

# FIRM FOUNDATIONS

## Study #3 (Updated 8-11-17)

### Read Matt 5:7-12 (NIV)

- <sup>7</sup> *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*  
<sup>8</sup> *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*  
<sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*  
<sup>10</sup> *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*  
<sup>11</sup> *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

### Review:

- The word Jesus uses here is the Greek word "**makarios**," (*mak-ar'-ee-os*), and it means "fortunate" or "well off".
- In other words, Jesus is saying when you're blessed, **you're in a good place!**

Read **vs. 7-10** again. But this time, replace "blessed" with "in a good place".

- <sup>7</sup> *"The merciful are in a good place, for they will be shown mercy.*  
<sup>8</sup> *The pure in heart are in a good place, for they will see God.*  
<sup>9</sup> *The peacemakers are in a good place, for they will be called children of God.*  
<sup>10</sup> *Those who are persecuted because of righteousness are in a good place, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

### Q: What does it mean to be merciful?

- Mercy means the surrendering of some of your rights.
  - Mercy says I will surrender some of *my* rights, so that *you* can have something *you* don't deserve to have.
- If someone strikes you on one cheek, justice would say you have the right to strike that person back. But if you show mercy, you are giving up your right to justice, and giving them something they don't deserve.
  - Your faith is not genuine if you are not merciful (**James 2:14-17**; **1John 3:17**)!
  - **Prov. 21:13** says that the unmerciful will not receive mercy.

There are two aspects of mercy:

1. **Forgiveness:**
  - a. **God expects you to forgive others as a condition of His forgiving you.**  
(**Matt 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-35**)
2. **Generosity:**
  - a. Giving to those in need, is showing mercy; because the money you earned is surrendered to someone who didn't earn it, and had no claim to it.

**Q: Why are merciful people “in a good place” (blessed)?**

- They will be shown mercy!
  - God has a right to punish us for our sins, yet He delights in mercy (**Mic. 7:18**).
- Being merciful is being like God (**Luke 6:36**).
- NOTE: The measure you use to dish it out to others, is the measure God will use to dish it back out to you (**Luke 6:38**). How do you want to be treated?

**Q: What does it mean to have a “pure heart”?**

- “The heart” is a metaphor for the center of your emotions and logic.
- “Pure” means uncorrupted, undiluted... it is not a mixture of things; it has one focus.
- The “pure in heart” is a statement that comes from **Psa. 24:3-5**.
  - Who can appear before God and commune with Him? The pure in heart!
- The heart has to be set out after only one thing, or else it is mixed.
  - In **James 4:8** we are commanded to purify our hearts.

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**Motive is everything!**

*In this beatitude, Jesus is addressing the prevailing problem among the worshipers of God in that day—the **mixed heart**. The problem is just as prevalent today!*

*In **Matt 6:2, 5, & 16**, Jesus condemns those who do **some** good things, but have more than one motive in their hearts... He calls them hypocrites (actors).*

- *They want more than just the rewards of God for what they do... They also want the approval of people!*
- *In every case, Jesus says they already have their reward... **the approval of people is all they will get!***

*It feels good to have the approval of people, so it's easy to get caught in the trap of pursuing their approval, or trying not to lose their approval. A pure heart is difficult to maintain, but it is necessary. (**Prov. 4:23**)*

- *It is like a garden that has to be weeded carefully.*
- *If you don't, the wrong things will grow there and eventually take over.*
- *If that happens, you won't be able to see God.*

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**Q: What does Jesus mean when He says the pure in heart will “see God”?**

- We cannot see God with our physical eyes, because it would be too much for flesh to be exposed to (**Ex. 33:18-20**).
- **But there is a spiritual sense in which we can see God.**
  - **1Cor. 13:12** says we can see God, but it's like looking at Him in a mirror.
  - They didn't have mirrors that were as clear as the ones we have today; theirs were often just polished or hammered metal, so the reflection was dim.
  - The more we look at Him, the more we become like Him, and the clearer we will be able to see Him. (**2Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; 1Cor. 15:49**)
  - **The ones who are pure in heart, will be the ones who see Him the best.**
- However, there **IS** a day coming, when we will finally see Him as He is (**1John 3:2**)!

**Q: What does it mean to be called “sons of God”?**

- People who make peace in their personal relationships, rather than push, divide, or dominate others, bear a family resemblance to God.
- **2Cor. 5:18-21** tells us how God acted toward those who had sinned and rebelled against Him.
  - **Eph. 4:32** *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* (NIV)
  - **James 3:18** connects the fruit of righteousness to peacemaking.
  - **Rom. 14:19** says that making peace is the way to build people up.
  - **Matt. 5:23-24** tells us to initiate peace in our relationships... even if we aren’t the ones who have been offended.

**Q: Why does the Kingdom of Heaven belong to those who are “persecuted because of righteousness”?**

- The Kingdom of Heaven is about living by the rules of Heaven.
- Living by those rules on earth won’t always be accepted here, but that’s ok; you belong to something better, that’s going to last much longer!
- **1Peter 3:13-14** tells us we should make sure that, if we are persecuted, it should not be because of unrighteousness, but because of righteousness.

## What About You?

Q: How merciful are you? (Rate yourself from 1 to 10)

- How forgiving are you? \_\_\_\_\_
- How generous are you? \_\_\_\_\_

Q: How pure is your heart?

- Is there something you would stop doing if no one noticed or cared? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there something you would start doing if people would appreciate it? \_\_\_\_\_

Q: How much of a peacemaker are you? (From 1 to 10, how true of you is each statement?)

- I tend to make peace and bring people together. \_\_\_\_\_
- I tend to push people away, cause divisions, or only hang out with people who do what I want. \_\_\_\_\_

Q: Which are you persecuted for more often: (Circle one)

- Righteousness
- Unrighteousness