

I. Review

- A. Jesus starts the SOTM with 8 aspects of His bridegroom heart that He longs to impart. He imparts these heart conditions to us in order for us to share in deep intimacy and love with Him. As we enter into this deeper degree of friendship, we experience increasing levels of abundant kingdom life in our inner man.
1. Blessed are the Poor in Spirit – Out of the desire for intimacy with His Father Jesus chose to empty Himself and only rely upon reality of what His Father empowered Him to do and say. Poverty of spirit is the necessary posture of entrance and experience of the Kingdom.
 2. Blessed are those who Mourn for the Kingdom – Experiencing the Kingdom causes us to see a disparity between the current age and the coming Kingdom age. This causes a constant dissatisfaction and mourning in our soul, until the fullness of the Kingdom comes.
 3. Blessed are the Meek – Meekness is the restraint of power or strength for the higher purposes of righteousness. The meekness of Jesus is the primary aspect of peace and rest in our inner man and the surety of an eternal Kingdom of peace on the earth.
 4. Blessed are those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness – God’s righteousness must increase in your soul, in order to give life and nourishment to your inner man and grow you up into the maturity of fullness of life and love.

II. Blessed are the Merciful for they shall Obtain Mercy (Mat. 5:7)

- A. Throughout this series we have reiterated how Jesus is very intentional about the order of these 8 aspects of His heart. Each one builds upon the other. How fitting it is that right after He exhorts us to hunger and thirst to walk in righteousness He immediately exhorts us to behold His mercy. (Heb. 4:14-16)
1. Jesus knows we bend towards self-righteousness and the trap we often fall in, to set ourselves as the standard of behavioral excellence. The fruit of self-righteousness is carrying a critical spirit rooted in pride, which tumbles us into shame and condemnation when our weakness is revealed. Mercy, on the other hand, is the fruit of those who walk in transformational righteousness, by the power of God and not of themselves.

Don't rejoice in your commitment to Jesus. Rejoice IN Jesus! If you rejoice in your commitment to Jesus it will lead you into self-righteousness. – Jack Deere

2. It is not by mistake that the first relational expression of the beatitudes, that we are called to walk in, is mercy. The foremost outflow of the righteous love of God being produced in us, is to operate in mercy.

B. Mercy Defined – Biblical mercy is more than simply holding back due punishment for someone’s offence. God feeling or having mercy upon us is manifested in a sincere sense of compassion over our state, and having a desire to relieve us from this state. God’s mercy is far from passive; His mercy compelled Him to pursue the wicked in order for them to turn from their ways. It was His mercy for us that ultimately drove Him to the cross. This is the reason scripture uses the words mercy and compassion interchangeably when speaking of His love. The mercy of God does not ever say to us in our sins “Its OK, it doesn’t matter.” On the contrary He was willing to bear the cost of our sin at His expense, in order to see us set free from the consequences of sin. (Ez. 18:23; Lk 15:4-10, 23:34; 2 Pet. 3:9)

The best definition of the distinction between grace and mercy that I have ever encountered is this; “Grace is especially associated with men in their sins; mercy is especially associated with men in their misery.” In other words, while grace looks down upon sin as a whole, mercy looks upon the consequences of sin. – Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

C. The Paramount Aspect of God’s Relational Heart – When looking at the aspects of relational love that God has towards us - the one most highlighted by Him, and by the prophets who carried His word, is mercy. It is the paramount aspect of His interaction with us. In the beatitudes, Jesus calls us to have the aspect of mercy be paramount in our understanding of relational intimacy with Him and with others. (Ex. 25:17-22, 33:18-34:7; Ps. 103:8-13; Jon. 4:2; Book of Hosea; Gen. 9:13; Rev. 9:13)

1. Through this beatitude, specifically, Jesus is inviting us to actively walk in God’s mercy towards others, as we rightly understand and feel His mercy towards us. When we fail to walk in mercy it is generally because we have not let the weight of how merciful He is to us humble us enough to respond in the same way. A right perspective of God’s mercy allows us to be fully loved by Him, as we are, and is the key to being merciful and loving to others.

“When it comes to responding to one another in mercy, we do not have people problems, we have knowledge of God problems.” – Brandon Hammonds

- a. This principal of right perspective, when neglected, has led to wrong teachings that we are forgiven by God only as we forgive others, and to the extent that we forgive others (Mat. 5:7, 6:15, 7:2; Mrk. 11:25-26). This cannot be right interpretation for a couple reasons. First, you would have to throw out the essential doctrine of Christianity of “Salvation by Grace Alone”. Countless passages upon grace make it clear, we are saved by grace through faith alone. Secondly, if our righteousness was judged strictly by those terms (walking in the forgiveness that God walks in) it is sure that none of us would see heaven.

- b. Scripture must be interpreted by scripture, and we must never entertain an interpretation of scripture that contradicts other scriptures. We are called to rightly divide the word of truth and in doing so, I believe very strongly, that we must apply these passages in terms of our living condition with God, rather than in our legal position in God. (Mat. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Jas. 2:13)

D. Mercy Incarnate – Once again, in the face of Christ, we find the beauty of our God, who delights to give mercy. In countless spoken and unspoken ways Jesus displayed the glories of the mercy of God and invited us to share in the life found within His heart.

1. Mercy was the catalyst for His miracles.
(Mat. 9:27, 36, 14:14; 15:22, 17:15, 20:30-31, 34, 23:23; Mark 8:1, 9:22, 10:47-48; Lk. 7:13, 17:13, 18:38-39)
2. Mercy was His message.
(Mat. 9:9-13, 12:1-13, 23:4, 23)
3. Mercy was His mission.
(Lk. 1:50-54, 72-78; Eph. 2:1-7; 1 Pet. 1:3)

Mercy is still His catalyst for miracles, mercy is still His message, mercy is still His mission. Mercy is His constant invitation for us to enter into the fullness of His love and His life. (Heb. 4:1-16; Jude 1:21)