

I. Revolution 6 Mercy

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A. *Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV) When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. {2} Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: {3} "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. {10} "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. {12} Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

II. Did you notice last week when I shared my passions, the types of recreation, what did they all have in common.

A. Golf, Skiing, Guitar, Running, Biking???

B. There is one common thread in each one of them

C. Each can be done alone. I don't have to compete, I don't have to win.

D. For me, I just want to finish; I want to improve; I want to be challenged.

E. I do have a competitive nature, so it is not like I don't understand, and I will give my best kick at the end of the race, and I feel a little better about myself if my score on the card isn't the lowest.

F. I love to play the game; and honestly, I like to win.

G. I have discovered that in the Kingdom of God, winning is not always the goal.

III. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

A. The only Beatitude where what you give, you get.

B. St. John Chrysostom, *Mercy imitates God and disappoints Satan.*

C. Mercy is an incredible character trait of a Follower of Jesus Christ.

D. Frankly, it looks good on people.

E. If you read through the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you will find it full of stories of the Mercy of God being shown to people.

F. Quite often Jesus goes to the least deserving and treats them with dignity and love.

G. Quite often, Jesus goes to those who thought they deserved God's favor and showed them what they were missing.

H. *Matthew 5:43-48 (NRSV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' {44} But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, {45} so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. {46} For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? {47} And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? {48} Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

I. *Matthew 18:1-4 (NRSV) At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" {2} He called a child, whom he put among them, {3} and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. {4} Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

J. *Matthew 20:1-16* Jesus tells the story of a Project Manager that hires a group of contract employees for a days wage. They start at 9 a.m. At noon he hires another group, at 3 another, and at 5 he hires another group.

1. At the end of the day when the job is finished, everyone comes to get paid and he pays those who started at 9 the wage they agreed upon.
2. He then pays the people at noon, 3 and 5 the exact same amount.
3. The full day people are a little disgruntled to say the least, but Jesus tells them *Matthew 20:13-16 (NRSV) But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? {14} Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. {15} Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' {16} So the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

IV. Mercy redefines Winning!

A.I was the shortest kid in my class until I finally had a growth spurt going into 9th grade.

B.Even though I was fairly athletic and loved to play sports, I was quite often chosen last when the teams for baseball and basketball were picked.

C.That may be why I turned my attention to more individual sports, though I really love teams.

D.When I moved to Jacksonville in 1981, I formed a great friendship with Kenny Fleming.

1. He is one of the best all around athletes I have ever met.
2. He is one of those human beings that is blessed with incredible eye hand coordination, a fast metabolism and great muscle and bone structure.
3. Combine that with a fairly disciplined lifestyle, and Kenny is the guy that everyone wants on their team.
4. When he plays a game, he is in it whole heartedly.
5. His brothers are very similar and, like brothers, they are very competitive.
6. I learned this one day when I went to play golf with their Dad and them. As soon as the car was parked, they both jumped out of the car and grabbed their bag out of the trunk and raced to see who could get it on the golf cart first.
7. It was bloody!!!!
8. Kenny was a youth counselor, and one thing that I saw him practice quite regularly when it got time to pick teams.
 - a. Often he chose the youngest, smallest, and least athletic to be the captains.
 - b. Sometimes he would captain the team and he and the other captain had already made a plan to pick the youngest, the weakest first. Leaving the biggest and strongest last.
 - c. It was a great life lesson for many of the youth and young adults who came through that youth program.

E.Video

1. Western Oregon's Sara Tucholsky is carried around the bases by Central Washington's Liz Wallace, left, and Mallory Holtman Saturday (AP Photo/Blake Wolf)

V. *Tragic Redemption*, Hiram Johnson pg. 108 "Isn't it amazing Jesus would rather experience hell for us than to go to heaven without us? Isn't it remarkable God would rather sacrifice His Son than to give up on you and me?"

A.Mauly Ball

1. We use to get together at his Dad's house cookouts on holidays like Memorial Day, Fourth of July or Labor Day.
2. A part of the day would be a pool game with his dad and brothers called Mauly Ball.
3. It basically was one team trying to move the ball from one end of the pool to the other end of the pool.

4. There were no rules, except you couldn't get out of the pool and if someone passed out from holding them under the water too long, you should help them to the edge of the pool and make sure they are breathing.
5. I would be sore for a week after we played. I had bruises all over my body. My feet were shredded from the friction we were generating from pushing off the pool floor.
6. At the end of the night, as everyone packed up their stuff to leave, all three sons filed past their dad and he would hug them and kiss them on the lips.
7. I am a bit touchy feely, but my family didn't kiss on the lips.
8. I remember trying to walk by Mr. Fleming without him seeing me, but he grabbed me, put a bear hug on me and kissed me right on the mouth.

B.I think a lot of us are in day to day games of Mauly Ball.

C.We are beaten up, bruised and bloodied, but if there was a Father who would put his arms around us, hold us, kiss us, show a little Mercy at the end of the day, we might be able to survive.

D.Who knows, we might even be able to learn to show mercy to others.

VI. A Mercy Revolution

A.Earlier I made mention that this is the one beatitude that reciprocates. You give Mercy, you will receive it.

B.I also shared a scripture that speaks of another reciprocal attitude described by Jesus.

C.*Matthew 7:1-5 (NRSV) "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. {2} For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.*

D.Christians are often described as the only Army that shoots its own wounded.

E.I am not sure why the Christian Church is known more for its judgmental nature than it is for its mercy.

F.*Tragic Redemption*, Hiram Johnson pg. 107 ***God's goodness, freely given to the unworthy, is called grace; given toward the suffering, it is called mercy.***

G.My vision of the church universal, but specifically for the CrossRoad Church local, is that we be known for the Mercy of Jesus Christ.

H.That is one of the reasons we advertise that we are a place for the Imperfect. Our vision recognizes that we all need God's mercy.

I.It says that unless we all win, no one wins.

J.If we leave someone behind, if we pass judgment on someone, if we fail to pick up hurting people while we round the bases, if we are only concerned with our score, if we fail to join this Mercy Revolution, ultimately this great divine created human experiment will fail.

K.Quite often, I get an email or a phone call from a single parent, most mothers who had a child out of wedlock and have mustered up enough courage and overcome their shame and ask if we would baptize their baby.

L.I am not so sure that the church of my teenage years would have done that.

M.Most people in that situation don't need one more reminder of their heart ache and shame, I am always glad that we say yes.

N.I don't believe it endorses their actions, I always pray that we aren't dispensing cheap grace, but I am compelled by the Mercy that I have received to offer that Mercy, and to celebrate the unconditional love of Jesus Christ.

O.In 2007 First Coast Women's Services had

1. New Client Cases 1161
2. Test Clients 914

3. Positive Tests 552
 4. New Counseling/Abortion Info Cases 46 (These are set on an abortion)
 5. New Material Service Cases 192
 6. New Other Cases 10
 7. For/Undecided Abortion 210
 8. For/Undecided Abortion Plus Test 132
 9. Aborted 10
 10. Left Undecided 63
 11. Abortion Minded Clients Who Chose Life 60
 12. Gospel Presented 298
 13. Number of Salvations 56
 14. Medicaid Appointments 253
 15. Ultrasound Appointments 182
 16. Number of Challenges Given 277
 - a. Chastity Being Considered 109
 - b. Chastity Challenges Accepted 60
- P.Bring in Baby Bottles