

Reading Matthew Chapter 5: v. 3-12.

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed *are* those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed *are* the meek,  
For they shall inherit the <sup>[a]</sup>earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed *are* the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed *are* the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed *are* the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### **Introduction**

We continue our series in Matthew’s Gospel prior to our communion service.

As you already know we are concentrating on the 5 teaching blocks in Matthew and not on the whole Gospel of Matthew.

Today we will focus on Matthew Chapter 5: v. 7-9.

#### **1. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. – v. 7.**

The word that Jesus uses here, translated as “mercy”, must be seen in its historic and positive meaning.

The word mercy is based on the Hebrew word “**Chesedh**”

This word is used frequently in the Old Testament.

The word expresses the unique quality of the everlasting mercy of God.

This word carries the meaning of **identification in the suffering of others.**

It means entering into another’s problem, with understanding and acceptance.

**This is exactly what God did for us in Jesus Christ.**

God identified with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

God fully identified with our problem of sin. He then suffered and died for us.

The words that Jesus speaks here are echoed throughout the Old Testament as a declaration of the character of God.

**In Psalm 18: v. 25 (in N.K.J.)**

<sup>25</sup> With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;

With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;

**In Isaiah 49: v. 13.**

<sup>13</sup> Sing, O heavens!

Be joyful, O earth!

And break out in singing, O mountains!

For the LORD has comforted His people,

And will have mercy on His afflicted.

It is important that we understand that mercy is **not a reward for good behaviour.**

Rather it can be seen **like a badge of our membership of the kingdom.**

In the same way as the world Cup Soccer players will wear badges on their shirts to represent their different countries, so Christian believers who show mercy, declare that they are members of a different country and a different kingdom.

Those people who understand the great mercy that God has shown them in the person of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, **demonstrate their gratitude in showing mercy to others.**

A key part of the Gospel Message, is God demonstrating His mercy to sinful mankind, by sending Jesus Christ into this world.

**Showing God's mercy to others, involves sharing the message of the gospel of mercy.**

It is O.K. to show practical need for anyone who is in distress, or has needs, but if we don't share the gospel message to these people, we are not demonstrating the mercy of God for all eternity.

In the U.S. during the depression there were many Christian organisations that fed the poor.

One mission used to preach the gospel every day to the poor people who gathered.

They feed them with a meal, and on the way out they would get a small sum of money, just enough to buy some food for the rest of the day.

This went on for months and there were no conversions to Christ.

However, one day a young man came forward to trust in Jesus as his own Saviour.

Afterwards he had a meal, and on the way out, **he refused the money.**

He said I have been coming here for months, just to get the money and the food.

However, I am totally satisfied in Jesus Christ, I don't need the money.

He walked away full of the joy of the Lord.

There is a Christian Mission in Bethlehem, called the "**House of Hope**".

It provides a home for the blind and children with special needs.

One of the workers, whom we met in Bethlehem, told us that they do not charge anybody for anything.

However, it is a condition that each person who is cared for at the home **is educated in the Bible and the gospel message.**

Remembering that Bethlehem is in a Palestinian, Muslim area, you would expect some compromise.

However, they have remained merciful in providing for the blind and children with special needs by giving them food, clothing and a home, **with the gospel message.**

They are a faith mission and God has wonderfully provided all of their needs for over 50 years.

I believe that this is the correct way to show mercy.

That is meeting practical needs with the "Gospel".

Paul said in Romans 1: v. 16 – **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to Salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."**

## **2. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. – v. 8**

Our hearts are at the very core of our lives. They are who we are.

In Matthew Chapter 15: v. 18-20 Jesus identifies the heart as the source of all sin and defilement in our lives.

**(Matt. 15: v. 18-20)**

<sup>18</sup> But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. <sup>20</sup> These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

Jesus says that to appear in God's presence, to see him as he is, requires total purity.

**Psalm 24: v. 3-4.**

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?

Or who may stand in His holy place?

<sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,  
Nor sworn deceitfully.

In Psalm 73: v. 1 it says that God is good to those who are pure in heart.

In our human sinful nature, we can never have a clean heart.

**It is only by God's grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that our hearts can be clean.**

The famous Charles Wesley hymn reflects this truth. It is well worth quoting here.

1. O for a **heart** to praise my God,  
a **heart** from sin set free;  
a **heart** that's sprinkled with the blood  
so freely shed for me:

2. A **heart** resigned, submissive, meek,  
my great Redeemer's throne;  
where only Christ is heard to speak,  
where Jesus reigns alone:

3. A humble, lowly, contrite **heart**,  
believing, true, and clean,  
which neither life nor death can part  
from him that dwells within:

4. A **heart** in every thought renewed,  
and full of love divine;  
perfect and right and pure and good  
a copy, Lord, of thine.

5. Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,  
come quickly from above;  
write thy new name upon my heart,  
thy new best name of Love.

We can only get a heart like the hymn writer talks about when our hearts are washed clean through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

**1 John 1: v. 5-10. (N.K.J.)**

<sup>5</sup>This is the message, which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Today's communion service declares that **a clean heart is possible** when we **admit that we have sinned** and **confess our sins to God**, trusting in the **blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins.**

**3. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God – v. 9.**

It is important that we understand this verse in the context in which it is written.

Matthew is writing a Gospel, not a peace treaty.

It is also important to remind ourselves who spoke these words.

Jesus spoke these words to remind us that there is a "**spiritual war**" going on in the world.

It started a long time ago when an Angel wanted to be like God, and it has continued for thousands of years.

**There will never be physical peace in our world until there is spiritual peace in everyone's heart.**

Jesus came as the prince of peace, in order to bring peace to hearts that are at war with God.

**Ephesians 2: v. 14-18 in the N.L.T.**

<sup>14</sup> For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. <sup>15</sup> He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. <sup>16</sup> Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

<sup>17</sup> He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. <sup>18</sup> Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

The message of peace is the message of the gospel.

People will only find peace within themselves, and among themselves **as they enter into a right relationship with God.**

Jesus calls these people "**sons of God**" because they have a personal relationship with God, through the blood of Jesus.

When we were in Israel recently, most of us learnt to say the word "**Shalom**".

In Hebrew the word means "**peace**".

The meaning of the word does not mean the absence of evil or war, it is a positive word which has to do with the **well-being of somebody.**

When you say "**Shalom**" to a Jew, you are asking for the **highest good things to come to that person.**

The highest good thing that can ever happen to a person in this world is when they make their **peace with God, through Jesus Christ.**

Q. **Have you made your peace with God yet?**

You can do this today, you don't have to wait. Jesus died on a cross in order to provide peace in your heart.

Will you come to Him today and receive that peace?

**Matthew 11: v. 28-30. (N.L.T.)**

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."