

# Sermon: The Ministry of Mercy

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

All right, if you've got your Bible, go to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5, we're continuing in our series on the Sermon on the Mount. What we've been doing, though, the last several weeks is just kind of unpacking the Beatitudes one by one.

And I would imagine just by the songs we've been singing, you can guess which Beatitude we're looking at tonight. The one about mercy. And so just thank you for your singing. It's just such a gift to be in this place and hear you singing praises to the Lord.

So Matthew chapter 5. And by the way, thanks for the feedback just already in the Beatitudes. Many of you have been sharing how much you have enjoyed working through them.

And it's been a joy to be able to preach these things. One other thing I forgot to mention, too, that I think Nate forgot to announce, which is communion. If you're a guest here tonight, we take communion every week.

[ 1 : 24 ] And so if you didn't get the elements when you came in and you're a believer in Jesus, feel free to go grab those. We've got an usher that would be happy to bring those to you. So just want to make sure that you're prepared a little later in the service when we partake of communion together.

Okay? We ready? Let's do this. Okay? Let me ask you again. Are you ready? I'm ready. There you go. Didn't really matter if you're ready. I'm ready. So here we go. Matthew chapter 5, if you're able to stand, please do so.

And we're going to read God's Word, verse 1 through verse 12. Each week we've been looking or reading every single verse, though we're going to focus specifically on verse 7 this evening.

Verse 1 says, 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. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[ 2 : 47 ] Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. This is God's Word. Pray with me and for me. And let's ask God to teach us tonight.

God, thank you for the privilege now to worship by understanding your Word. We need the Holy Spirit to do that, the Spirit of truth. And so Lord, we just pray as you've met us here each week, as we open your Word, would you do it again?

And just help us understand more of what your kingdom really looks like. Because we are influenced often by the world and we want to be consistent with the kingdom of God.

So would you once again tonight teach us these things? We pray in Jesus' name. And God's people said? Amen. You can please be seated. It was a November night that Victoria would never forget.

[ 3 : 55 ] She just finished attending her niece's recital and she was driving back to her home on Long Island. She couldn't wait to get home, to hit the couch, relax by the fire, and just chill for a little while.

But unfortunately for Victoria, that's not how she would spend the rest of her evening. In fact, it's not even how she would spend the rest of the next several days.

You see, as Victoria was driving home, a silver Nissan pulled up beside her and an 18-year-old boy leaned out the passenger window and threw a 20-pound frozen turkey through the windshield of Victoria's car.

The frozen turkey broke through the glass, bent the steering wheel, and shattered Victoria's face like a dinner plate hitting concrete. What that 18-year-old young man thought was going to be a

funny prank left Victoria fighting for her life in intensive care.

She survived, but only after the doctors would rewire her jaw, reattach an eye, and bolt titanium plates to her skull. Victoria said that every time she looked into the mirror, she was reminded of the pain.

[ 5 : 30 ] But the shocking part of that story is not that an 18-year-old would be stupid enough to throw a frozen turkey through someone's windshield.

The shocking part of that story happened nine months later when her offender, Ryan Cushing, stood before the court judge.

The courtroom was absolutely packed with people that couldn't wait to see this little punk get put away. And so you can imagine the outrage when all Ryan received was six months, a few years probation, some counseling and community service.

The courtroom erupted. Everyone in that place objected. Everyone was outraged. Everyone. Except Victoria.

You see, Ryan's reduced sentence wasn't the judge's idea. It was Victoria's.

[ 6 : 39 ] In fact, after Ryan was sentenced right there in full view of the judge and the entire courtroom, Victoria embraced Ryan. As he just sobbed.

I forgive. I forgive.