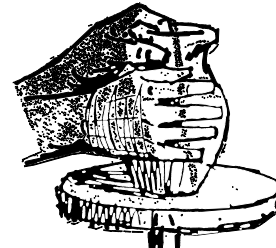


His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10*



Isaiah 64:8

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Beatitudes, Maturity, and Forgiveness *from various articles*

At the beginning of Christ's sermon on the mount, He taught His disciples the Beatitudes, Mt 5:3-12. He ended Matthew 5 with *“You, therefore, must be perfect [complete], as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Mt 5:48. Here lies Christ's plan for developing spiritual maturity. But how many Christians have really developed these attitudes? As Christians, we need to develop a mind for the Beatitudes. That is crucial if we want to mature in Christ. But most of these traits are the opposite of what is valued by everyone else around us. In fact, some of them sound weak. Last week we demonstrated the difficulty of having a mind for the Beatitudes by turning the first four into a question. Today we will consider two Beatitudes that deal with forgiveness—giving and receiving it. **Blessed are the merciful?** Does that mean we're supposed to dispense with justice and allow terrorists and rapists and murderers to go free? That's not right or fair. We need justice in the world, not mercy. What is mercy? Mercy is concern and compassion for the plight of others. It is loving-kindness, willingness to help and give. It is compas-

sion plus action. But mercy is not turning a blind eye to moral violations—the attitude that pretends not to see things. This can be seen most forcefully when we consider that the term *merciful* is an adjective which is applied especially and specifically to God Himself. God is merciful, but He is also truth: “Mercy and truth are met together,” Ps 85:10. If we think of mercy at the expense of truth and law, then it is not true mercy; it is merely a caricature.

A Christian who is merciful feels such compassion and concern that he is not content until he does something about the plight of the one with whom he comes in contact. The story of the Good Samaritan is a classic illustration of mercy, Lk 10:30f. Mercy is shown to the one who is in need, Mk 10:47. Mercy is also shown to the one who is wrong, Lk 17:3-4.

When the people were ready to stone the adulterous woman, Jesus said that the person without sin was to throw the first rock at her. But, of course, none of them fit that description but Jesus—the One she had truly sinned against. When He was the last one left standing there, He told her to *go and sin no more*, Jn

8:4-11. He showed her His mercy that day. He has shown it to you and me. We have been forgiven.

But have we learned to show mercy? Like our Father in heaven, do you know how to forgive? Or are we like the servant who begged his king to forgive his huge debt, but refused to have mercy upon the one who owed him much less, Mt 18:23-35? We all want to obtain mercy from God. We want Him to overlook our mistakes and cover our slip-ups in the blood of Jesus. Are we willing to do the same for others? I once heard, *“When people look at others, they see their mistakes and wrongs. When they look at themselves, they see their own good intentions.”* Have you ever fallen into that trap? I know I have. But even the Lord's Prayer requires us to forgive in order to be forgiven. Just like the Beatitudes, the prayer teaches that our own forgiveness is conditional upon whether we forgive, Mt 6:14-15.

If you have ever experienced a wrong so deep that, no matter how much you tried by yourself, you could not let go of the fury building inside of you, this teaching is for you.

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"For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." —1 Samuel 6:7

Holding a grudge only harms you. Hate is like taking a poisonous drug yourself and hoping someone else will die. In the end, it will only hurt you and your relationship with God.

If you do not forgive your offenders, then God will not fully forgive you. Being merciful will open up the door for God to work in every area of your life. So how do you forgive the unforgivable? You begin to pray. Not just for yourself but for the one who harmed you. *"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you..."* Mt 5:44. Why? Jesus Himself explains in the passage: being able to show true mercy to those who do not deserve it is the real sign that you are developing into a spiritually mature Christian. *"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless..., do good..., and pray...[to show] that you are sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper growth of virtue and integrity], just as your Father in heaven is perfect,"* Mt 5:44-48. When we pray for our enemies, God begins to show us the pains in the offender's heart that led him to his actions. As God heals the pain inside us, we begin to understand that this person is not really the enemy. He is just a pawn used by our

Father's enemy, Satan, to hurt one of His children. Why should we pray for the people that hurt us? Because they have no clue who they are messing with. They don't know that they

How To Forgive in 5 Steps:

1. Make a list of the actions, not the people, that have hurt you.
2. Pray and ask God to heal those broken places in your life and your relationship with Him that these actions have caused.
3. Ask God to remove your unforgiveness and help you to release any anger or resentment you have held in your heart. Ask Him to show you how to forgive.
4. Destroy the paper with the list of offenses once and for all.
5. Write the name(s) of the offender(s) on a separate sheet of paper without their actions. Use this as your prayer list. Commit to praying for these people daily for a month.

If you still feel you have not fully forgiven the offender or if you have angry feelings about him/her again, take that thought captive, 2 Cor 10:5. Confess aloud that you have forgiven that person, then pray for him/her. In time, your emotions will align with your spirit.

have just come against a child of the Living God! As we mature in Christ, we realize that the real battle is not of flesh and blood—and that the battle is not really ours to fight. *For it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord,*" Rm 12:19. Forgiveness is a conscious spiritual decision. We have to choose it. Sometimes it takes a while for our emotions to catch up with our spirit, so we need to keep praying. **Blessed are the pure in heart?** Don't you also have to be shrewd and cunning, so that others don't take advantage of you and make you look

like a fool? And how can I ever be pure? That seems impossible. Yet we know that the power of Christ's blood can do the impossible—it can cleanse us and wash our sins completely away when we submit to Him in baptism. But there may still be a part of you that carries the shame and guilt of past transgressions, memories of a former life that Satan uses to torment and haunt you. Satan does not want you to feel forgiven or pure.

Why? Because as long as you feel dirty and ashamed, like Adam and Eve in the garden, you will begin to hide yourself from God. As long as the devil can convince you that you are still carrying past sins, you will feel unworthy even to step in the presence of your God Who loves you. And as long as you have not confessed your present sins to God, Christ's blood has not been released to cleanse you from them, 1 Jn 1:9.

Yes, we continue to have spots on our spiritual record. But He continues to cleanse us. *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us,"* Ps 103:12. Satan no longer has the right to put us on trial for any of our sins! *"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."* Col 2:13-15. God has forgiven and cleansed us! God has forgiven you. Do you believe it? Whether you feel forgiven
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Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”
—Ephesians 3:19

Beatitudes *from p. 2*

or not does not matter—feelings are not facts. The fact is that you have been set free from God's condemnation. You must also set yourself free from your own guilt. *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation [no adjudging guilty of wrong] for those who are in Christ Jesus... For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has freed me from the law of sin and death,”* Rm 8:1-2 [AMP]. If you have given your heart to Christ, if you love Him and your true desire is to follow Him, then He Himself has purified your heart. That means that His blood continues to cleanse you if you repent, confess your sin, and move on. Repentance does not mean merely asking for God's forgiveness. A mature Christian knows that repentance is an attitude of the heart and change in action. We ache when we grieve our Father in heaven, we want no part of anything counter to God's perfect will and desires for us. Our heart is single-minded—pure. Even more, with maturity comes the understanding that we alone do not have the power to resist sin. We must regularly go before God, praying to receive strength to walk in His paths and not to fall into the same traps over and over again.

After listing characteristics that we must add to our lives, Peter wrote, *“for he who lacks these things is short-*

sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins,” 2 Pet 1:9. See, growing in the Spirit, maturing in Christ is evidence that we are pure in heart, single minded, cleansed.

A Heart Like Jesus. What if, for one day and one night, Jesus lived your life with His heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ. His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your conduct. What would you be like? Would people notice a change? Would you treat the needy the same as you do now? Would your family and friends see more joy? Would others receive more mercy from Christ's heart than from yours? And you—how would you feel? What alterations would this transplant have on your mood swings? Your temper? Would you sleep better? Would you see death differently? Sunsets? Taxes? Would you still dread what you are dreading? Would you still do what you are doing? Pause and think about your schedule. Appointments. Obligations. Outings. If Jesus took over your heart, would anything change? God wants you to be like Jesus. He wants you to have a heart like His. He loves you as you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. Where did we get the idea we can't change? "It's just my nature to worry," or, "I'll always be pessimistic. I'm just that way," or, "I have a bad temper. I can't help the way I react"? Who says? Would we make similar statements about our bodies? "It's just my nature to have a broken leg. I can't do anything about it." Of course not. If our bodies malfunction, we seek help. Shouldn't we do the same with our hearts? Shouldn't we seek aid for our sour attitudes? Can't we ask for treatment for our selfishness? Jesus can change our hearts. He wants us to have a heart like His. Can you imagine a better offer? (Next week, two more Beatitudes.)

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

Madge Wallace—lung cancer; nerve block successful in relieving pain

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, staph infection on toes from diabetes; **Virginia**, now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Matt Reames—VA unable to insert shunt to drain fluid from his brain (hydrocephalus), the cause of Matt's headaches and blurred vision; pray for VA speed

Mark Campbell—full recovery expected from “brain bruise”

Judy Strand's son Joe Huff—recurrence of neurological symptoms, black-outs, from brain injury he suffered in a 2007 car accident

Alexander Gintchin's classmate, **Jack Miller**—2 brain tumors; age 6

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—heart; spinal pain

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; house-bound in cold weather and needs help

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Job concerns **Andrew Tope** and

Frank Savarese are seeking jobs. **The Menards' son** is out of work.

Expecting **Marie Carlson**—July 1 girl;

Amy Vander Kooi—August, boy.

Traveling **Pat Campbell** is in AR caring for her parents: **Ruth Hice**

fell and broke her arm; **Delmar Hice** has pneumonia. Cards to: 28345 Highway 69 W, London, AR 72847.

Larry will join them Wed-next Sun. The **Reameses** are in CO Springs today to celebrate Cheryl's grandmother's 100th birthday.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Judge Orders Abortion Pill Sold OTC to All

What? So you can't get decongestant, but you'll let anyone get this stuff? Think of where this takes date rape pills. Not to mention someone slipping it into a pregnant woman's drink as some sort of sick revenge.

Check it out: A federal judge ruled last Friday that the morning-after pill known as Plan B must be made available over the counter for women of all ages. The decision on the controversial subject came after lengthy legal battles over who should have access to the pill and at what age.

The Food and Drug Administration had initially decided to allow the emergency pill to be available for young teens. But Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius overruled the FDA in late 2011, and the agency limited availability without a prescription to women 17 and older.

The decision Friday by U.S. District Judge Edward Korman ordered the FDA to make the pill, commonly referred to as the abortion pill, available for all ages. The decision means that unless the FDA appeals and is granted a stay, by this time next month a teenager 16 or under could walk into a local pharmacy and buy the pill off the shelf.

Korman accused the FDA of "intolerable delays" in reviewing a petition seeking broad access to the drug, likening the process to an "administrative agency filibuster." He wrote, "The plaintiffs should not be forced to endure, nor should the agency's misconduct be rewarded by, an exercise that permits the FDA to engage in further delays and obstruction." The FDA declined to comment on the ruling, describing it as an "ongoing legal matter."

Memory verse: *"Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."*

—Psalm 98:1-3

Westside church of Christ

meets at
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(303) 233-5683

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: *"Blind Spots of Discipleship,"* by Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

A Walk in Their Sandals Series

"Dueling Sisters: Leah and Rachel," by Larry Campbell