

Matthew 5:1-12

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[0 : 00] This morning, Matthew chapter 5 is found on page 809 of your pew Bible. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 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.

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.

[1 : 17] Continuing in Matthew 18, starting at verse 21. Then Peter came up and said to him, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me?

And I forgive him. As many as seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold with his wife and children and all that he had and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.

And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred denarii.

[2 : 26] And seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, Pay what you owe. So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, Have patience with me, and I will pay you.

He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed. And they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Then his master summoned him and said to him, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?

And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

This is God's word. Well, let's welcome Dr. Hanum Asad as he comes to preach God's word to us this morning.

[3 : 39] Good morning. It's a great privilege and blessing for me to be with you.

Grateful for the opportunity. And thank you, Greg and Michelle, for all your help. We're grateful for the partnership with Trinity Baptist.

You've been a great blessing for the people in Gaza, for the needy, for the poor. You've been a blessing for the Syrian refugees and also the Iraqi refugees in Jordan as we minister among them and share God's love with them and also help in a practical way at this difficult time in the region.

I want to share with you about the importance of growing through forgiveness. And the Lord used different ways to help all of us to grow through his word, through prayer, through relationship with others.

God helped us also to grow through persecution and through tribulation and through suffering. But this morning, I want to focus with you to live the life of forgiveness toward others and how this will help us to grow in our walk with the Lord and also with our relationship with one another.

[5 : 09] The verse we heard in the Sermon on the Mount, in the fifth beatitude, when he says, blessed those who will show mercy toward others because themselves will receive mercy from the Lord.

But it's impossible to experience mercy toward other people unless we first experience the four beatitudes.

The fifth beatitude in verse 7 is not there by chance where it's first mentioned the four beatitudes.

The first four beatitudes focus more in your relationship with the Lord.

But the other four focus more in your relationship toward other people. This is why he say, blessed are the peacemaker. This is why he say, blessed are the merciful.

This is why he say, blessed are those who are pure in heart, who live a holy life. Blessed are those who will be persecuted. But it's impossible to experience forgiveness in our life toward other people, loved one, unless we first experience what it means to be poor in the spirit.

[6 : 24] You know, in the Greek language, the word poor, they use two different words. The first word, poor, it's referred to a person who works hard every day, but not barely able to make, to provide the basic physical needs for his family.

But the other word, poor, is the poorest of the poor. And this person not even able to provide the basic needs for his family. And this is the second word which is used when the Lord say, the blessed are the poor.

What the Lord say, how desperate these people for the physical and the basic needs. And he say to every one of us, if this is how you feel, this is how much you need God for your life, you will be blessed.

You know, the scripture, of course, say the Lord is presence everywhere. But in Isaiah 57, he say the Lord is presence in two places. He's in the highest place, up high, but also he's in the lowest place where is the broken and humble heart.

If you and I want to experience the power of the presence of God, we need to humble ourselves and to experience his presence. But also he said, blessed those who mourn.

[7 : 40] And the word mourn also in the Greek is not just to feel sad about your sins, but it talked more about grieving deeply combined with weeping concerning when you sin against the Lord.

If you experience that, you will be forgiven and you will be comforted. And then he say, blessed are the meek. And the word meek or meekness coming from Latin word, manu asus.

Manu, it's where we have the English word manual, hand. Asus, it means used to. And this expression or this word is used especially for wild animals, you know, which the horse, the wild horse will not use for the hand.

You know, he will kick and all of that. And this is really our life before we come to know the Lord. But when we allow God's hands to be on us, he will change us and make us the people who want us to be.

And then indeed we experience what is meek and meekness is all about. And then he said, blessed those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they will be filled.

[8 : 58] You know, the scripture never speak directly about blessed those who will seek happiness. You know, but if you have happiness here and if you have righteousness here, if you just seek happiness for itself, what you will receive?

Unhappiness. But if you seek righteousness, what you will get, not only righteousness, but also happiness. In the Sermon on the Mount, we see the recipe, if you will, for happiness.

And he speaks the characteristic through that. For us to live on this level, to experience forgiveness toward other people, first we need to experience what it means to be poor in the spirit, what it means to mourn, what it means to be meek, and what it means to be hungry and thirst for the things of God.

The parable we just heard, if we try to summarize it, where is Peter come ask Jesus, how many times I forgive my brother? And Peter said seven times because according to the traditional, the Jewish tradition, you forgive up to three times or four times.

But we see what Peter did, he multiply it and then add one. And he thought maybe we'll receive a praise from the Lord Jesus.

[10:26] But Jesus said, no, no, no, Peter. It's not seven times, but seventy, seven times. What he means, you cannot put a number how many times you forgive your brother or your sister.

And then he spoke about the parable about the king who forgave his servant. And how much he forgave him?

Ten thousand talents. And it's hard to believe, but you know one talent, how much it worth? One talent is worth about 15 years of work.

So he didn't forgive him for one talent or two or a hundred or a thousand. And the ten thousand talents, ten thousand bags of gold, if you will, and this is the maximum number on math or accounting, as I understand, you know, that they used at that time in the Near East.

What he's saying, I forgive you more even than can you comprehend in your mind. But the sad thing is, this servant is not willing to forgive his fellow servant how much?

[11:44] A hundred denarii, which is worth a hundred days of work. If you want to compare the value, how much the master forgave and how much the fellow servant is not willing to forgive, it's five hundred thousand times.

Can you imagine that? And basically, this is how much loved one the Lord forgave every one of us. More than you can imagine and more than can you comprehend.

But the sad thing, why sometimes we not willing to forgive one, forgive each other for the small things. May God help us all to live by the power of forgiveness.

Every human being, regardless of his ethnicity, regardless of his background, he needs the assurance before he die, he or she need to be sure that their sins are forgiven.

I read the story about the Second World War and there was a young man, a German soldier, his name Karl.

[12:57] He was with the Nazi. And at that time, they were in Russia and he came to the hospital and he was in very dangerous condition.

He was in the deathbed. And it seemed the moment he came to the hospital, he asked the nurse and he said, I want to speak to a Jew, an Jew. And there was an architect, Jewish person, working. But the way they treated them at that time, very badly, he was collecting the garbage and cleaning the place. So she asked him to come. And the minute he come, Wydenthal, the Jewish person, and when Karl, the German soldier, saw him, he hauled him quickly from the wrist of his hand.

And he said to him, I have horrible things I want to confess to you. And he started to talk to him.

We've been in this Jewish village in Russia and we put Jewish men, women, children in this frame house.

We closed the door, we threw the gasoline in and we put the place in fire. And if any person tried to jump from the windows, there's snipers down below and they will be killed before they be down.

[14:16] And he was crying without control. And then he, able to stop and he say to Wydenthal, forgive me, forgive me, I want to die in peace, would you forgive me?

And the story said that Wydenthal, the Jewish person, didn't say a word, and little by little withdraw his hand and left the young soldier dying without forgiveness.

And after the war was over and Wydenthal survived, he wrote his story in a book and he asked the people, what you will do if you were in my position?

Did I did the right thing? And because he wasn't sure if he did the right thing and different people wrote different things and he said, oh, you cannot forgive him and what he did is horrible.

And the other person said, you know, if I'm in your place, I will shock him and, you know, the offense is done against you directly so you cannot forgive him even though you are from the same ethnicity.

[15:25] And one person said, I'm not sure what I will do, but I hope I have the courage to tell him, I cannot forgive you, but I encourage you that you come with me before God and ask God to forgive you.

The reason I'm sharing this story with you this morning that deep inside every human being before he die, he needs the assurance that his sins are forgiven.

You know, loved one, only in the scripture, only in the person of Jesus Christ, you can be sure that you be forgiven as you come before him and humble yourself and ask his forgiveness.

See what he's saying in 1 John 5, 11 and this is the testimony. God has given us eternal life.

You see, he didn't say God may, will, or, you know, he will, or probably, no, he said God already, God has given us eternal life, which means you and I can be sure while we're still here on this earth

that we have eternal life.

[16:45] And this is what he said in verse 13 of the same chapter, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

He said, you can know simple, present, simple tense. While you're still here, you can know where you go after you die if you put your trust in the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. The reason I think, loved one, we didn't practice enough of forgiveness toward one another because there's a lot of misunderstanding what is forgiveness is all about.

When you forgive somebody who hurt you or did something bad against you, when you forgive that person, this is, doesn't mean what he did is right.

also we have the expression about forgive and forget. And you could forgive somebody but you still remember the event. But what you need really to forget the desire of revenge.

[17:54] When you forgive somebody who hurt you, this doesn't mean you invite him or her back to hurt you again. When you forgive somebody who broke the trust, this doesn't mean the trust automatically will come back as it used to be he or she has to gain the trust again.

Forgiveness also is not just a feeling but it's a decision. When you hurt deeply, you didn't feel like to forgive. But you come before the Lord, you share your pain and what you're going through.

But you say, Lord, I know what the right thing to do. I make a decision at this moment even though I didn't feel so, to forgive so and so.

And you know what? The moment you make this decision before the Lord in His presence, you will start to experience freedom in your life. Also, forgiveness is not just an event but it's the way of life. What I mean, after you make this decision, maybe the emotions, the feelings will come back after a few hours or after one day. But you come back before the Lord again and again and ask Him to continue to help you in this life of forgiveness.

[19:16] The feelings will take time but will come after a while. Sometimes take longer. It depends how deep the hurt you went through.

the question why we should forgive. You know, the New Testament used two words in the Greek when He explained or talks about forgiveness.

The first word is sit free and the second word to release. When you and I refuse to forgive somebody, we not only paralyze ourselves or bound ourselves but also bound the other people. But in the moment you make this decision, you be set free and also you release the person who sinned or who hurt you.

To forgive, to forgive, the word forgive coming from the word to give. And this is the ultimate way of giving when you give of yourself.

[20:22] Forgive not only to give but also giving up. you're giving up your right. You're giving up your right. And this is the ultimate way of giving of yourself when you decide to forgive others.

Why we should forgive? Simply because the Lord commands us to forgive. What we say in the Lord prayer, we say forgive us our sins, right?

As we forgive others. But also in the same chapter, Matthew 6 verse 14, he say, for if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you.

But if you don't forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins. If you're not willing to forgive others, as if you're saying to the father, don't forgive me because I don't want to forgive so and so.

So we see the forgiveness here are conditional. Forgiveness, loved one, bring healing to our soul. Why the Lord command us to forgive?

[21:31] Because simply he knows what is the best for you and for me. It's remind me of a story about a person many, many years ago.

His car broken on the freeway before they have a triple A, before they have cell phone. So he stuck in the freeway for two hours, three hours. People stopped to try to help him but no luck.

After three hours, somebody pulled over, came out of the car, told man have suits on and told this man, open the cover of the motor and he opened the cover of the motor and for a couple of minutes he did a few things here and there and then he said, start the car.

And this man said to himself out of desperation, I've been waiting here for three hours, people one after the other try to help and nothing and this guy coming just in two minutes and telling me to start the car.

Out of desperation, he started the car and the car started for his amazement. He wasn't in shock, he looked at him and he said, who are you? And he said, I'm Henry Ford.

[22 : 46] I'm the person who's behind this car. I'm the person who designed this car. I'm the engineer behind this car. I know every details about this car.

I say to myself, if Henry Ford knows this much about this car, how much the loving God who created you and me in his image know all the details about every one of us.

He knows how our body function, he knows what the need for our souls and our spirit. And he ordered every one of us as his children, he command us, live the life of forgiveness.

Don't allow bitterness, hatred to rule in your life. You know, when I struggle with forgiveness, when I go through tough times, I remind myself of two things.

Either if I chose to live the life of unforgiveness, allow bitterness and hatred to rule on my life, then I will be destroyed and I will be finished and I will not be affected at all.

[23 : 53] But by his grace, when I bring my pain and my hurts before the Lord and say, Lord, you see what I'm going through. It's very difficult. I've been humiliated.

It hurts, but I know what the right thing to do. Help me. I make a decision at this moment to forgive and to live the life of forgiveness.

What will happen when you and I decide to forgive? We give up our rights of revenge. Also, I review my feeling toward the person I hurt.

And also, I will rediscover the humanity of the person who hurt me. Because not anymore I look to him in the eyes of hatred, but I look at him through the eyes of love.

One of the things really helped me concerning to live the life of forgiveness is to arrange my priorities. And one of the things which really pushed me to rearrange my priorities when I went through the toughest time of my life.

[25 : 15] And this is when I was pastoring Gaza Baptist and one of our church members been kidnapped and after 10 hours been executed by militant because of his faith in Christ.

He wasn't 30 years old yet, his wife in her 20s. Their oldest child was two and a half years. The other child was less than one year and she was pregnant.

I didn't know what to do, what to say, how to deal with that. And it was a difficult time also because I felt my own life was on the line as well.

And at that time I started to ask the difficulty questions in life. What is life is all about? What is the most important thing for me in this life?

My faith? My family? To know the Lord in a better way and to make him known? And one of the things the Lord taught me at that time as I saw Rami was refused to deny his faith and he's willing to give his life for Christ.

[26 : 29] And also the Lord showed me not just Rami but you know loved one we have brothers and sisters around the world almost every day they are murdered for their faith in Christ.

And the sad thing even though we have brothers and sisters who is willing to give their life for their faith in Christ. the sad thing many times we fight in our churches among ourselves about silly things and here we have their brothers who is willing to give it all for the Lord.

One of the things which really touched my heart when Pauline the widow after one year of the murder of her husband she said this is my revenge she said this is my revenge that the people who murdered my husband that they may come to know the Lord in a personal way.

One thing really touched my heart last summer when I heard her saying how the Lord continued to bring genuine healing and forgiveness toward the people who murdered her husband.

But also we need to forgive in a good attitude I don't know if this story will make sense in this culture here but it talks about two neighbors one of them supposed to be Christian and the other not and there's touch between the two there's a problem they not talking for a while and the story said the anti-Christian neighbor came back late to his house and he surprised when he came the grass in the front in the front of his house cut neatly somebody cut it nicely and you know he didn't know you know who did that and so he went to the neighbor in the front of him you know to thank him and he said you are the one who cut the grass you know in the front of my house he said no he went the neighbor behind him you are the one who cut the grass in the front of my house he said no and then you know he said what is left just the

[28 : 49] Christian neighbor you know and out of curiosity you know he went to his house knock knock and opened the door and the man said yes and he said you are the one who cut the grass in

front of my house he said yes he said oh thank you what happened he said the scripture the bible says if your enemy is hungry give him something to eat if he stirs they give him something to drink and if you do this there will be a burning coal of fire coming on his head and may the fire come on your head is this a good attitude no we have to have a good attitude when we deal with forgiveness with others I will end with just a couple of things Corrie Ten Boom maybe you heard her story Corrie Ten Boom and her family hid in the

Jewish people in the second world war from the Nazi because their life were in danger and the Nazi found out and they took Corrie her sister her father her brother and they put the two sisters in the prison they released the father and the son and Corrie and her sister humiliated very badly in the German camps even to the point torture even to the point that her sister died and after a little bit you know the war was over and she released but it took her number of years before she's able to forgive before she's able to heal because of the hurts and the humiliation and the torture she went through and after that she felt you know now I'm healed and she started to speak about forgiveness she started in Holland she went to France and finally to

Germany in the place where she had the toughest time and on Sunday evening after she finished speaking about forgiveness there's a man came toward Corey and he said Corey isn't wonderful that Jesus forgive us all and immediately Corey realized who this person is he's J.

Laurie he's the guard who was behind the humiliation and the torture of Corey and her sister and he reached out he wanted to check his hand and she said for a moment I felt my hand frozen and in a few seconds I left a prayer to the Lord I said forgive me for I'm not able to forgive him and she said immediately when I felt the Lord forgive me for that he gave me the power to reach out and to check this man hand and to experience the life of forgiveness one of my favorite verses in the scripture in 2nd Timothy chapter 4 Paul wrote 2nd Timothy in the end of his life just I don't know a few months probably before he executed by Nero where his head cut off and he said this word to

Timothy he said I fought the good fight I finished the race I kept the faith when Paul said I fought the good fight that means sometimes we don't fight a good fight the sad thing for us as Christians many times we waste probably years in our life when we live by the spirit of unforgiveness I just pray the Lord help us all be able to say what Paul said in the end of his life you know what many of us as Christians we start well with our walk with the Lord we start with a great passion we want to live for the Lord we want to live for the Lord but the challenge for you and for me this morning how many of us will finish this journey will finish this race in a way will be pleasing to him how many will live by the spirit and the life of forgiveness

[33 : 32] I think one of the most beautiful thing for you and for me especially when we feel our journey getting close to be with the Lord that we able to come in the presence of the Lord with peace in our heart with joy in our heart and say Lord what you trusted in my hands what you trusted in my heart I did my best I know how and be wonderful to hear his voice well done faithful servant enter to the presence of your master may God help us all to live the life of forgiveness amen God bless you God bless you