

## **The Heart We Need (pt. 2)**

**Matthew 5:1-12**

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### Introduction:

- Last week we began looking at the Sermon on the Mount.
  - Because in this sermon we see a true picture of the Christian life.
  - When we feel distracted by sin.
  - When our hearts grow cold.
  - Or when we feel spiritually stuck.
  - Studying the Sermon on the Mount can help us refocus on God, set us on the right path, and lead us to the blessings of salvation.
  - It can lead us to the revival we need.
- And last Sunday we looked at the first 4 characteristics of the Christian heart.
  - The first 4 beatitudes.
- And we saw how the true Christian person is someone who sees their spiritual poverty.
  - No matter how much success you have in life, no matter how much good you've done, the poor in spirit recognize how spiritually bankrupt they are.
  - It's a person who completely depends on God for salvation.
- Then we saw how the true Christian believer is a person who mourns over their sin.
  - Instead of just saying, "Yes, yes, I'm a sinner."
  - A true Christian is able to name their sins and grieve over how they've displeased the Lord.
  - It's the person who's truly repented of their sin.
- Then we saw how the true Christian believer is someone who's learned to submit to God.
  - It's not someone who's timid or doesn't have a backbone.
  - Rather, it's someone who's meek.
  - It's someone who's learned to accept God's will and authority.
- Fourth and finally, we saw last week how a true Christian believer is someone who longs for righteousness.
  - It's someone who desires to live a godly life.
  - Instead of looking for the easiest choice, or the most self-serving choice, it's the person who seeks to please God with every decision.
  - I'm not going to date that person. I'm not going to lie on my tax form. I'm going to take responsibility for my actions. I'm not going to be rude even if they were rude.
  - It's the person who's constantly asking, "what's the right thing to do?"
- Now, as I said last time.
  - It's not by seeking these characteristics that you become a Christian, rather, these are descriptions of a person who's already a Christian believer.

- But it's necessary to examine ourselves, to see whether we are in the faith. If we don't see these traits in our heart, we recognize our need to turn to Christ and ask him to save us, so all these might be true of us.
- And if you are a believer, though all of these traits are true of you, the Sermon on the Mount will help you grow in these traits, so that you might experience more spiritual blessings in the Christian life.
- And this morning as we continue in our series, I want to look at the second part of the beatitudes.
  - The second four traits we need to grow in, so that we might refocus on God and experience true blessing.

Point 1:

- First, Jesus says that you can experience blessing when you show compassion as Christ has shown compassion to you.
  - Take a look at verse 7.
  - *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy,"* (Matthew 5:7).
  - And we have to ask, "What does it mean to be a merciful person?"
  - "How can we show mercy to others?"
- To show mercy to others means that we show compassion and kindness, especially to those who can't help themselves, to those in pain and hardship.
  - Mercy is compassion for those who can't help themselves.
- One of the clearest examples of mercy is found in the story of the Good Samaritan.
  - Do you remember the story of the Good Samaritan?
  - Jesus tells the story of a man who was going down the road.
  - But this man ran into some robbers who stripped him naked, beat him, and left him half dead.
  - A priest came by and passed on the other side of the road.
  - And then a Levite, who is another religious person, came by and passed by on the other side of the road also.
  - But then a Samaritan came by, and when he saw the man, the Bible says in Luke 10:33, that he had compassion on the man.
  - He bandaged the man up, took him to a place to stay, and even paid for this man's hotel stay.
  - And when Jesus asks, *"Which of these three proved to be a neighbor?"* (Luke 10:36).
  - The expert in the law, who was speaking to Jesus says, *"The one who showed him mercy,"* (Luke 10:37).
  - Mercy is compassion and a tender heart towards others.
- But I want you to notice how mercy isn't just a tender heart.
  - It's also an action that results from a tender heart.
  - A person who says, "I'm so sorry for your difficult situation," and doesn't do anything about it, isn't showing mercy.
  - Mercy isn't only a matter of what you feel, but also what you do.
  - It's not just about getting angry at injustice, and how people aren't helping. It's doing something about it.

- Speaking about the Good Samaritan, Pastor and theologian Sinclair Ferguson writes, “The Samaritan took responsibility for the injured man...He did not deal with cause of the man’s need by chasing the robbers (it was not retribution he sought). He did not complain about the failure of society to meet the man’s need (such protest was not the appropriate remedy for the man’s condition). Rather, the Samaritan sought to work in the context of the immediate need set before him, and to bring relief. Of course there is a place for seeking justice. And there is room for prophetic protest...But neither of these things is the exercise of mercy. Mercy is getting down on your hands and knees and doing what you can to restore dignity to someone whose life has been broken by sin...” (Ferguson, The Sermon on the Mount, 28).
- Do you see what Sinclair Ferguson is saying?
- He’s saying true mercy isn’t just about feeling angry or compassion, rather mercy is compassion in action.
- And we need to remember that mercy isn’t something that’s easy to give.
  - Oftentimes, it’ll require sacrifice on our part.
  - Mercy will require you to give up your time, or your resources, or to give up comfort, so that you might comfort others.
  - I know this may be hard to hear, but if you aren’t willing to inconvenience yourself, it may be an indication that you’re not a very merciful person.
  - The priest and the Levite maybe had a busy schedule to keep, or business to conduct, or errands to run, or places to go. They had rules to obey.
  - But this Samaritan, gave up his time, gave up his money, and went out of his way, to show mercy to this man.
- And think about this. The priest and Levite were very religious men.
  - They were people who studied the Bible and went to worship services and tried to perfectly obey God’s law.
  - That’s probably why they walked on the other side of the road.
  - They didn’t want to become unclean by accidentally touching a dead person.
  - But through the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching that worship without mercy isn’t worship.
  - Later in Matthew 9:13 Jesus says, *“I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.”*
  - James writes, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,”* (James 1:27).
  - A true Christian, a true worshipper, is someone who shows mercy to others. Someone who has compassion, and acts on that compassion.
- And so, this morning, let’s think about someone who may need our help.
  - Someone who’s not able to help themselves.
  - Someone who may need help connecting in our church and finding a friend.
  - Someone who may need a phone call or a word of encouragement.
  - Someone who may need financial help because of a difficult time in life.
  - Or perhaps there’s an organization that you could help serve at, teaching Bible study at a prison, or feeding the poor at a shelter, or serving on one of our mission teams, or maybe, could I kindly ask that you consider serving in our children’s ministry?
  - Is there someone who needs your help today?

- Another way you can show mercy is by being patient with those who aren't mature, with those struggling with their faith, or self-doubt, or unable to overcome some trial in their life.
  - Jude 1:22 states, *"And have mercy on those who doubt..."*
  - When Thomas doubted Jesus' resurrection and said that he wouldn't believe, unless he saw the hands and feet of Jesus, what did Jesus do?
  - He didn't rebuke Thomas; he didn't put Thomas down and get mad at him. Rather, he showed mercy.
  - Jesus just went through a horrible crucifixion. He faced the wrath of God. He was wrongfully accused. He was betrayed by Judas. He was humiliated in front of all the people. Peter denied him three times. We could add more to the list.
  - But instead of yelling at Thomas, instead of being impatient, he met him where he was and showed mercy.
  - Some people take longer to grow than others. Some people aren't where they should be, but we need to show mercy and have compassion and encouragement instead of being impatient.
- And the promise is that God will show mercy to us.
  - This verse isn't saying that it's only if we have mercy, that God will have mercy on us.
  - Rather, it's saying that because God has shown mercy to us, we're able to show mercy to others.
  - By our mercy, we show that we belong to Christ.
  - God didn't have to send his one and only Son.
  - And Jesus didn't have to die on the cross.
  - But God sent, and Jesus came.
  - And on this earth, Jesus experienced hunger, pain, shame, and death in order to save us.
  - Talk about inconvenience. Jesus lived in paradise.
  - But he showed mercy.
  - And so, Jesus says:
  - *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy,"* (Matthew 5:7).

Point 2:

- Second, Jesus says you can experience true blessing, when you seek to be devoted to Christ.
  - *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,"* (Matthew 5:8).
  - When Jesus talks about purity, he's not speaking about being perfect.
  - Paul writes in Philippians 3:12, *"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own..."*
  - Perfection can't be reached in this world.
  - Rather, as Paul writes, it's something we need to pursue.
  - And those who are pure in heart are those who seek to live a life devoted to God.
  - To be pure means that your heart isn't divided.
  - It means you're not a double minded person.
  - Trying to follow God and trying to follow sin.
  - It means you're devoted to following Jesus Christ.
- Now, I want to be crystal clear, you're not justified by what you do.
  - Your acceptance isn't dependent on how good you are or how much you do.
  - You're not saved by works.
  - You're saved by faith and grace alone.

- But you do need to fight for your purity.
- James 4:8 states, *"Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded."*
- We need to fight for holiness and purity.
- And one way you can seek purity in your life is by reading and studying God's word.
  - Listen to Psalm 119:9-11.
  - *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*
  - God's word is able to convict you of sin, give you wisdom and guidance, and help you fight against wrong thinking and sin in your life.
- And when you read God's word, remember to feed on God's word, because reading alone isn't enough.
  - That is, you have to reflect, apply, believe, thank, confess, rejoice, and commit to obeying God's word.
  - You must meditate on God's word, and think about what it means for your life.
- Not only that, you also need to store up God's word in your heart.
  - The Psalmist writes, *"I have stored up your word...that I might not sin against you,"* (Psalm 119:11).
  - The more you read, the more you study, the more you meditate on God's word, it will have a greater influence over your mind and heart.
  - I've heard several pastors say to me, "It's not necessarily 1 sermon that will change someone's heart and mind. Rather, it's by listening to hundreds of sermons over time, that shapes our hearts, and grows our faith, and deepens our love."
  - When you first begin saving money, it may look very small.
  - But over a long period of time, it begins to grow exponentially with compound interest.
  - In the same way, when we store up God's word in our heart, our wisdom begins to exponentially grow, and we can learn to stand against sin.
- In a similar way, just as good leads to more good, remember that small bad choices will lead to greater bad choices.
  - Every time you say yes to sin, you're allowing the power of sin to grow in your heart.
  - It's like a football game.
  - Every time you say yes to sin, it's like you're losing yards.
  - Every time you say no to sin, it's like you're gaining yards toward the end zone.
  - It's that small lustful thought which leads to infidelity.
  - It's that small bitter thought that leads to a broken relationship.
  - It's the small compromise that leads to a lifetime of compromise.
  - The little choices matter, because it sets the direction of our heart.
- Moreover, also remember that attending Sunday worship is vital for the purity of your soul.
  - Of course, we'll have vacations and sickness, but when we decide to neglect worship, it'll have a cumulative effect on your spiritual growth.
  - When we neglect to worship God, we'll begin to worship something else.
  - And we can open the door to different kinds of sin, addiction, and unhealthy habits.

- Pastor Colin Smith writes, “Worship is more than attending a service at church on a Sunday morning. It is the gaze of the soul on the greatness and glory of God, and Paul tells us that beholding the glory of the Lord has a transforming effect in the life of a Christian believer.” (Smith, Momentum, pg. 147).
- Gaze upon and worship the Lord, and you will be pure. You will see God.

Point 3:

- Third, Jesus says that you can experience true blessing, when you seek to be a uniter not a divider.
  - Verse 9 states:
  - *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God,”* (Matthew 5:9).
  - Thomas Watson writes, “Satan kindles the fire of contention in men’s hearts and then stands and warms himself at the fire.” (Watson, The Beatitudes, pg. 209)
  - Do you see what Watson is saying?
  - Satan loves to stir up strife, mistrust, and disunity in the church. And then he loves to watch God’s people tear each other apart.
  - Satan loves to warm his hands at the fire he’s caused.
  - He’s a war-maker.
  - But Jesus Christ is the opposite.
  - He’s the Prince of Peace, the God of peace, the author of peace.
  - That’s why those who bring peace are called the children of God.
- And let’s remember that God is commanding every single Christian to be a peacemaker.
  - Peacemaking isn’t just for mature believers. Every Christian is commanded to bring peace to their homes, family, friends, and community.
  - Now, it may be the case that sometimes reconciliation and peacemaking aren’t possible.
  - King David couldn’t reconcile with his son, Absalom.
  - Or with King Saul.
  - But Romans 12:18 is very clear.
  - It says, *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all,”* (Romans 12:18).
  - We need to do all that we can do to live at peace with others around us.
  - Others may not want peace with us, but we need to seek to live at peace with others.
  - And so, we need to ask ourselves, “Is there someone I have conflict with today? And have I done all that I can to reconcile with that person? Standing before God, is my conscious clear that I’ve done all that I can to seek peace?”
  - If you haven’t, you may need to take steps to make peace, as far as it depends on you.
- And we need to remember that peacemaking isn’t about running away from conflict but facing our conflict.
  - One Bible scholar writes, “A conflict avoided is often a conflict postponed, and therefore a conflict that ultimately becomes worse,” (Cloud, Henry, Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously in Charge).
  - Conflict doesn’t just go away.
  - In fact, the more you wait, it’s possible that it will get worse.
  - That’s why it’s important to remember that peacemaking is an active action.
  - Hebrews 12:14 says, *“Strive for peace with everyone.”*
  - Peacemakers seek out ways to bring peace.
  - You can’t force peace. It takes effort, planning, and prayer.

- It's something you have to pursue.
- And let's remember that peacemakers are called at times to absorb the pain and not prove their point.
  - It's possible that someone may not completely understand all the wrong they did, but they may come to you with a repentant heart.
  - And when that happens, peacemakers will be quick to forgive.
  - They won't wait for full repentance, but the beginning of repentance.
  - A friend of mine told me when he was a kid, after he fought with his brother, the way they'd reconcile was by cooking instant ramen.
  - If his brother said, "Hey bro, I'm cooking some ramen, you want some or something,"
  - That was his brother apologizing to him.
  - And then he'd say, "Yea, I guess."
  - I'm not saying that we should reconcile by cooking Raman noodles for each other, but when someone takes the first step, our job isn't to make sure they understand every wrong they did.
  - Rather, peacemakers will move towards that person with love and forgiveness.
- Isn't that what that father did in Luke 15, when his prodigal son returned home.
  - He wasn't waiting for his son to fully repent.
  - All the father needed was to see his son from a distance returning home.
  - In fact, the father was most likely waiting for his son to return home.
  - That's why he ran to him, while he was still far away.
  - He didn't wait for his son to walk all the way to the house and explain every wrong he did.
  - He just came, and that's all the father needed.
  - And isn't that how God forgives us?
  - If God waited for us to understand every wrong, and every sin in our heart and mind, we'd never be forgiven.
  - Repentance is a process, a lifelong process.
  - And it's when we begin to repent, that God forgave us.
  - And we're commanded to forgive, as God forgave us, because that shows that we belong to God, that shows how we're children of God.
  - *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God,"* (Matthew 5:9).

Point 4:

- Fourth and finally, Jesus says that you can experience true blessing, when you learn to suffer for what is right.
  - *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you,"* (Matthew 5:10-12).
  - I can't remember who said this, but I remember hearing someone say to me, that in America, more than the persecution itself, it's the fear of persecution that causes great anxiety for many in the church.
  - But here Jesus reminds us, that if we live out all the beatitudes, we're going to be persecuted for our faith.

- We may not be put in jail or flogged, but you'll be mistreated, misunderstood, feel left out, feel wronged, hurt, overlooked, ignored, judged, forgotten, treated with suspicion, pressured, and I'm sure we could add more to this list.
- Sometimes, it may not be because of our righteousness but our foolishness that leads to our suffering.
- And our suffering may be warranted.
- But let's remember that persecution, sacrifice, and suffering are part of the Christian life.
- It's something we'll endure in this life as we seek to live a righteous life.
- Now, when persecution and suffering come, it will be our temptation to move away from it.
  - But listen to what one Bible scholar writes, regarding our suffering.
  - "Moving on whenever trouble appears on the horizon is a formula for perpetual spiritual infancy. Nothing of value was ever accomplished without pressing on through difficulty, so don't take opposition, pressure, frustration, disappointment, or fear as an indication that it is time to move on," (Smith, Momentum, 179).
  - "Oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure," (Marshall, United States Congressional Serial Set, 50).
  - Now, there may be many good reasons to move away from trouble, to move schools, to leave the mission field, to change jobs, to take a break, to move your home.
  - But, if all you do is keep yourself from persecution and suffering, you may be keeping yourself from growing in Christ.
  - You'll be in perpetual spiritual infancy.
- And if you do need to leave, it's usually not good to leave in the storm.
  - Rather, it's better to leave after the storm.
  - Your mind is usually never clear in the storm, but it's after the storm you can make a more reasonable and wise decision.
  - Endure the storm and see how God leads.
  - It may be that like Job or Ruth, you'll see more of God's spiritual blessing at the end, if you endure.
- Let's refocus our hearts and seek to show mercy. Let's seek to be undivided. Let's seek to bring peace, and let's press on through the storm and persecution.
  - Because Jesus was merciful to us. He saw our helplessness and came into the world. He was beaten so that we could have peace with God, and he paid for our entrance into heaven.
  - And do you see here what Jesus says about those who endure and persevere to the end?
  - He says that there's a reward for those who wait and trust and endure to the end.
  - The world may not reward you for these things, but God will.
  - And so, let's be the church that God calls us to be.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all references to the Bible are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

<sup>2</sup>Ferguson, Sinclair. *The Sermon on the Mount*. Pg.28.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Colin. *Momentum*, pg. 147.

<sup>4</sup>Watson, Thomas. *The Beatitudes*, pg. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Cloud, Henry. *Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously in Charge*. Harper Business, 2013.

<sup>5</sup>Marshall, *United States Congressional Serial Set*. pg. 50.