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Bridge of Hope  
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## “The Messianic Exchange”

Introduction: Good morning! We are glad you are here with us for worship. My name is David and I serve as one of the elders here at Bridge of Hope and will be sharing our talk for today.

**Matthew 5:1-12** (NKJV) *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then 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 filled.*

***Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain 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 they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

In our message today we want to look at something that is not natural to us. It is about being merciful and people are not generally merciful until they have received mercy from others. This is especially true in terms of the impact Christ has in our lives, He is the source of mercy.

There is a powerful story about mercy as shown in the life of a godly woman named Corrie Ten Boom. She was arrested by the Nazi's for hiding Jews and placed in an concentration camp. Corrie writes in her book *The Hiding Place*, "It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there - the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing. Betsie's pain-blanching face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein,' he said. 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!'

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Blomendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.<sup>1</sup>

With this great example that for many of us seems unreachable we will go to work so that we better understand what Jesus is offering His new disciples in this fifth Beatitude of the Messianic Exchange.

- **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL**

1. Merciful, when we take a look at the Greek term translated as merciful we discover it means to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable.
  - Essentially, mercy gives attention to those in misery.
2. Often we interchange the words grace and mercy as if they mean the same thing when in fact they are somewhat different.
  - Grace is shown to the undeserving. It is God's unmerited or undeserved favor.
  - Mercy is shown to the miserable. It is God's compassion for those in misery.
3. Mercy is not simply feeling compassion; it is when we are moved into action to alleviate distress in the life of others.
  - Many people will feel compassion, but do nothing to solve the problem.
  - A person is merciful when they actually do something to help the person in misery.
4. Jesus made this very clear for us with the parable of the Good Samaritan.
  - **Luke 10:30-37** (NIV) "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

*"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

*The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

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<sup>1</sup> Corrie ten Boom, The Hiding Place, pg 215

*Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

- Mercy was about the person who took action that matched the compassion they felt in their heart. It was both feeling and doing.

5. **The merciful person is one who remembers their sin and God's mercy shown to them.**

- This remembrance of how Christ has shown them love through mercy impacts the way they will interact with others who need the mercy of God.
- They are full of love as they are moved to compassion to alleviate the distress in those around them.
- It's hard to live and we want to ignore it, but a true follower of Jesus cannot ignore it.
- Jesus expects His followers to be people who help to alleviate the distress of others.
- Again, let me remind you that Jesus is presenting the standard, a standard He knows will be hard to live to and that will require you relying on Him to grow into living it out in your life.
- It is not about being perfect and doing this right all the time, it is about a heart that is willing to repent and learn to do things the way God wants. It is about giving yourself to Jesus and growing in Him.

6. **And now for the emphatic part of this Beatitude, Jesus said, for those who are merciful that God smiles on them and then promises . . .**

• **FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY**

1. **Anyone who has been shown mercy is a blessed person, but here in Matthew 5:7 it is emphatic: *Blessed are the merciful, For they [they alone] shall obtain mercy. (Matthew 5:7 NKJV)***

2. **We find this thought reinforced in other scriptures:**

- **James 2:8-13** (NIV) *If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.*

*Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!*

- **Matthew 6:14-15** (NIV) *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*
- When we receive the mercy of Christ in our lives and then share His mercy with others He promises to give us more mercy.

3. **Some may think that this beatitude is saying that simply by doing the act of mercy you will be shown mercy, but this is not what Jesus is saying.**

4. **R. Kent Hughes writes, "What this Beatitude means is that those who are truly God's children, and as such are objects of his mercy, will themselves be merciful and will receive mercy in the end. Showing mercy is evidence that we have received mercy."<sup>2</sup>**

- Those who have received mercy have mercy to give and giving it is evidence that they have received it.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom, pg48

- As followers of Jesus this is really not optional, we are to be merciful.
  - When we are apathetic or callous to human need and refuse to do what we can do, it is time to take a look at ourselves and see if we really are what we say we are, followers of Jesus.
  - When we are unable or unwilling to extend forgiveness to others, and therein be merciful to them, it is time to take a look at ourselves and see if we are what we say we are, followers of Jesus.
  - Mercy is really about the love and grace of God coming together, it is the way His love is shared with us
5. The Bible says it like this in **1 John 3:16-20** (NIV) *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*
6. This is what the merciful do; they love like Jesus loved by doing what Jesus does.

Conclusion: So what should be the heart of a disciple of Jesus? They should love like Jesus and be merciful to others.

When we started out in this study of the Messianic Exchange presented in the Beatitudes we talked about this teaching us what an authentic expression of faith would look like. We also said that it would provide us with a standard by which to measure our spiritual health and character. This Beatitude clearly provides us with each of these. The issue of authenticity of your faith in Christ is largely answered by answering this question, “Are you merciful?”

If the compassion level has not been where it should be. If forgiveness has been difficult to grant or mercy has not come quickly or at least eventually. Then I would suggest you try 4 fairly simple things to help you get back on track.

- **CONFESS** – admit your need to God and pray to this effect: “Jesus, I have experienced Your mercy in my life. I know what it means to receive mercy. And I know what it means to be merciful to others. Help me to be more compassionate with the actions of mercy. Help me to be more forgiving as an action of mercy. I know this is Your will for me, please help live as a merciful disciple.”
- **TRUTH** – read the scriptures that have to do with things like mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love. (For example: Take a look at Hosea 6:6 and then read Jesus’ application of it in Matthew 9:9-13 and 23:23. Examine Micah 6:8 and Amos 5:21-24. Look at Luke 10:30-37 and Matthew 6:14 and 18:21-35). Pause and think about what you are reading and how it applies to your life.
- **ENLIST** – get some help from Family Group members or if you aren’t a part of a small group find a trusted friend and ask them to help you with being merciful. Give them permission to tell you when you are not being merciful and ask them to reinforce it by letting you know when they noticed you were being merciful. Get their help!
- **ACTION** – get out and show mercy, do it! Volitionally forgive those who have harmed you. Purposefully become involved with those who are hurting. Be merciful!

Then begin to enjoy what it means to have God smile upon you! Blessed, approved of God, are those who are merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.