

Devotional 5: The Merciful

Restoration and Compassion

Foundational Text

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

— Matthew 5:7

What the Text Reveals

With the fifth beatitude, Jesus pivots from the inward disposition of the revived heart (Beatitudes 1–4) to its outward expression (Beatitudes 5–8). The first four beatitudes describe what God does in us; the next four describe what God does through us. Mercy is the first fruit that flows outward from a transformed heart.

The Greek *eleemones* describes not merely feeling compassion but acting on it—mercy in motion, not sentiment. It shares the root of *eleemosyne*, from which we derive “alms.” Mercy, in Jesus’s framework, is compassion that costs something. It is grace extended at personal expense to those who do not deserve it—because we ourselves have received grace we did not deserve.

The promise creates a cycle: “they will be shown mercy.” Those who extend mercy receive mercy. But the sequence is important—Jesus does not say “be merciful so that you will receive mercy” as a transaction. He describes the character of those who have already experienced God’s mercy (Beatitudes 1–4) and now overflow with it toward others. Mercy received becomes mercy extended becomes mercy received again—an ever-expanding circle.

Biblical Architecture

Micah 6:8 summarizes the entire prophetic demand in three phrases: “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Mercy is not passive feeling but active love—something to be loved, pursued, and embodied.

Matthew 18:32–33 presents the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant as the devastating counterexample. A man forgiven an unpayable debt (ten thousand talents—roughly \$6 billion in modern terms) turns and chokes a fellow servant over a few hundred dollars. The master’s response is fury: “Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” Those who have received divine mercy and withhold human mercy reveal that they never understood the mercy they received.

James 2:13 provides the principle: “Mercy triumphs over judgment.” In the economy of God’s kingdom, mercy does not set aside justice—it transcends it. The cross is where mercy and justice met: full justice was satisfied, and infinite mercy was released. Those who live in the shadow of the cross become mercy’s agents.

Core Thesis

Revival produces mercy, not just morality. Those awakened by God’s undeserved grace become conduits of that grace to others—broken marriages restored, fractured families healed, enemies reconciled. Without mercy, revival becomes religious pride; with mercy, revival becomes transformative love.

Revival Connection: Concentric Circles

The concentric circles of revival—personal, family, church, community, nation—are the circles through which mercy flows outward. Revival that remains a private emotional experience has stalled at the first circle. Mercy is what propels revival outward from transformed hearts into transformed relationships and transformed communities.

In the personal circle, mercy means forgiving ourselves as God has forgiven us—refusing the self-condemnation that masquerades as humility. In the family circle, it means extending grace to spouses, children, and parents who have wounded us. In the church circle, it means reconciliation across the divisions—racial, economic, denominational, generational—that grieve the Spirit. In the community and national circles, it means compassionate engagement with a broken world that reflects the mercy of God rather than the judgment of the self-righteous.

Every sustained revival in history produced institutions of mercy—hospitals, orphanages, schools, social reforms, abolition movements. The Great Awakenings produced not only conversions but compassion infrastructure. Revival without mercy is incomplete at best and fraudulent at worst.

Strategic Question

Who has wounded me that I have not yet forgiven? Where am I hoarding God’s mercy rather than channeling it to others?

Closing Prayer

Merciful Father, we have received mercy we did not deserve. Let that mercy overflow through us to others—forgiving those who wounded us, restoring what was broken, extending compassion where judgment is deserved. Make us channels of Your mercy, not reservoirs hoarding grace for ourselves. Open our eyes to the suffering around us and move us to action,

not merely sentiment. Let the world see in Your revived people the mercy they have seen in Your cross. Amen.

Scripture Treasury

“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

— **Micah 6:8**

“Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?”

— **Matthew 18:33**

“Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

— **James 2:13**

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

— **Ephesians 4:32**

“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.”

— **Psalms 103:8**