

# Blessed Are (Part 4)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Jesus. Tonight we'll continue studying how Jesus describes being blessed as we go through three more beatitudes.

! Biblical blessedness is a state of joy and well-being that does not depend on physical or temporary circumstances. Let's go ahead and read Matthew chapter 5 verses 3 through 12.

Jesus said, Last week we covered what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

True righteousness, as Jesus demands, includes a proper relationship with God, a proper relationship with other people, a pure heart, a pure mind, and pure motives.

True righteousness, then, includes more than what we do. True righteousness also includes what we think and our motives behind what we do. True righteousness is the longing to be positively holy.

[ 1 : 57 ] And that's a longing or desire to be like the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Our supreme desire is to be like Christ. That fits with the main idea of this entire section.

Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described in these verses. Because Jesus exhibited these traits perfectly, we can paraphrase the main idea as Jesus expects every believer to be like him.

Jesus told us that our part is to seek righteousness. God's part is to satisfy. And although Christians continually seek God's righteousness, always wanting more and never getting all of it, they nevertheless will be satisfied by God.

Tonight's lesson will cover verses 7 through 9 of chapter 5. We'll talk about the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers.

These three virtues describe how true believers should relate to other people. All three qualities are also qualities of God. We can understand them only because we've first seen them exhibited by Christ.

[ 3 : 09 ] Because we've experienced them in Christ, we are to exhibit them to others. So everything comes back to the main idea paraphrase, and that is that Jesus expects every believer to be like him.

Jesus said in verse 7, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. We know that each beatitude has a requirement and a reward.

The reward for the merciful in this verse is that they will receive mercy. Grace and mercy are closely related. You may have heard grace described as giving someone something that is undeserved. Mercy often is described as withholding punishment that is deserved. Mercy goes deeper than that, though. Mercy is having compassion on others who are in difficult or desperate circumstances. Mercy is more than a feeling. It's an action. It stirs the heart and moves the hand to render help to those in need. There are two Greek words for mercy.

[ 4 : 14 ] One refers primarily to emotion. The word that Jesus uses here focuses on the action to which the feeling compels us. Biblical mercy, then, is kindness, generosity, and loving sacrifice on behalf of the wretched and the unworthy.

You already may be thinking about why true believers should demonstrate mercy. True believers should demonstrate mercy because we have received mercy.

Jesus described himself to Moses in Exodus 34.6. In Exodus 34.6, it says, The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Psalms 145.9 says, The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. Moving to the New Testament, Jesus told us, Be merciful even as your Father is merciful.

In 1 Peter, Peter reminded believers of the mercy that God has toward us. Listen to what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1.3. He said, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 33 ] According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus displayed mercy during his first coming.

For an example of that, consider how Jesus treated the woman caught in adultery. These verses are John 8, verses 1-11. So this is John 8, verses 1-11.

They say that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst, they said to him, Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say? This they said to him, to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.

[ 6 : 48 ] And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones. And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you.

Go, and from now on, sin no more. Notice that Jesus acknowledged the woman's action as sin, but he had compassion upon her and withheld punishment.

Even better than that, Jesus demonstrated mercy when he served as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of every believer. Romans 5.8 tells us, Mercy is at the heart of the gospel.

When we repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our salvation, we receive even greater mercy than the woman caught in adultery. Let's look now at the reward of this beatitude.

[ 8 : 00 ] Jesus said, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. That leads to a couple of questions. One of those questions is, from whom will we receive mercy?

And the second is, when will we receive this mercy? We've already touched on who will show us mercy. Society often fails to demonstrate mercy.

We saw that when we read the verses about the woman caught in adultery. The mercy Jesus references comes from God. There's no guarantee that you will ever see any earthly reward or any earthly recognition or even any earthly gratitude from those upon whom you have showered mercy. Our reward comes from God. The writer to the Hebrews illustrated that. Listen to Hebrews 6.10. He said, For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.

The next question is, when will we receive mercy? And the answer to that is broad. We received mercy in the past when Christ died in place of us for our sins.

[ 9 : 17 ] We saw that earlier when we read Romans 5.8. We receive mercy in the present when God forgives us of sin again and again and again.

We get reminded of that every time we read 1 John 1.9. And of course, 1 John 1.9 says, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we will receive mercy in the future at the final judgment. The entire passage covering that comes in Matthew 25, verses 31 through 46.

I'm only going to read verses 31 through 36 of Matthew 25. So here are those verses. Jesus said, Jesus referenced those who fed the hungry, gave a drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, visited the sick, clothed the naked, and came to the persecuted prisoner.

So what quality were those people demonstrating when they did all those things? Obviously, they were demonstrating mercy. And that's why we said earlier that biblical mercy is more than a feeling.

[ 11 : 17 ] Biblical mercy includes action. Matthew 5.7 does cause some controversy, though. Those who incorrectly believe in salvation by works often point to this verse.

Jesus seems to imply that we will receive mercy only if we show mercy. We can refute that argument by pointing to the past, present, and future aspects of mercy that we looked at earlier. We had nothing to do with the mercy that we received in the past. We were all yet to be born when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. And we have nothing to do with the mercy that we receive in

the present when God continues to forgive us of our sins.

However, we demonstrate that we receive mercy and we respond properly to God showing us mercy when we show mercy to others. Those true Christians who demonstrate mercy are the ones who will receive God's mercy in the future judgment.

Because when we show mercy, the true biblical mercy, that gives evidence that we really are believers. Perhaps nowhere is the relationship between God's original mercy and our subsequent merciful actions better stated than Ephesians 2, verses 4-10.

[12:35] Listen to Ephesians 2, verses 4-10. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Here in the Ephesians passage, we see the past, present, and future aspects of God's mercy. Paul said that because God is rich in mercy, God saved us when we were dead in sin.

That happened in the past. God has made us alive in the present. In the future, God will show us the immeasurable riches of his grace.

Our response to that then comes in verse 10. After we have received mercy, and because we will continue to receive mercy, then we do the good works that God prepared in advance for us to do, and some of those good works include being merciful to others.

[14:11] If I am not merciful, there is only one explanation, and that explanation is that I have never understood the grace and mercy of God. That means I am outside of Christ, and I am still in my sins, and I am unforgiven.

True Christians will be merciful because God was first merciful to us. When true Christians are merciful, we will continue to receive mercy from God because we demonstrate that we belong to God.

Jesus continued talking about Christian virtues in Matthew 5.8, and in Matthew 5.8, he said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The key to this verse is understanding what Jesus means by pure in heart. In the Bible, the heart is the center of the personality. It involves the mind, the will, and the emotions.

We'll look at three verses from the book of Romans to make this definition a little more clear. In Romans 1.21, Paul's reference to the heart speaks mainly about the mind.

[15:21] Romans 1.21 says, Because of their futile thinking, which happens in the mind, their hearts were darkened.

Then in Romans 2.5, Paul's reference to the heart refers mainly to people's will. Romans 2.5 says, Because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Because these people were unwilling to repent, they were bringing God's judgment upon themselves. And then in Romans 5.5, Paul's reference to the heart refers mainly to the place of our emotions.

Romans 5.5 says, And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

We'll look now at a few biblical descriptions of our natural hearts, and the Bible has very harsh descriptions of our natural hearts.

[16:38] We'll look at some Old Testament references first, and then we'll go to the New Testament. Listen to Jeremiah 17, verses 9 and then verse 10.

Verse 9 says, The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? Then verse 10 should be scary for non-Christians.

Verse 10 says, I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds. Jesus said these words to the Pharisees in Matthew 12, verse 34.

In Matthew 15, verses 18 and 19, Jesus added, Here in our text tonight, Jesus tells us that true believers are to be pure in heart.

Peter expanded on this concept in 1 Peter 2, verses 21 through 23. Listen to 1 Peter 2, verses 21 through 23.

[ 18 : 09 ] Peter wrote, For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Each beatitude comes back to the main idea for verses 3 through 12. Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described in these verses, or Jesus expects every believer to be like him.

Martin Lloyd-Jones defined pure in heart like this. He said, Being pure in heart means to be like the Lord Jesus Christ himself, perfect and spotless, and pure and entire.

It means we have an undivided love which regards God as our highest good, and which is concerned only about loving God. To be pure in heart, in other words, means to keep the first and greatest commandment.

[ 19 : 26 ] Jesus told the lawyer about the first and greatest commandment. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 22, 37 and 38. And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. Being pure in heart means that we should live to the glory of God in every respect, and that living that way should be the supreme desire of our lives.

It means that we desire God, and that we desire to know him, and that we desire to love him and to serve him. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for appearing to be clean on the outside, but being dirty on the inside.

For just a sample, listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 23, 25-28. Again, these verses are Jesus speaking in Matthew 23, 25-28.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

[ 20 : 42 ] You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

The Pharisees were insincere, and here in this fifth beatitude, Jesus emphasizes sincerity. Jesus emphasized more than sincerity alone.

Like the false prophets in Elijah's day and the false religious of our day, we can be sincerely wrong. The pure in heart are the utterly sincere about the purity that God requires.

Their whole life, public and private, is transparent before God and man. Their very heart, including their thoughts and motives, is pure and unmixed with anything devious, ulterior, or base.

[ 21 : 55 ] Hypocrisy and deceit are abhorrent to them. In other words, they are without guile. This concept had to seem revolutionary to Jesus' first readers.

They should have remembered Psalm 24, verses 3-6, though. This is not a new concept. Listen to what David wrote in Psalm 24, verses 3-6.

David wrote, Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully.

He will receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Now that we know what it means to be pure in heart, the obvious question is, how can we become pure in heart?

[ 22 : 57 ] James Montgomery Boyce wrote, The answer is that only God can make someone pure. You can begin by trying to cleanse your own heart, but whether you turn to ethics, religion, asceticism, fetishes, or whatever it may be, you will find that your heart is as corrupt at the end as at the beginning.

Only God can cleanse your heart from its impurities. Again, this is also a concept that's common in the Old Testament. King David understood that too.

Listen to what David wrote in Psalm 51. We know that Psalm 51 is a psalm that he wrote after he finally confessed his sins related to Bathsheba.

Psalm 51.10 says, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. You can see that David knew that God was having to create that clean heart.

God does that for all believers who believe on Jesus Christ. He does it judiciously and judicially in the moment that we believe. He does it practically during the moments of our earthly life as we yield to the urging of the Holy Spirit, and he will do it finally and completely in the moment of our death when we are purified from all evil and brought without spot into his holy presence.

[ 24 : 25 ] This beatitude, like all others, has the requirement and the reward. The last sentence of the previous quote blends both the requirement and the reward.

God finally and completely gives us a pure heart at the moment of our death when we are purified from all evil and are brought without spot or blemish into his holy presence.

God's motive is his loving desire to give us pleasure and joy and happiness that far exceed anything that impurity could ever produce. We will experience that fully when we see God.

God's motive should motivate us now. Although we can never fully achieve a pure heart in this life, we will sense more and more about what it will be like to one day see God.

Believers have a vision of God even while we are in this world, and let's think about some ways we do that. Christian people can see God in a sense that nobody else can.

[ 25 : 29 ] The Christian can see God in nature. The non-Christian can't. The Christian sees God in the events of history. But there's a seeing also in the presence of knowing God, a sense of feeling that God is near and enjoying God's presence.

Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote that we experience in the present a mere nothing as compared to what is yet to be. Listen to that again.

He says that what we experience in the present is a mere nothing compared with what is yet to be. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 13.12, Listen to what the Apostle John said in 1 John 3, verses 1-3.

John wrote, See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

[ 26 : 55 ] And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. About the promise that we will see God, Martin Lloyd-Jones said this to his congregation.

He said, This is surely the most amazing thing that has ever been said to a man, that you and I, such as we are, pressed with all the problems and troubles of this modern world, are going to see God face to face.

If we only grasped this, it would revolutionize our lives. You and I are meant for the audience chamber of God. You and I are being prepared to enter into the presence of the King of Kings. Do you believe it? Do you know it is true of you? Do you realize that a day is coming when you are going to see the blessed God face to face? Not as in a glass darkly, but face to face.

Surely the moment we grasp this, everything else pales into insignificance. Read the book of Revelation and listen to the redeemed of the Lord as they praise Him and ascribe all glory to Him.

[ 28 : 04 ] The blessedness is inconceivable beyond our imagination and we are destined for that. Listen to the last sentence of that quote again.

The blessedness is inconceivable beyond our imagination and we are destined for that. Because of this assurance that comes straight from God's word, we strive now to please God, to yield to Him, allowing Him to make us more increasingly pure.

And as we do, we increasingly see God as He fills our being and makes Himself known to us.

That's quite a statement, but we have one more verse to cover tonight.

In Matthew 5.9, Jesus said, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. We see the requirement and the reward again.

The requirement is to be a peacemaker. The reward is to be called sons of God or daughters of God. The same thing applies. Again, we see how countercultural the Beatitudes were and still are.

[ 29 : 17 ] The Jews in Jesus' day thought that the Messiah would be a military Messiah. They expected the Messiah to overthrow the Roman oppression. Jesus says here, though, that peacemakers are the ones who will be blessed.

Bring that forward to the present day. Why are there wars in the world? Why is there constant international tension? Why have we had world wars?

Why is there always a threat of further war and all of this unhappiness and turmoil and discord among people? According to this Beatitude, there's only one answer to these questions and that answer is sin.

That answer is theological and it's doctrinal. The trouble, according to Scripture, is in the heart of a man and until the heart of man is changed, he will never solve his problem by trying to make manipulations on the surface.

The trouble is in the heart of a man and nothing but a new heart, nothing but a new man can possibly deal with the problem. That is why peacemakers, as Jesus defines them here, are so important.

[ 30 : 31 ] Only the man of a pure heart can be a peacemaker. So you see how the Beatitudes build upon each other. Once we have a pure heart, we can then work on being a peacemaker.

The peacemaker has an entirely new view of himself. He has seen himself and he's come to see that in a sense this miserable, wretched self is not worth bothering about at all.

The peacemaker's self is so wretched it has no rights or privileges. It doesn't deserve anything. So if you've seen yourself as poor in spirit, like the first Beatitude, if you've mourned because of the blackness of your heart, if you've truly seen yourself and hungered and thirsted after righteousness, you'll never stand any longer on what is your right or what your privilege should be.

You'll realize that you deserve nothing from God, but yet you've received everything. The peacemaker has a new view of life, including a new view of others.

He's concerned about them. He's trying to see them in the light of biblical teaching. The peacemaker is the man who does not talk about people when they are offensive and difficult.

[ 31 : 46 ] Instead, he says, that poor person is a victim of self and Satan. He is hellbound. I must have pity and mercy upon him. The moment a Christian begins to look at others like that, especially non-Christians, he's in a position to help them.

He's more likely to make peace with them. Being a peacemaker also means having an entirely new view of the world. The peacemaker only has one concern, that's the glory of God among men.

That was the Lord Jesus Christ only concern. His one interest in life was the glory of God. The peacemaker is the man whose central concern also is the glory of God and who spends his life in trying to minister to that glory.

He knows that God made man perfect and that the world was meant to be paradise. When he sees individual and international disputes and quarreling, he sees those as detracting from the glory of God.

A peacemaker is also a man who is ready to humble himself and is ready to do anything and everything so that the glory of God can be promoted. The peacemaker desires this and he so desires it that he is prepared to suffer to bring it to pass if necessary.

[ 33 : 07 ] He is even prepared to suffer wrong and injustice so that the peace may be produced and that God's glory can be magnified. The peacemaker has finished with himself and with self-interest and self-concerns.

He says, what matters is the glory of God and the manifestation of that glory among men. If his suffering is going to lead to God's glory then the peacemaker will endure suffering.

From these definitions we again can see why we say that Jesus commands all his followers to be like him. Jesus is the one who did everything for the sake of God's glory including suffering.

This beatitude certainly speaks about how Christians should bring peace among men. We have to remember that the most important peace we can bring to others is peace between them and God. Listen to what Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 14 through 20. He said, For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this that one has died for all therefore all have died and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[ 34 : 32 ] From now on therefore re-regard no one according to the flesh even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh re-regard him thus no longer.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away behold the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. Listen to those last two verses again.

That is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

[ 35 : 41 ] Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. And instead of reconciled there we could say make peace with God.

It's the same idea. Only those who have first tasted peace with God at the cross of Christ can become peacemakers. Because these people have known God's peace then they must be peacemakers.

We have to be peacemakers in every area of our lives in our homes in our workplaces in our schools in our church in our cities in our nation and in our world.

Ultimately we should desire to bring men to peace with God. You have to think of peacemaking in terms of all persons with whom you come into contact.

If your old nature cries out that it wants to be first or that it's being taken advantage of then we need to look upward to the Lord Jesus Christ and yield to him and ask him to crucify our old nature including all its affections and lust.

[ 36 : 55 ] That sounds difficult but we can do that and we can do that through Christ working in us. We can all grow together into a more perfect reproduction of Christ's gracious life and character.

Before we end our look at Matthew 5-9 let's talk about the reward Jesus promises to peacemakers. Jesus says that peacemakers shall be called the sons of God or we could say shall be called children of God.

The text has a slight nuance to it and we need to see that. Peacemakers are more than just made the sons of God. Peacemakers are called the sons of God.

And here's the difference. To be made a child of God is to be renewed in his image and likeness.

To be called a child of God is to be esteemed and regarded as such.

Holy peacemakers are recognized as children of God by their spiritual brethren. To build on the idea of being called sons of God, listen to what the writer to the Hebrews said in Hebrews 2-11.

[ 38 : 05 ] Hebrews 2-11 says, For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source, brothers. That is why, and this is talking about Jesus, he is not ashamed to call them brothers.

So the he in the last sentence refers to Jesus, and when we are sanctified, when we behave like Jesus, Jesus is unashamed to call us brothers and sisters.

We already are brothers and sisters with Christ when we are saved. When we act like saved people should act, then Jesus is unashamed to call us brothers and sisters.

So you see the difference? We are children of God, but then we are called children of God when we manifest that behavior to others. A.W.

Pink says, Have you received this grace of the Spirit, so that you sincerely desire and endeavor to live at peace with all men? Then that is an evidence you are a child of God, a pledge of your adoption, labor to maintain it, ultimately God will make it manifest to all the universe that we are his children.

[ 39 : 15 ] Romans 8.19 says, For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. As we've gone through these verses, we've talked about how the Beatitudes have an intentional order.

True Christians demonstrate the three Beatitudes we looked at tonight because true Christians also demonstrate the first three Beatitudes we looked at in earlier lessons. Martin Lloyd Jones wrote that the first Beatitude pairs with the fourth, the second pairs with the fifth, and the third pairs with the sixth.

The merciful demonstrate mercy because they realize that they themselves are poor in spirit. They understand that they have received mercy even when they had nothing to commend themselves before God.

The pure in heart mourn over sinned, and that's the kind of mourning required by the second Beatitude. Only the meek who demonstrate power under control can truly be peacemakers, and

there you see how the third and the sixth pair together.

The Christian faith is not something on the surface of a man's life. It's not merely a kind of coating or a veneer. It's something that is happening at the very center of his personality, personality, and that's why the New Testament talks about rebirth and being born again, about a new creation, and about receiving a new nature.

[ 40 : 43 ] It's something that happens to a man in the very center of his being. It controls all his thoughts, all his outlook, all his imagination, and as a result, all his actions as well.

All our activities are the result of this new nature, this new disposition which we receive from God through the Holy Spirit. The good news of the gospel is that Christ paid the penalty for all sins so that God can be merciful to sinners.

On the cross, Christ satisfied God's justice, and when a person trusts in that satisfying sacrifice, God opens the floodgates of his mercy.

The good news of the gospel is that in the shedding of Christ's blood, justice was satisfied. sin was forgiven, righteousness was fulfilled, and mercy was made available.

There's never an excuse for sin, but fortunately for us, there's always a remedy for sin. John MacArthur says, at the cross, all of man's hatred and anger was vented against God.

[ 41 : 53 ] On the cross, the Son of God was mocked, cursed, spit upon, pierced, reviled, and killed. Jesus' disciples fled in fear, the sky flashed lightning, the earth shook violently, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

Yet through that violence, God brought peace. God's greatest righteousness confronted man's greatest wickedness, and righteousness won. And because righteousness won, peace was won. When our hearts get purified at salvation, we begin to live in the presence of God. We begin to see and to comprehend God with our new spiritual eyes.

Like Moses who saw God's glory and asked to see more, the one who is purified by Jesus Christ sees again and again the glory of God. When we truly realize that we've received mercy from God, we show mercy to others.

We desire to become pure in heart like God himself, and we manifest a desire for peace so that others will call us sons and daughters of God. The three verses we looked at tonight are a single sentence each, but those sentences are short yet profound.

[ 43 : 10 ] blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, summarized in one verse everything that we've talked about in this lesson. James 3.17 says that the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this reminder of what you expect us to be like. Thank you also for the reminder that we can't be this way ourselves, that we have to rely on the Holy Spirit to continue to make us more and more like Christ as we go through this life.

Continue working in us to make this so. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.