

## Blessed Are The Merciful They Shall Receive Mercy

by Hendrik Joubert

Mercy is a gift as well as a duty. For the Christian, that is. Consider righteousness. For the Christian it is obvious that God sets the standard, and His standard is high – very high. It not only addresses outward actions, but it also deals directly with the motivation behind what may even be considered good actions. Are you doing it for selfish gain, or are you doing it for righteous reasons? There is not one single man who has been able to comply with this standard perfectly – with one exception, Jesus of Nazareth.

In Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words we find that mercy is described as *...the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.* Pity may have a negative connotation in the (arrogant) way that we sometimes use it, but not here. Mercy is clearly connected with grace – unearned favor received from another ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Grace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace)). Notice the need for mercy, but more importantly the ability to give on the part of him who shows it.

Every sinner *needs* mercy. The only One who has the true ability to grant mercy is God. It is difficult to think that sinners, who share the same lot, are able to be merciful in this purest sense. We *must* be and can be merciful because God demands it. The beatitudes are not *potluck nice* attributes you may, or may not have. They constitute a progressive discussion of the personality of the Christian. It is not a *show and tell* like competition where we compare the virtues we just happened to have. If we do not have the quality, we need to develop it. **...they shall receive mercy...** Do you need mercy, or could you stand in the judgment without it? Then I better be merciful because it is the merciful who will receive mercy.

It is the individual who is *poor in spirit*, who is reduced to mourning as he realizes his situation and his condition in relation to God. God's solution provides the way to be comforted. All is not lost. This individual will be *gentle, meekly* approaching God's throne for mercy. She will notice the beam in her eye before she notices the splinter in her sister's. He will strive to learn how to please God, hunger and thirst after righteousness. In this search he becomes more completely aware of the mercy shown him, and he shows mercy to others as he realizes the wrong done to him, fall far short of the wrong he did against God.

Mercy now becomes the duty of everyone who would receive mercy from God. It is a duty since we need the continued mercy from God – how could he ever stop being merciful to others? We should realize that we are able to give mercy because we received it from God. It is not an arrogant act of pity, it is a loving and merciful act of obedience. Notice this duty expressed through the apostle Paul:

***So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Colossians 3:12-13***

Where is the justification for bearing grudges? Where is the sense that a brother or sister went just one step too far in order for me to act merciful? So often we are concerned about contributing towards another's delinquency. We emphasize their responsibility to repent, or the fact that we do not think that they *really* repented. How often is this because we are finding it difficult to be forgiving, merciful or gracious? Consider how often our attitude – and the meaning we ascribe to the actions of others – reveals how we think in our hearts. Because we think so, we think others think so also.

When I am concerned that my brother is abusing the mercy I am showing, is it because I am concerned for him, or is it because of me? Do I feel *used*? When I am concerned about his conduct or his attitude, do I approach him, talk to him in a loving and caring way? Am I truly merciful – from the heart?

What is my attitude? ***Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:38***