“The King’s Blessed People: Reflecting His Heart”

Matthew 5:1-12

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 8/21/22)

 How will you make a difference for Christ where you live? God’s children, the people of the Kingdom, bear Jesus’ character. We are meant to live lives that reflect His heart. A church used by God is a church that shows mercy in its community. To be born again makes one realize just how sinful we are and how dependent we are on God. We grieve over our sin. We bow before Him in humility. We crave righteousness that we can’t manufacture on our own. If all these attributes are in us and growing, we can’t help but show mercy!

 To be merciful is to be kind, compassionate, lenient, giving and forgiving, even to those who have offended us. After all, mercy and justice met on the cross of Jesus. He is our example, and His Spirit is our power. Mercy moves beyond pity: mercy moves our hands and feet. God’s people are distinguished by mercy. They are indwelt with the Spirit of God. His people carry His fragrance. We are meant to serve the world with mercy.

 God has done everything necessary to make us right with Him. God gave His people His law, a reflection of His nature, because of His mercy. He wanted them to live their best life. Because of His mercy, God allowed blood sacrifices to be made for sin. This system foreshadowed the mercy God would show through Christ’s redeeming blood. Those who truly receive God’s mercy become merciful themselves. Mercy is a sign of life! The absence of mercy is a sign of death, living apart from God (Rom. 1:31).

 The rest of this study looks at 3 areas of application:

1. Mercy as a response to **need**.
2. Mercy as a response to an **offense**.
3. Mercy as a response to the **Great Commission**.

All through Jesus’ ministry, He looked at people’s **needs** and He acted: He healed the

sick, He made the lame walk, He raised the dead… And we, His people, are called to meet the real needs that sin’s curse has brought to humanity. MERCY IS AN ACT OF KINDNESS TOWARDS NEEDY PEOPLE. Consider the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Kingdom people don’t look away from needs. Mercy is an active response to those in need. It is a litmus test for our love toward God and for our love toward the people made in His image.

 Fallen people **offend** each other ALL THE TIME!!! What are we to do that reflects the heart of the King? FORGIVE! Don’t carry grudges. God’s people are called to forgive those who offend or sin against them. Make forgiveness your plan; make forgiveness your goal. We have been forgiven much… so we are to forgive. Consider the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21-35). The unforgiving person bears evidence that he has never received forgiveness from God (see Matt. 18:35). Do our relationships reflect the forgiving heart of God? Your debt to God is INCALCULABLE! Full and free forgiveness comes through Jesus, by God’s grace. Have you received His mercy? Do you extend mercy when you are offended? Please read Eph. 4:31-32.

 God’s people, rescued by mercy, long to see others rescued by His mercy. That, folks, is the **Great Commission** (Matt. 28:18-20). Our outreach with the Gospel is MERCY-MOTIVATED (1Pet. 2:9-10). We want to see others taste this same mercy. Augustine of Hippo wrote, “If I weep for the body from which the soul is departed, how [I should] weep for that soul from which God has departed!” We are surrounded by people who are perishing, having never tasted the mercy of God. Does your practice of sharing Christ say that you are a merciful person? Does your practice of praying for the salvation of others reflect God’s own merciful heart toward sinners? (I’m not trying to beat you up… these questions hit home with me, too!) Most of us will be offended before this day is over, having an opportunity to show mercy once again. Let our hearts overflow with gratitude for the mercy we have been shown, causing us to show mercy again and again. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt. 5:7)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. Why did Pastor Steve entitle his sermon “Reflecting His Heart?”
2. When has mercy been shown to you by another person?
3. Read Mark 5:19 again. How should mercy be part of evangelism?
4. Pastor Steve said, “Mercy received motivates mercy proclaimed.” Explain this in your own words.
5. How could you help your children or your grandchildren grow in showing mercy?
6. Because of closeness, we often are offended by the people we love (or is it just me?!?!?) Remembering these 3 little words helps me respond with mercy: “Compassion, not criticism.” What helps you in showing mercy when it matters most?
7. Open Arms and Lazarus House are 2 excellent, local examples of ministries built around showing mercy. How do you know where to get involved? Where do you start? (starfish story)

“Amazing Grace” (Newton)

 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,

 That saved a wretch; like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

 Was blind, but now I see.

 ’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

 And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

 The hour I first believed!