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| **SERIES** | The Pursuit of Happiness |
| **BIBLE** | Matthew 5: 7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” |
| **TITLE/TOPIC** | Marked by Mercy |
| **OVERVIEW** | Our world celebrates and advertises acts of charity. When someone does a “random act of kindness” or “lends a hand to the disadvantaged” it is something to be admired. It is easy to be quick to kindness when the person didn’t hurt you first. But the world is clearly not good at the virtue Jesus describes as merciful. To be merciful is to be compassionate, withhold judgment, and extend forgiveness. God is the king of mercy – He who has been offended the most by humans has extended the greatest kindness to humans in sending Jesus. THIS is the merciful life Jesus equips us with and calls us to in His kingdom. |
| **SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN** | Beatitudes built on this framework:  Root -> Shoot (main supporting trunk) -> Fruit  Poor in spirit, mourn, meek - > hunger for righteousness - > merciful, pure, peacemakers  ***Matthew 5: 7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”***  *Merciful = Compassionate (actively). Receive mercy = Specifically of God granting even to the unworthy favor, benefits, opportunities, and particularly salvation by Christ:*  All through Scripture, God reveals Himself to be merciful and compassionate. It is core to His essence. Just as God is holy and just, God is merciful. When Moses asked to see God’s glory, this is what God said:  Exodus 34:  **5**Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. **6**And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, **7**maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”  Jesus is teaching His disciples that in the Kingdom, when our heart is right (roots of humility) and we are seeking God (hunger for righteousness), we will begin to imitate the character of God (merciful) and be rewarded with that same character (shown mercy).  **So how can we experience and walk in this merciful blessedness?**  **Demonstrate compassion. Withhold judgment. Extend forgiveness.**  **To be merciful is to demonstrate compassion**. Example – Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37 A Jewish man was beaten and left for dead. Two Jewish religious leaders saw him and walked by without helping. A Samaritan man – avoided at best, hated at worst by Jewish people – saw the dying man, stopped, used all his resources to help the man live and recover. (He did not ask if the man was Jewish, or if he hated Samaritans, or why he was walking alone on dangerous road, etc…) Compassion sees the need and takes action to help. This is mercy.  **To be merciful is to withhold judgment – not deliver the punishment that is deserved.** Only God truly knows how far we humans have fallen. Though created with the capacity for sinless love, kindness and truthfulness, humans are self-centered, mean spirited and deceitful. The God who alone knows the full beauty of what we were meant to be also knows the depths of our depravity. All have sinned, hard, and are guilty of His wrath. But God is merciful and withholds judgment and does not treat us as our sins deserve.  Psalm 103: 7-12 **7**He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: **8**The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. **9**He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; **10**he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. **11**For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **12**as far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us.  **To be merciful is to extend forgiveness.**  “God forgives where a wrong has been done, when repentance begins, because atonement has been made.” (Colin Smith, Momentum 123). To be merciful is not just extending kindness to the hurting, or having a long suffering tolerance to overlook others failures. It also requires forgiveness when people sin against you. Forgiveness is the way broken relationships are restored. Forgiveness is the only way we can be made right with God. Again, our God leads the way, with the forgiveness that was secured for us through the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, as people of mercy, we are to model what we have been given. Ephesians 4 brings out this aspect of mercy -  Ephesians 4:  **32**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. |
| **GOSPEL** | How does this sermon bring people to the Gospel?  Have you responded to the mercy of God? Though we were sinners and could never be good enough, God send Jesus as His kindness and love to be good enough for us, and to withhold God’s judgment, and to extend God’s forgiveness. Repent and turn to Jesus in faith today.  Titus 3: **4**But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5**he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. |
| **NEXT**STEPS | Begin | Connect | Engage | Grow | Disciple  GROW – CONNECT: Jesus models and establishes mercy as a premier value in His kingdom. As He is merciful and sympathetic to us in our weakness and temptations, we too can build a culture of mercy in the Body of Christ.    Hebrews 2: **17**For this reason he (Jesus) had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. **18**Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. |