

## SMALL GROUP SERMON STUDY

### *Leader's Guide*

March 1-2, 2008

## A Fresh Look at The Merciful

Matthew 5:7

### The Big Idea

The fifth beatitude contains both a challenge and a promise. If we show mercy we will also be shown mercy.

### The Background

The New Testament uses three different Greek words to refer to mercy:

Eleos (eh-LAY-ous - the word used in Matthew 5:7) - The feeling of pity

Oiktirmos (oik-TEAR-moss) - Pity at the sight of another's bad fortune

Splanchna (SPLAHNK-nah) - Compassion from the seat of the emotions, the heart

All of these demonstrate the way God deals with us, and how we pass the mercy on to other people.

### For Discussion

1. Read Matthew 5:7.
  - How would you define "mercy"?
  - Can anyone in the group tell a story about when they saw mercy displayed?
2. What can we discover about mercy in the following verses?  
*Deuteronomy 4:31 Nehemiah 9:31 Jeremiah 3:12*  
*Matthew 9:10-13 Romans 12:1 Ephesians 2:4,5 Titus 3:4*
3. John Stott says that mercy is "compassion for people in need."  
Can you think of a time when you witnessed or heard about this kind of compassionate mercy?

4. Someone has defined mercy as "God not giving us what we deserve." (That is, because of our sin, we deserve to be distant from God, but instead God shows us mercy and loves us.)  
What do you like or dislike about this definition?
5. In Matthew 18 Jesus tells the story of a man who is forgiven a huge debt and then shows no mercy to a man who owes him a small amount. In verse 33 the man is asked, "Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?"  
What are the ways Jesus has shown mercy to us? What are the ways that we can be merciful to others in the same way that Jesus has been merciful to us?
6. Can you think of a situation when a Christian should NOT show mercy?
7. How do you think Matthew 6:14, 15 relate to this beatitude?
8. Read James 2:12, 13. How does mercy "triumph over judgment"?
9. As mentioned in the "Background" section above, the New Testament uses three different Greek words to refer to mercy. Can you think of life-examples where a Christian might display each one of these?
10. What could the members of this group do this week to show mercy?
11. As Ken preached this week, what other insights did you write notes about that the group has not discussed tonight? What questions did you have as Ken preached that have not been answered?

### FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Online commentary on Matthew 5:7 -- <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getCommentaryText&cid=1&source=1&seq=i.47.5.3>

### Links on Crossroads Website:

"Blessed Are the Merciful" by Gary Thomas

"Call to Discipleship: The Beatitudes" by Dennis A. Lewis