

Matthew 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Analysis

This beatitude declares 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy' (Greek: μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, 'blessed the merciful ones'). The blessing operates on the principle of divine reciprocity: those who show mercy (ἐλεέω, compassionate action toward the needy) will themselves receive mercy. This is not salvation by works but a demonstration that genuine faith produces merciful character. The future tense 'shall obtain mercy' (ἐλεηθήσονται, divine passive) indicates God as the source of mercy. Kingdom citizens embody God's mercy because they have experienced it.

Historical Context

In first-century Judaism, mercy (hesed in Hebrew tradition) was a core covenant virtue. Jesus' sermon on a Galilean mountainside to Jewish audiences would evoke Sinai's law-giving. However, Jesus radically redefines blessing beyond mere covenant-keeping to internal character transformation. The merciful acts Jesus envisions extend beyond Jewish community boundaries to enemies (5:44) and the undeserving, reflecting God's character revealed in Exodus 34:6-7.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does showing mercy demonstrate that we have truly experienced God's mercy?
2. What is the relationship between receiving mercy and extending mercy to others?
3. In what practical ways can we cultivate merciful hearts in daily interactions?

Interlinear Text

Μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται
Blessed G3588 are the merciful G1655 for G3754 they G846 shall obtain mercy G1653

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 22:26 (Grace): With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

Psalms 18:25 (Grace): With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;

James 2:13 (Grace): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

James 3:17 (Grace): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Colossians 3:12 (Parallel theme): Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Luke 6:35 (Parallel theme): But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Micah 6:8 (Grace): He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Hebrews 6:10 (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Proverbs 19:17 (Parallel theme): He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Hebrews 4:16 (Grace): Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

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