

# BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Mt 5:6; Ps 18:25; Col 3:13; Jas 5:9

**I. MERCY DEFINED:** “compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm,”

- A. Beneficence: wishing well, good will for others (cf. Jonathan Edwards)
- B. Forbearance: putting up with others' faults, shortcomings
- C. Forgiveness: refusing to retaliate, absorbing insults, injuries

## II. MERCY ENJOYED

- A. God revealed as merciful—multiple texts, hymns celebrating grace; “Divine mercy is the disposition of God to relieve the miserable, salve the wounds of the hurt, and receive sinners, quite apart from any works or merit” (Thomas Oden).
- B. As recipients, sinners enjoy forgiveness
  - 1. John Newton: “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me . . .”
  - 2. Truman Capote: “I wanted to get my goodness back.”

## III. MERCY ENJOINED

- A. Empathy—feeling with, sharing sorrows; “The merciful,” said Erasmus, are those “who, through brotherly love, account another person's misery their own; who weep over the calamities of others; who, out of their own property, feed the hungry and clothe the naked; who admonish those that are in error, inform the ignorant, pardon the offending; and who, in short, use their utmost endeavors to relieve and comfort others.”
- B. Spiritual Acts of Mercy
  - 1. Traditional:
    - a. Admonish sinners—prophets; preachers (Al Mohler); writers (Eric Metaxis' *Letter to the American Church*); judges (A. Scalia); school administrators (H. Orton Wiley at Pasadena)
    - b. Instruct the uninformed—teachers (schools & churches); podcasts (Prager University; Jordan Peterson; classical philosophers (Plato, Aristotle); apologists (James Tour); Gideons; Navigators
    - c. Counsel the doubtful—spiritual guides (Eugene Peterson; Thomas a Kempis; Edith Stein)
    - d. Comfort the sorrowful—empathetic counselors (Gregory I; Francis de Sales; Scott Peck)
    - e. Be patient with those in error—wise superiors (PLNU's Jim Bond)
    - f. Forgive offenses—priestly role (MLK after assassination attempt).
    - g. Pray for the living and the dead—intercessors; grief groups;
  - 2. Contemporary, additional areas?
- C. Corporal Acts of Mercy, based on Jesus' words in Mt 25
  - 1. Traditional:
    - a. Feeding Hungry—“Food for the Poor”
    - b. Giving Drink to thirsty—“Healing Waters”
    - c. Sheltering Homeless—Colorado Springs rescue mission; Habitat for Humanity
    - d. Clothing Naked—thrift stores, rescue missions; Compassion International
    - e. Visiting Sick—hospital visitation, chaplains
    - f. Visiting Imprisoned—Prison Fellowship, chaplains (Buena Vista facility)
    - g. Burying the Dead—funerals, on-going care for loved ones (CFC “care” list)
  - 2. Contemporary, additional areas?
    - a. Defending unborn—Choices; Students for Life;
    - b. Preserving environment—personal care; political positions (cf. *Range*)