



Daily Verse and Comment

Matthew 5:7

(7) Blessed *are* the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

New King James Version

Mercy begins with the [love](#) of [God](#). He is always the source of righteous character and righteous deeds. Without God's love as the source of those things and our guide, our "[merciful](#)" good works (as we see them) are suspect. If they do not have God as the source, we cannot trust them to be truly good. [Jesus](#) points out the Pharisees as the opposite of what He wants. They did their good works for selfish reasons, as both Matthew 6 and Matthew 23 show. They did their works to be seen by others, that is, hypocritically. They did not do them primarily to help the needy. They did them so others would say, "Wow, what a righteous person that guy is." Jesus calls them what they were—hypocrites.

Conversely, the mercies of God are untainted by this idea of "what can doing this get me," because the love of God is the *agape* love. It is selfless, a divine sacrificial love that gives, not for something in return but because it is good and right to do so.

The structure of this beatitude implies a reciprocal relationship between the merciful God and the converted Christian. It is a covenant relationship like the agreement between a lord and a vassal, bound by oaths and promises.

Here, the agreement is that God has given mercy, which obliges the Christian to show mercy to others, and God then will continue to extend mercy. Both God and the Christian fulfill their roles, not to get something like salvation. Both do their parts out of love because it is good. It is what pleases God and helps other people.

While the word is not present in Jesus' beatitude, the structure of this idea harkens to a pervasive [Old Testament](#) concept found in the Hebrew word *hesed*, which means "covenant loyalty." It can also connote "loyal or steadfast love." It is frequently translated in the Old Testament as "favor," "lovingkindness," "[kindness](#)," "[goodness](#)," or "mercy."

Because we have made a covenant with God to be molded into His image, we have vowed through our [baptism](#) to uphold this idea of *hesed*. Our baptism is a sign of our covenant with God. By it, we have promised to keep the New Covenant. In this beatitude, Jesus reminds us that to remain loyal to Him, our covenantal agreement requires us to show mercy just as God has shown mercy to us.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Merciful](#)



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