

INTRODUCTION: The Civil War was not an easy time. Mercy was not a high trader on the commodities market of the day. Families were split apart by colliding belief systems and geographical lines drawn by pens in places far away from the true battle lines. War is hell, and Clara Barton knew it. She started an effort to give comfort to the wounded and dying on the battlefields of the day. Her work gained popularity and not all of it was positive. A reporter slandered her for her misapplied good works. Those words cost her charitable effort some hardship. Many years later, she was asked about this incident and how it had affected her. Her reply was and still is impressive. She simply stated ‘ I distinctly remember forgetting that.’ Amazing. I don’t know about you, but I think Clara had spent some time in Matthew 5.

I. Matthew 5:7 Blessed are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- A. Literal translation: Supremely blessed are the actively compassionate, because first they have obtained, received, and had compassion shown on them in word and in deed.
- B. What is mercy?
 - 1. Compassion-greek-human or divine but definitely active in either case.
 - 2. Compassion-webster-pity aroused by the distress of others, with a desire to help.
 - 3. Feelings for others coupled with selfless actions on their behalf. Knowledge plus shoe leather
 - 4. It is obtained-requires seeking –
 - 5. It is received-requires a source outside of ourselves
 - 6. It is spoken-it must flow out of our mouths James 2:12-13 ‘Speak as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful’
 - 7. It is acted out-it must come from our hands
 - 8. It is powerful- James 2:13 ‘mercy triumphs over judgement’
- C. What does our mercy/compassion have to flow from?
 - 1. Our understanding of the character of God Neh 9:26-33 ‘time after time’
 - 2. Our understanding of Christ’s purpose Titus 3:3-8
- D. What does mercy look like in us?
 - 1. What is looked like in God the Father in the Old Testament ‘time after time’
 - 2. What it looked like in Christ...’oh Jerusalem...how oft would I have gathered you...’
 - 3. What it looks like in the Holy Spirit...
- E. When does mercy stop?
 - 1. For the sovereign God – at his discretion--‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy...’
 - 2. From the true believer horizontally – never
 - 3. To the true believer vertically- never – mercy in Christ, in the Spirit, in His presence
 - 4. To the rejecter of God - At judgement...it will no longer be required as we will be perfected and so will all of our neighbors.
- F. What does mercy look like?
 - 1. Horizontally- Pausing fifteen to thirty seconds before jumping to a conclusion...and then not jumping. Remembering to forget. Waving to the person who cut you off in traffic and with the motive of ‘ I’m sure they’re on their way to the hospital or something...’. Letting people in a line of traffic when they’ve known that the lane was going to be closed for the last 2 miles..and then not complimenting yourself mentally for doing it. Not punishing your child for that really big mess-up when you can see that they are already broken by it. Saying I’m sorry when people hurt instead of trying to fix everything. Hurting with people without having to know all the details. Not trying to outdo someone’s struggles with the struggles you’ve seen and experienced...and just listening. Letting people mar your character, but never the character of your savior. Seeing the needs around you and then doing what you can to meet them. Knowledge is responsibility.
 - 2. Vertically- Watching mankind continually mess up and still loving them. Saving a few in a really big boat, when it may have been easier to just start the whole thing over. Never changing. Instituting the animal sacrifices and watching the blood flow to the valley of hinnom for years just to create an object lesson for your children that someday the blood would flow for the remission, not the rolling back of sins. Keeping your promise to send a savior for the people that kept forgetting you existed. Not lowering the bar because they just don’t seem to be getting this selflessness concept. Desiring communion with an unholy people and knowing what the cost would be. Sending a part of you to die for the same race of people that just keep messing everything up. Watching them keep on sinning after confession of your son’s sacrifice and not turning them into cinders on the spot. Loving them in spite of...and you fill in the blank in your life. Keeping your promises while not moving the standard of Holiness. Seeing your son’s blood spilled on the very soil that you created to save the soil that killed Him. And on and on and on....

PRINCIPLE: *The mercy of God is incomprehensible, and so should ours be to those around us. The mercy of God should be our sole motivator for mercy towards others.*

APPLICATION: *What does mercy look like in your life? Where does it come from? Have you experienced the mercy of God this week...and remembered to thank him for it?*

II. **Matthew 5:8 Blessed are those who are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

- A. Literal translation: Supremely blessed are the clean of heart because they will gaze in wide wonder at the supreme deity.
- B. What is our heart?
 - 1. The storehouse from within a person – Mt 15:18 ‘The things that come out the mouth come from within’ Lk 6:45 ‘The good man brings good things out of the good things stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart’
 - 2. It is evidenced by the mouth – Luke 6:45b ‘For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks’
 - 3. Broken from the beginning- Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. And who can know it.
 - 4. It longs to be made right with God Psalm 51
- C. What does a clean heart look like?
 - 1. It houses good things.- Lk 6:45
 - 2. It is evidenced by wholesome speech-Lk 6:45b
 - 3. It is evidenced by clean hands-Job 17:9 ‘The righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.’
 - 4. It is new, it is a gift, it is soft-Eze 36:26 ‘I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’
- D. How can I make my heart clean?
 - 1. You can’t – not by works, because you’d brag about it...it is a free gift
 - 2. Ask for it in light of the cross.
- E. What happens when we have a clean heart?
 - 1. We can see clearly
 - 2. We are in awe
- F. What do we look at?
 - 1. Hebrews 2:9 ‘But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.’
 - 2. Our salvation.
- G. How is this applied:
 - 1. Horizontally-Seeing the hand of God in everything that happens on a daily basis. Loving unconditionally. Parenting so that God gets the glory, not so that you’ll just have a well behaved and easy to manage household so that you can pursue what really matters to you. Being grateful for the gift of salvation in you. Letting the work on the cross be your only motivator for good works.
 - 2. Vertically-Giving God all the credit, all the time. Being confident of the gift of salvation in you. Letting Christ’s work on the cross be enough and not adding all these things to it

PRINCIPLE: God reveals Himself to those who earnestly seek Him and after seeing Him for who He really is, we cannot be the same.

APPLICATION: Who has ordained your steps to date? Peer pressure, you, your spouse, money, quality time with the kids, sacrifice now for time later, profit and loss statements, sales goals, a better crop yield, evangelism, church service, leadership, ministry, teaching Sunday school, furthering your education, retirement, indifference, apathy, innocence...or is it all of the above but with the goal of the praise of the Glory of His grace in the forefront? How clear is your picture of God? How are you trying to put dark tint on your heart so that others and even God can’t see it’s real condition? Do you see Jesus?

CONCLUSION: A four pound rock doesn’t look all that big. It’s about the size of a brick, give or take. If it’s going 70mph, 4 lbs takes on a whole new meaning. The reverend Johannes Christian found this out the hard way when a 15 year old boy pushed one off the ledge of an overpass into the path of his car. He never saw it coming, and he never saw anything after it. The rock came straight through the windshield and nearly killed him. Johannes was revived, but his sight wasn’t. Jacob, the boy who committed the act was charged with 2 counts each of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and destruction of property. Jacob was looking at a lot of time alone to think about what he had done. He got twelve years. He is sitting in a Clark County Ohio jail right now. But he is free. You see, Johannes went to Jacob’s trial and pleaded for mercy for Jacob. And then, he called the juvenile detention center where Jacob was being held and told him he was praying for him to become a Christian. And through the bible study classes made available to him, Jacob met God’s saving grace in the shape of a four pound rock, and he accepted the terms. According to the chaplain of the Clark county jail, Jacob is doing all he can to become a youth pastor when he leaves the jail system. We never know how far our mercy will go in the hands of a sovereign God...just ask the reverend Johannes Christian. Let’s pray.