

# For Those Who Show Mercy

The Following Article is an Excerpt from

## “A Book of Bible Study”

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<https://www.abookofbiblestudy.net/>

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

Jesus' teaching known as "The Beatitudes" is recorded in Matthew 5:3-12. Within this passage, He identified attributes or experiences that will be manifested in the lives of those who are indeed the children of God. Each of these experiences is a reflection of the suffering and sacrifice that Jesus Himself endured, and each of these brings the promise of God's blessing.

Jesus began by teaching that we as God's children will know and experience what it is like to be poor in spirit, even though the kingdom of Heaven is ours. We will know what it is like to mourn and to be partakers with the Him, the Man of Sorrows (John 16:20-22, Isaiah 53:3), and yet we are assured that the time will come for us when we will be comforted.

We will also be brought to a position of meekness or humility as God works in our lives to conform us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:10-11), and yet the time will come when we will inherit the earth.

We will hunger and thirst for righteousness when surrounded by unrighteousness in a wicked world (Psalm 42:2, 63:1, 143:6). However we are assured that the time will come for us when we will be filled, and we will hunger and thirst no more (Revelation 7:16-17).

We will also find ourselves called upon to sacrifice something of what we have and could have kept for ourselves, in order to be merciful to someone in need. Love manifesting itself through acts of mercy is one evidence that we ourselves have received God's mercy, having been called to faith in His Son.

Jesus also taught that we will know something of what it is like to be pure in heart. As those who have been called to faith in His Son, God has given us a heart to obey Him and keep His commandments (John 14:23-24), which is another evidence of a genuine faith that will be manifested in the lives of God's people.

As Jesus continued, He taught that we will know and experience something of what it is like to be peacemakers among those who are self-willed. As believers, God has ordained that the life of the Prince of Peace will be manifested through our lives lived here on the earth (Isaiah 9:6-7, 2 Corinthians 4:7-12).

Jesus concluded His teaching in this passage by saying that we as His people will also know in some measure what it is like to be persecuted. We will be excluded, insulted, and falsely accused because of who we are, believers in Christ (1 Timothy 3:12).

Among these beatitudes, we find the beatitude of showing mercy toward others. The love of Christ will be manifested in the life of every believer, and this love will motivate us, and even compel us, to show mercy to others (Matthew 25:31-46, John 13:34-35, 1 John 3:11-20). Our faith in Christ will be shown to be a genuine faith by love manifesting itself through acts of mercy. Jesus taught that in return for the mercy that we show to others in their time of need, we will receive the mercy of God in our own times of trouble, and eternal reward and blessing in Heaven.

### *A Lesson from Psalm 41*

In Psalm 41, David told of the mercy of God that is extended to those who have shown mercy to others. In the context of this psalm, we see that David was very ill, and he acknowledged that his present illness was a consequence of his

own sin. Certainly not all illness and affliction is a consequence of one's own personal sins, as is clearly taught in the Book of Job (Job 1:1, 2:8, 2:3). However in the context of this psalm, David acknowledged his illness to be a result of his sin. Beginning in verse 1, we read:

How blessed is he who considers the helpless;  
The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble.  
The LORD will protect him and keep him alive,  
And he shall be called blessed upon the earth;  
And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies.  
The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed;  
In his illness, You restore him to health.

As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;  
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You." (Psalm 41:1-4)

The promises of God's blessing that we find in these verses are given to those who show mercy to the weak. David taught that in return for the mercy that we extend to those who are helpless and in distress, the Lord will extend His mercy to us and deliver us in our own times of trouble.

Even as David acknowledged in verse 4 that his current affliction was a result of his own sin, he knew that God would remember the mercy and kindness he had shown to others in their weakness, vulnerability and need. God will remember our acts of mercy toward others, and He will in turn show His mercy to us in our time of need, even in the midst of His disciplines, which always come upon us as a consequence of our sin.

### ***A Lesson from Isaiah 58***

In the book of Isaiah, we find another promise of God's mercy given to His people in return for the mercy they have shown to others. Speaking through the prophet, the Lord rebuked the house of Jacob for their superficial type of fasting. They went without food, but they continued in other sinful practices such as exploiting their workers, quarreling, and even striking one another with their fists.

After His rebuke, the Lord said that true fasting that pleases Him is to extend mercy and acts of kindness to others. In this passage, God promises His people that

in return for the mercy that we show toward others in need, we will receive His mercy, provision, and help in our time of need. Beginning in verse 6, we read:

“Is this not the fast which I choose,  
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the bands of the yoke,  
And to let the oppressed go free  
And break every yoke?  
“Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry  
And bring the homeless poor into the house;  
When you see the naked, to cover him;  
And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?  
“Then your light will break out like the dawn,  
And your recovery will speedily spring forth;  
And your righteousness will go before you;  
The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.  
“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’  
If you remove the yoke from your midst,  
The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness,  
And if you give yourself to the hungry  
And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
Then your light will rise in darkness  
And your gloom will become like midday.  
“And the Lord will continually guide you,  
And satisfy your desire in scorched places,  
And give strength to your bones;  
And you will be like a watered garden,  
And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.  
“Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;  
You will raise up the age-old foundations;  
And you will be called the repairer of the breach,  
The restorer of the streets in which to dwell. (Isaiah 58:6-12)

There are conditional promises in the word of God. These conditional promises require acts of obedience on our part as God’s people in order for us to receive the blessings promised. In Psalm 41 and Isaiah 58, we see God promising His blessings and mercies for our lives, and He gives us these promises on the condition that we show mercy to others.

Notice in Isaiah 58 that God calls upon us, to the extent that it is in our power to do so, to “let the oppressed go free” and to “break every yoke”, as we read in verse 6. In verse 7, He calls upon us to give of our own material resources in order to provide necessities to those who are in need. With this kind of fasting, we deny ourselves what we could have kept for our own benefit in order to show mercy to others. This is true fasting that pleases God, fasting that does not merely deny ourselves food for a time.

In the following verses we see that for those of us who show mercy to others, God promises that light will break forth for us in our own times of darkness. We also see the promise that our “recovery will speedily spring forth”, which speaks of God’s restoration in our lives. We also find God’s promise of His protection, with the glory of the Lord as our rear guard. And we also see that for those of us who show mercy to others, God promises that when we call to Him for help in our times of trouble, He will answer us.

Continuing in verse 10, the Lord gave the conditional promise to His people, that if we extend our souls to the hungry, and if we “satisfy the desire of the afflicted”, then in return our “light will rise” in the midst of our own darkness. He promised that He will guide us always, and He will satisfy our needs, even if we should find ourselves in a scorched and barren place in our own lives. He also promised that He will strengthen us. All of these promises of the Lord’s help and sustenance are given to us in return for the mercies that we have shown to others.

In verse 11, the Lord said that those who have shown these mercies will be like a “watered garden” and “like a spring of waters, whose waters do not fail”. This imagery describes the blessings that come to those who have extended mercy, spending themselves and their resources in behalf of the hungry, to satisfy the needs of those who are oppressed. This verse brings to mind the words of the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians where he wrote: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

### ***The Teaching of James***

James wrote to believers saying: “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” (James 1:27). To look after widows and

orphans in their distress is to be merciful to those who are in a position of weakness, need, and vulnerability, doing what we can to meet their need, and thereby showing mercy to them by spending ourselves and our resources in their behalf. At the same time, we are to walk in obedience to all of God's word, keeping ourselves from being polluted by the world.

James also exhorted us: "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment." (James 2:12-13). As believers, the love and the life of Christ will be manifested in our lives lived here on earth (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). And one of the ways in which Christ's life will be manifested through our lives is through the sacrifice that we make when we show mercy to others.

Let all of us who are recipients of God's grace strive to show mercy to others whenever we can, so that we will receive eternal reward in Heaven, as well as God's conditional promises of His mercies for our own lives here on earth. These promises of His blessing and mercy shown toward us in our times of trouble are contingent upon our showing mercy to others.

### ***God's Blessings Promised to the Generous***

One of the ways in which we show mercy to others is through our generosity in giving to them something of what God has given to us, in order to ease their burden during their time of need. We have already seen several passages in both the Old and New Testaments that speak of the blessings promised to the righteous who give generously of the resources that God has given to them for the benefit of the poor and needy. In Psalm 112 we find yet another of these passages. Beginning in verse 4 we read:

Light arises in the darkness for the upright;  
He is gracious and compassionate and righteous.  
It is well with the man who is gracious and lends;  
He will maintain his cause in judgment.  
For he will never be shaken;  
The righteous will be remembered forever.

He will not fear evil tidings;  
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is upheld, he will not fear,  
Until he looks with satisfaction on his adversaries.  
He has given freely to the poor,  
His righteousness endures forever;  
His horn will be exalted in honor. (Psalm 112:4-9)

The word “horn” in verse 9 is symbolic of dignity, so a paraphrasing of the last part of verse nine could accurately be rendered as “his dignity will be exalted in honor.” The psalmist told of the blessings that God will give to the righteous who are gracious and compassionate, who are generous and lend freely, and who have “given freely to the poor”.

The righteous man in Old Testament times looked for the coming of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets. He strove to obey God according to the directives and teachings given in the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets.

Today the righteous man is the believer in Christ. This promise of God’s blessing given to His people here in the Old Testament, in return for their mercy shown to those in need, is a promise that is also ours today as believers, as spiritual Israel. Ours as well is the wealth of blessings and promises that God has provided for His people through the writings of the New Testament authors.

As God’s righteous people who have been brought to faith in Christ, we will be generous in many ways as the love of God manifests itself through our actions, bearing witness to our genuine faith (James 2:14-26). Our hearts will be steadfast, secure and ultimately without fear because we trust in God and in the truth and faithfulness of His word.

God gave us this promise through the psalmist’s words: “Light arises in the darkness for the upright” (Psalm 112:4). This is God’s promise for the righteous, who are gracious and compassionate, lending their resources to help meet the needs of those who are in distress.

Though darkness and trouble persist for a time in the lives of the righteous, light will dawn in the midst of our present darkness, and good will come to those who are generous. Therefore, let us remember to show mercy to others by giving to them something of what God has given to us in order to ease their burden, so that we may receive God’s promise of mercy and the dawning of light in the midst of our own times of darkness.

The righteous man shows mercy when he gives, and as Jesus said: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5:7). When we show mercy by our generosity to others, we in return are promised God’s mercy when we find ourselves facing our own times of trouble. This is God’s promise for those who show mercy.