

Study Guide: The Sermon on the Mount - Happy Are the Merciful – Lesson 23

May 11, 2025

Quiz

1. According to the sermon, what is one characteristic that Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' time lacked, despite their external practices?
2. In the context of the Beatitudes, what does the preacher suggest is the two-fold idea behind being "merciful"?
3. John the Baptist, in John chapter 3, confronts the Pharisees and Sadducees. What does he tell them to bring forth as evidence of their repentance?
4. How does the sermon describe the consequence for trees that do not bear good fruit, according to John the Baptist's message?
5. What does the preacher suggest is the difference between external religious actions and true spirituality according to Jesus' teachings?
6. The theologian Martin Lloyd Jones is quoted in the sermon. What is the core idea of his quote regarding being a Christian?
7. The preacher mentions that the first four Beatitudes primarily focus on "inner principles" or how we see ourselves before God. What shift in focus occurs starting with the fifth Beatitude, "Happy are the merciful"?
8. What comparison is made in the sermon between the people Jesus was addressing and the world today regarding mercy?
9. What is suggested as the only way to truly experience the meaning of mercy and be concerned about others before yourself?
10. What is the biblical precept of prayer mentioned in the sermon regarding being angry at someone?

Quiz Answer Key

1. According to the sermon, the Jewish religious leaders lacked anything happening "inside." Their religion was shallow, superficial, and external, without true inner transformation.
2. The two-fold idea is that to enter God's kingdom, one must seek mercy, and once in the kingdom, one will give mercy to others.

3. He tells them to bring forth fruits that are worthy of repentance, indicating that their external religious acts were not enough without inner change.
4. According to John the Baptist, every tree which does not bear good fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire, signifying judgment.
5. The sermon suggests that while Jesus was concerned with actions, he primarily focused on the internal state or "heart attitude" from which actions should spring, rather than just superficial external practices.
6. Martin Lloyd Jones is quoted as saying, "A Christian is something before he does something," meaning true Christian character precedes actions.
7. Starting with the fifth Beatitude, the attitude begins to reach out and touch others, meaning it becomes manifested outwardly as a result of the inward transformation described in the first four.
8. The sermon compares the people Jesus addressed to the world today, stating that both are often merciless, proud, self-righteous, and condemning.
9. The only way suggested to truly experience the meaning of mercy and prioritize others is to have Jesus Christ in your life.
10. The biblical precept mentioned is that if you are angry at someone, your prayers will not be effective or get higher than the ceiling.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the contrast presented in the sermon between the external, formalized religion of the Jewish leaders in Jesus' time and the internal transformation emphasized in the Beatitudes. How does the concept of "whitewashed tombs" illustrate this contrast?
2. Analyze the preacher's argument that the first four Beatitudes (poor in spirit, mournful, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness) are sequential and foundational for the manifestation of the later Beatitudes (merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake). Provide examples from the sermon to support your analysis.
3. Explore the significance of mercy as presented in the sermon. Why does the preacher state that mercy is a "gigantic reality" that runs throughout the entire Bible? How does the lack of mercy in the world contribute to global conflicts, according to the sermon?

4. Explain the preacher's perspective on legalism and superficial Christianity. How does he define legalism, and what does he suggest is the antidote to this practice based on Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount?
5. Discuss the four proposed aspects of studying mercy mentioned at the end of the excerpt: Significance, Source, Substance, and Sequel. Based on the introduction provided, what do you anticipate will be the focus of the "Significance" aspect of mercy in future lessons?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Beatitudes:** The blessings listed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12). Each one describes a particular state of being or action that is considered blessed or happy.
- **Discourse:** A formal discussion of a subject in speech or writing. In this context, it refers to a sermon or teaching.
- **Sermon on the Mount:** A collection of sayings and teachings of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew (chapters 5-7), which includes the Beatitudes.
- **Makarios:** A Greek word used in the Beatitudes, translated as "blessed" or "happy."
- **Poor in Spirit:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to a spiritual state of humility and dependence on God, recognizing one's spiritual bankruptcy without Him.
- **Mourners:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those who mourn over their sin and the brokenness of the world.
- **Meek:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those who are gentle, humble, and submissive to God's will.
- **Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to a deep desire and longing for God's justice and holiness.
- **Merciful:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those who show compassion and kindness to others, especially those in need.
- **Pure in Heart:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those whose inner motives and desires are clean and focused on God.
- **Peacemakers:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those who actively work to bring about peace and reconciliation.

- **Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake:** One of the Beatitudes, referring to those who suffer for their faith and adherence to God's ways.
- **Kingdom of Heaven/God:** The reign or rule of God, both presently in the hearts of believers and in the future consummation of His kingdom.
- **Shallow, Superficial, External Religion:** A religious practice that focuses on outward rituals and appearances rather than genuine inner transformation and a relationship with God.
- **Self-Righteous:** Having or characterized by a smug or moralistic belief that one is morally superior to others.
- **Whitewashed Tombs:** An analogy used by Jesus in Matthew 23:27 to describe the Pharisees and Sadducees, who appeared outwardly religious but were inwardly full of corruption and sin.
- **Brood of Vipers:** A harsh term used by John the Baptist and Jesus to describe those who are deceptive and inwardly corrupt.
- **Fruits of Repentance:** Actions and behaviors that demonstrate genuine sorrow for sin and a turning away from it.
- **Lineage/Racial Identity:** Relying on one's ancestry or ethnic background for salvation, as opposed to personal faith and transformation.
- **Winnowing Fan:** A tool used to separate grain from chaff, used metaphorically in the Bible to represent judgment and separation.
- **Unquenchable Fire:** A biblical image often used to describe eternal judgment or punishment.
- **Legalism:** Strict adherence to laws or rules, often in a rigid or unthinking manner, particularly in a religious context where it can become a substitute for genuine faith and love.
- **Facade:** An outward appearance that is maintained to conceal a less pleasant or creditable reality.
- **Veneer:** A thin decorative covering of fine wood applied to a coarser wood or other material; used metaphorically to describe a superficial or deceptive appearance.
- **Blood of Bulls and Goats:** A reference to the animal sacrifices offered in the Old Testament Law, which the sermon suggests God was not solely interested in unless they were accompanied by a right heart attitude.

- **Significance, Source, Substance, Sequel:** The four aspects of mercy that the preacher intends to explore in subsequent lessons.