



# Week three

## The sermon on the mount

### 'the mercy of god'

- Welcome (5-10 minutes)

Are you competitive or do you enjoy seeing others succeed? When did you last 'win'?

- Worship (10-15 minutes)



**pray**

*<sup>21</sup>At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven."<sup>23-25</sup>"The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market. <sup>26-27</sup>"The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt. <sup>28</sup>"The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!' <sup>29-31</sup>"The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king. <sup>32-35</sup>"The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."  
(Matthew 18: 21-35 The Message)*

- Word (50 minutes)

Seeing the world's needs through God's eyes can help us to see the extent of the grace that God shows to us personally. Individual people sin their sins and ask for forgiveness. We are each a part of this pattern, a sinner in need of a saviour. Of all God's roles, judge is the one we seek to usurp, whereas the mercy-giver is a far more attractive role as it seeks to bring about success for people rather than to compound failure.

Read the passage:

Matthew 5 (NLT)

The Sermon on the Mount

<sup>1</sup> One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.

*The Beatitudes*

<sup>3</sup> "God blesses those who are poor and realise their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup> God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.



- <sup>7</sup> God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- <sup>8</sup> God blesses those whose hearts are pure,  
for they will see God.
- <sup>9</sup> God blesses those who work for peace,  
for they will be called the children of God.
- <sup>10</sup> God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right,  
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.



We find real success in the world as we discover what it looks like through the eyes of Jesus.

- Find Scripture references that point to the world as one which shows the Father's mercy.

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Our relationship with God should find its out-working in how we treat other people.

- Share your ideas about why we need to show mercy in order that we might receive it.

Being on the receiving end of an act of mercy can affect us in a deep way. It may teach us to think about the world or a person from a whole new perspective. It may challenge our behaviour or thinking.

- Talk about the ways you have received mercy from someone else. What were your emotions? How did you respond? Was the mercy expected?
- What were the costs of this incident of mercy for yourself and for the mercy-giver?

John Stott suggests that;

*'Mercy' is compassion for people in need. Richard Lenski helpfully distinguishes it from 'grace': 'The noun 'eleos' (mercy) ... always deals with what we see of pain, misery and distress, these results of sin; and 'charis' (grace) always deals with the sin and guilt itself. The one extends relief, the other pardon; the one cures, heals, helps; the other cleanses and reinstates. (p.47 Sermon on the Mount)*

Mercy then should inspire action to make the world a better place.



- How do mercy and grace work together for our salvation? Think of and talk about examples from your own life where you can see or have seen the two strands at work.
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| 1. |
| 2. |



- Is being merciful your natural approach to the world?

Pray together about increasing your abilities and desires in this area.

- **Witness** (20 – 25 minutes)

**Pray**

Offer some prayers of intercession for world or local events that have recently moved you.

Each person should commit to showing mercy in an area that would be unusual for them during the week. Share ideas in the group and agree on how best you can support one another in this.

**Time for refreshments, you've earned them!**



Bibliography

Stott, John RW; *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*; BST; IVP; 1978