet, . . . God still loves me. What a gracious, merciful God, He is. I think of, all the dumb stunts, I've pulled, and all the things I've done wrong, and He continues to shower me, with His love, and mercy, and grace.

Stop, and remind yourself, "God, if You can be merciful to me, . . . surely, I can be merciful, . . . to that person."

\*\* One day, some religious hypocrites, brought a lady, caught in the act of adultery, to Jesus, . . . where He was teaching, and threw her down, in front of Him. They said, "Jesus, this lady, was caught, in the act, of adultery.

 And, You know what, the law says -- if you're caught in adultery, . . . you get stoned, . . . to death!"

Jesus said, "You're right. That's, the law. The first one of you, who has never broken the law, gets to throw the first stone." And, they all silently, started walking away. Another time, Jesus said, "You're so concerned, by the problems, in that other person's life, before you get the speck of sawdust, out of your neighbor's eyes, . . . why don't you get the telephone pole, out of your own eye?"

God has been, merciful to me, . . . so, I need to be merciful, . . . to other people. We tend to judge, other people, by their worse faults, . . . and, we tend to judge ourselves, . . . by our best intentions.

**Poem**: Don't find fault, with the man, . . . Who limps, or stumbles, along the road,

 Unless, you've worn, the shoes, he wears, . . . Or, struggled, beneath his load.

 There may be tacks, in his shoes, that hurt, . . . Though hidden away, from view.

 Or, the burden he bears, placed on your back, . . . Might cause you, to stumble too.

 Don't sneer at the man, who's down today, . . . Unless, you've felt the blow.

 That caused his shame, or felt the shame, . . . That only, the fallen know.

 You may be strong, but still the blows, . . . That were his, if dealt to you.

 In the same self way, and the same self time, . . . Might cause you, to stagger too.

 Don't be too harsh, with the man, who sins, . . . Or pelts you, with words, or stones.

 Unless, you are sure, yea, doubly sure, . . . That you, have not sins, of your own.

 For you, perhaps, that if the tempter's voice, . . . Should whisper soft to you.

 As it did to him, when he went astray, . . . It would cause you, to falter too.

Be merciful. Why? Because, God has shown me, mercy.

**2. Because, I'm going to need, . . . more mercy, . . . in the future**. Not only, has God been merciful to me, in the past, . . . but, I'm going to need it, . . . in the future. I don't expect, to be perfect, from now on, . . . so, I'm going to need more mercy.

James 2:13 – *"The man who makes no allowances for others, will find none, made for him."* Only those who give it, . . . get it. Those who give mercy, . . get mercy. Those who don't give mercy, . . don't give mercy back.

You say, "But, you don't know, . . how much, this person, hurt me! And, they continue, to hurt me! I just can't, . . . forgive them." Then, I hope, . . you never sin.

Forgiveness, and mercy, . . . are a two-way street. When you refuse, to forgive others, . . . and, refuse to show mercy, to others, you're burning the very grid, . . . you have to walk across, to get to heaven. The Bible says, that those who show mercy, . . . receive mercy. Those who don't, . . . do not.

I need to be merciful, . . . because, I'm going to need it again, in the future. I'm going, to make mistakes. Don't burn, . . . your bridges. Be very careful, about demanding justice, . . . because, **God just might, give it to you**.

If we all got, what we deserved, . . . none of us, would be here. God does not give us, . . . what we deserve; He gives us, . . . what we need. And, that's, mercy. And, mercy, is giving to others, not what they deserve, when they've fallen, not what they deserve, when they've hurt us, . . . but, giving them, what they need.

**3. Because, it makes, . . . me happy.**

Mercy, makes me, happy. That's what, Jesus says. *"Happy are, the merciful."* The opposite of that, . . . is true also: "Unhappy, . . . are the unmerciful." The most miserable people I know, are people, . . . who are resentful, . . . who refuse, to give up a grudge, . . who are holding some unforgiveness, over somebody else's head. They don't realize, . . . they are only, hurting themselves. Unmercifulness, . . . makes you, miserable.

Ben Franklin said, "When you're good, to other people, you are best, to yourself." That's what, Jesus said, here.

Proverbs 11:17 – *"Your own soul, is nourished, when you are kind; it is destroyed, when you are cruel."*  Doing acts of mercy, gets us out of ourselves, gets the focus off of me, and on to other people, and produces happiness.

This is a tremendous way, to get rid of depression, is to learn to develop, . . . due acts, . . . of mercy. When you're depressed, and all of a sudden, . . . you begin to be patient, . . . to those, who are peculiar, . . . forgiving to those, who have fallen, . . . helping those who are hurting, . . . doing good to your enemies,

 . . . you will watch, the clouds of depression, . . . lift, and blow away. It gets the focus, . . . off of you. As you give your life away, . . . the happiness comes.

You ought to be merciful, . . . simply, because, it makes you, happy. It's a “boomerang blessing.” What you give, . . . is what you get.

\*\*\* How then, do I become, a merciful person? The starting point, is you must first, . . . experience, the mercy of God. You cannot offer mercy, to anyone else, . . . until, you have first, . . . received mercy. You can't offer forgiveness, to anybody else, . . . until, first, . . . you feel, forgiven.

One of the reasons, why some of you, have a hard time forgiving people, . . . is because, you don't really feel, . . forgiven. When I feel unforgiven, . . . then, I am definitely, unforgiving. When I don't feel good, I sure don't want anybody else, to feel good. The starting point is, . . . I must receive, . . . the mercy of God, . . . the peace of God, . . . and, the forgiveness of God, . . . and, then, I can offer it, . . . to others.

Every sin, you have ever committed, . . are committing right now, . . or, will commit, has already, been paid for. Why? The Bible says, just as you break man's laws, there's a penalty, you break God's laws, and there's a penalty. The Bible says, the wages of sin, is death. Jesus took, that penalty. It's already, . . . paid for.

You can walk out of here, with a clear conscious, with a clean slate. You can begin, . . a new life. You receive, the mercy of God, . . . not because, you deserve to be forgiven, . . . you don't. But, God wants to forgive you, . . simply, because, . . He is, a forgiving God. He loves, forgiving. It's His, nature. He is a God, of mercy.

After, you've done that, once you really feel forgiven, once you have been graced, . . then, it's easier, for you, . . to be gracious. Once, you have felt, the mercy of God, . . . then, it's easier, for you, . . . to be merciful.

After you've done that, the next thing you do, in order to become a merciful person, . . is start looking at people, with the eyes, of Jesus Christ. Look at people, . . . the way the Lord, . . . would see them.

\* By the way, if you have trouble with lust, . . . this is the key. Instead, of looking at them, . . . in lust, . . . look at them, . . . in love, the way Jesus would see them. Instead, of a body, . . . you will see, a person.

So, instead of having a problem, with lust, you start saying, "Lord, help me, to see that person, from Your point of view. How do You, see that person? What are the hurts, You see in their lives? What are the needs, You see in their lives?" Look at them, . . . from the eyes of Christ. The most Christlike thing, you can do, . . . is to care, for other people.

Matthew 25, the thing Christians, are going to be judged for, at the judgment, is how they treated, other people, *"I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was naked, and you clothed Me. I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink. I was in prison, and you visited Me."*

We're going to say*, "Lord, when did we do, all that to You?" Jesus said, "I will say then, in as much as you've done it to anybody else, you've done it to Me."* God's going to ask you, . . how you treated, other people.

Were you, . . . merciful? Were you, . . . like Him? Jesus had, a ministry, . . . of mercy. He lifted up, the lonely. He accepted, . . . the rejected. He grieved, with those, . . . who were sorrowing. He loved, the unlovely. He helped those, who are helpless, . . . and, the hurting. He cared, . . . for them.

And, God wants you, . . . to be a little Christ, at your job, at your school, at your home. Treat people, the way, He would. Who is it, in your life, . . . that needs mercy? That's barely, hanging on? And, they're about, . . . to let go?

You need to, show some mercy, . . . this week. Who is it, in your life, . . . that, you're still holding the past, . . . over their head? You won't let them, off the hook. Every time, they do something you don't like, . . you bring it back up, for ammunition. It's always, silently there, . . . in the background.

That's a great way, . . . to kill a marriage. You're, unpleasable. No matter what, they do for you, you remember, the past. You have a little scale, in your mind. No matter what, they do for you, you keep on reminding them of this. You're destroying, . . . your own marriage. You're doing it, yourself.

Who is it, that you need to, say a word of forgiveness to, this week. Let them off the hook, wipe the slate clean, never mention it, again. It's over, . . it's done with, . . it's forgiven. That's it! Be happy! Show mercy!

\*\* This is what, we want, . . . our church, to be. We want this place, . . . to be a place, . . . of mercy. We want our family, here, to be a place, . . . where we are patient, with the peculiar, forgiving to the fallen.

If you're perfect, . . . this place, is not for you. This church, is for people, who do not have it all made. They're struggling, they admit it, . . . and, they're honest enough, to realize, they've got a lot, of growing to do.

We're forgiving, of the fallen. It doesn't matter, so much where you've been, it's where are your feet, is headed, right now? We want our church, to be a place, . . . where we really help those, . . . who are hurting.

We don't just say we care, but, we help each other, . . . and, all of the ministries, really help people. The body, ministers, to itself. We want this to be a place, that even when people do bad to us, we do good to them. We do not, retaliate. We are actors, . . . not reactors.

“You Get What You Give”, Don't Worry - Be Happy! Part 5 of 8

Matthew 5:7 – "Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!"

**The Meaning of Mercy:** "Mercy" is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Psalm 145:8 – “God is kind and merciful, slow to get angry, and full of love.”

**\*\* The Marks of Mercy. If I am Merciful:**

1. I'll be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with those who are peculiar.

 I Thessalonians 5:14 – “. . . Encourage the timid, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.”

 Romans 15:7 – “*Accept each other, in the Lord, even as Christ has accepted you.”*

2. I'll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ those who have fallen

 Colossians 3:13 – “Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”

3. I'll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ those who are hurting.

 Proverbs 3:27 – “Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it.”

 I John 3:17-18 – “If someone who is supposed to be a Christian has enough money to live well, and sees a brother in need but won't help him -- how can God's love be in him? . . . Let's stop just saying we love people . . . let's show it by our actions!”

 Judges 1:24 – “Be merciful to those who doubt.”

4. I'll do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to my enemies.

 Luke 6:33, 35-36 – “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even `sinners' do that! . . . But love your enemies, do good to them . . . then your reward will be great

 . . . Be merciful, just as your Father is!”

**\*\* The Motive for Mercy**

1. Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Matthew 18:3 – “Shouldn't you be merciful, to other people, just as I have been merciful, to you?”

2. Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 James 2:13 – “The man who makes no allowances for others will find none made for him.”

3. Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Proverbs 11:17 – “Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel.”

**Poem**: Don't find fault, with the man, . . . Who limps, or stumbles, along the road,

 Unless, you've worn, the shoes, he wears, . . . Or, struggled, beneath his load.

 There may be tacks, in his shoes, that hurt, . . . Though hidden away, from view.

 Or, the burden he bears, placed on your back, . . . Might cause you, to stumble too.

 Don't sneer at the man, who's down today, . . . Unless, you've felt the blow.

 That caused his shame, or felt the shame, . . . That only, the fallen know.

 You may be strong, but still the blows, . . . That were his, if dealt to you.

 In the same self way, and the same self time, . . . Might cause you, to stagger too.

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 As it did to him, when he went astray, . . . It would cause you, to falter too.

Next week’s Sermon: “Happy From the Inside Out”, Matthew 5:8