

# The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES  
with Pastor Greg Formey



## Give Mercy, Get Mercy

Matthew 5:7

Sunday, September 6 & 13, 2015

**"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." KJV**

Do you believe that if you are good to others, they will be good to you? The trouble with this idea is that it only takes about five minutes to find out that this is not always the case. Sure, there are some who will return your kindness; then there are those others who will steal you blind!

This certainly sounds like a contradiction. Why would God set us up for failure. The ultimate kindness is that of showing mercy. The problem is that others may not return the favor. How, then, can we say that we believe the words of Jesus when he says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The truth is that we keep running accounts of the offenses committed against us, and resist the idea of extending this blessing to everyone.

### OUR SENSE OF JUSTICE

There is something inside every human being that screams out for justice. Somehow we know that there are accounts that must be settled. This has been called "The Rule of Fair Play" or "The Moral Law." C.S. Lewis says that this is most clearly seen when people say things like, "**How'd you like it if someone did the same to you?;**" "**That's my seat, I was there first;**" "**Leave him alone, he isn't doing you any harm;**" "**Come on, you promised.**"

Lewis writes that someone who says such things is using some rule of behavior which he expects others to know about and agree to. He observes, "*Nearly always the other person tries to make out that what he/she has been doing does not really go against the standard, or that if it does, there is some special excuse.*"

### THE PROBLEM WITH MERCY

Ever noticed that people don't have a problem when they are on the receiving end of mercy? It is when I am the one required to show it that I struggle, because the only kind of person to whom I can show mercy is one who does not deserve it. Even those who reject Jesus as Lord are impressed by it. The problem comes when we find ourselves in situations where we are required to actually put it into practice.

**Matthew 18:23-35**

**23** “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. **24** In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. **25** He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold-along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned-to pay the debt. **26** “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ **27** Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

In the middle of the story, Jesus has the servant on his knees begging for a little time. What is troublesome about this story is that the king forgives the servant, and takes it back ten minutes later. That is not what we have been told about forgiveness. You cannot say to me this morning, "I forgive you," and this afternoon say, "I've changed my mind." Here's a scary question: **“Would God actually take forgiveness back?”**

to help us answer this, here is another interesting question: **“Did that servant actually receive the forgiveness that was offered to him?”** It would have been impossible for him to treat his debtor the way he did had he really been forgiven and received it. Would you even noticed a person who owes you \$20, if you have just been forgiven \$10 million?

The problem is that there is only one kind of person to whom you and I can show mercy: a person who doesn't deserve it.

## **Conclusion**

The obvious question that comes to mind when we hear this story is why the forgiven servant could not see the hypocrisy of his behavior. May we cry out to the Lord for help in the area of showing mercy to all who have offended us. We can then give it to all who have offended us.

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death.

"But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy."

"But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied.

"Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for."

"Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

The truth is we know the blame game all too well, and we need a remedy for it. We need a force powerful enough to break this cycle of resentment. Jesus gives it to us in this beatitude: **“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”**

Back to our question at the beginning on whether Jesus was right in saying that the merciful would receive mercy. Of course He was. We should not expect mercy from people, but we can be absolutely confident that mercy will always come from Him.

**Hebrews 4:15-16**

**15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is God's way of saying to us, "It's your fault, blame me." Because of this great mercy of God in Christ, we are truly able to be merciful in this life on earth.