

Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3, Beatitudes, Part 3 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3, Beatitudes, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Bill Mounce continues his exploration of the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, specifically focusing on **mercy** and **purity of heart**. He defines mercy as compassion with action, emphasizing its necessity as a reflection of having received God's mercy and questioning the genuineness of faith in those who consistently refuse to show it. Mounce then discusses purity of heart as undivided devotion to God, contrasting it with external religious acts and highlighting the challenge of focusing on being rather than doing. Finally, he begins to introduce the concept of **peacemakers**, defining them as those at peace with God, possessing an inner disposition of peace, and actively working for reconciliation within the church and beyond.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Gospels → Sermon on the Mount).**



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3. Briefing Document: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3, Beatitudes, Part 3

Briefing Document: Dr. Bill Mounce on Beatitudes, Part 3

Overview: This lecture concludes Dr. Mounce's discussion on the Beatitudes, focusing specifically on "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the pure in heart," and "Blessed are the peacemakers." It also briefly introduces the topic of persecution, which is the final Beatitude. Throughout the lecture, Dr. Mounce emphasizes practical application, personal reflection, and the transformative nature of experiencing God's grace. He frequently uses anecdotes and interacts with the audience to illustrate his points.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Blessed are the Merciful (Matthew 5:7):

- **Definition of Mercy:** Mounce defines mercy as "having compassion for people in need" and distinguishes it from grace, which is "God's compassion for people who don't deserve it." He emphasizes that biblical mercy involves both "a heart of compassion, the attitude of mercy, and then the actions." He quotes someone defining mercy as "compassion with feet," meaning it's compassion that leads to action.
- **Quote:** "Mercy is compassion that does something. It just doesn't sit there and go, oh, you know, I feel merciful."
- **Biblical Examples:** He highlights the Good Samaritan as a positive example of mercy in action and the unmerciful servant as a negative example illustrating the expectation to extend mercy because it has been received.
- **Universality of Mercy:** Mounce notes that this beatitude "doesn't tell us who we should be merciful toward," emphasizing that mercy should not be dependent on the object's deservingness. "We don't have mercy because someone deserves it. If someone deserves it, we don't call it mercy; we call it something else."
- **Becoming Merciful:** He suggests that becoming merciful is part of a "golden chain" of spiritual growth. He offers two practical keys:
- **Seeing People for Who They Could Be:** "Mercy sees people for who they could be." This involves looking past their current state and recognizing their potential in God's image.

- **Viewing Sin as a Foreign Object:** Drawing from a conversation with Tom Schreiner, Mounce suggests viewing sin as an external force actively working against individuals. This helps in extending mercy by separating the person from the sin controlling them.
- **Reciprocity Principle:** Mounce introduces the idea of reciprocity: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." He clarifies that this isn't a quid pro quo arrangement like a "soda machine," where one's acts of mercy obligate God. Instead, he argues that those who have truly experienced God's mercy will, as a natural outflow of their changed hearts, extend mercy to others. "Change people live to change lives."
- **The Terrifying Question:** He poses a challenging question: "If someone refuses to show mercy, is it possible they were ever shown mercy by God?" He suggests that a consistent refusal to show mercy might indicate a lack of genuine conversion, aligning with the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:32-35.
- Quote (Matthew 18:33): "'Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you?'"
- **Mercy and Legalism:** Mounce states, "The greatest enemy of mercy is legalism," because legalism prioritizes being "right" over showing love and mercy.

2. Blessed are the Pure in Heart (Matthew 5:8):

- **Definition of Pure Heart:** Purity of heart means being "unsoiled, untainted, and spotless," with a heart "purely devoted to God," not divided or diluted by sin. He connects this to the Old Testament idea of clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3-5) and an undivided heart (Psalm 86:11).
- **Inner vs. Outer Purity:** He contrasts this with the Pharisaical emphasis on outward cleanliness and religious acts, stating that Jesus blesses "the purity of the heart" over external shows.
- **Being vs. Doing:** Mounce highlights a challenge, particularly in the Chinese church context, of understanding "being and not doing." He explains that their history has often emphasized action over inner character. He argues that in all cultures, there's a tendency to define oneself by accomplishments rather than one's relationship with God.
- **Seeing God:** The blessing for the pure in heart is that "they will see God." Mounce interprets this as an empowering act, a clearer and clearer vision of God that

motivates further purification. He notes that while disciples can perceive God now, it will be profoundly different when they see Him fully.

- **Journey Towards Purity:** He emphasizes that the promise is for those "on the journey toward purity." He connects this to the concept of striving for holiness in Hebrews 12:14, arguing that genuine discipleship involves this ongoing pursuit.
- **Transformation at Seeing God:** He reflects on the significance of seeing Jesus for the first time, hoping to be alert and not medicated at the moment of death to fully experience it. He links this to 1 John 3:2, which speaks of being transformed when we see Him as He is.
- **Removal of Sinful Nature:** He ponders when the sinful nature is removed, speculating it might be at death upon seeing Jesus, leading to a totally pure heart.

3. Blessed are the Peacemakers (Matthew 5:9):

- **Not Just a Disposition:** Mounce clarifies that this blessing is not simply for those naturally inclined towards peace or those who avoid conflict out of fear. He also doesn't believe it's primarily about world peace, though it has global implications.
- **Three Aspects of a Peacemaker:**
 - At Peace with God:** This foundational aspect refers to the reconciliation achieved through justification by faith (Romans 5:1).
 - Inward Disposition of Peace:** This involves the inner calmness, harmony, and wholeness described by the Hebrew concept of "shalom," where the inner life is not characterized by strife.
 - Outward Actions of Making Peace:** This is the active work of reconciliation, starting within the body of Christ and extending to communities and the world.
- **Reconciliation:** Peacemaking begins with reconciling broken relationships within the church. He shares a powerful anecdote of a church experiencing significant discord that was resolved through peacemaking efforts, culminating in a member publicly asking for forgiveness after 24 years of hatred.
- **Extending Beyond the Church:** He recounts the story of a friend led by God to a racially divided community to facilitate reconciliation between pastors and churches.
- **Ironic Nature of Peacemaking:** Mounce points out the irony that "making peace is rarely a peaceful activity." It often requires aggressively confronting negative emotions within oneself and engaging in difficult confrontations with others.

- **Called Sons of God:** Peacemakers "will be called sons of God," which Mounce interprets not just in terms of gender but as inheritance language, signifying full membership in God's family and a reflection of God's character as the ultimate peacemaker. He uses the analogy of adoption to illustrate this, emphasizing that children resemble their father.
- **Starting Point:** He stresses that becoming a peacemaker is not a standalone decision but stems from the initial steps of the "golden chain," beginning with recognizing spiritual depravity and growing to desire to be like God.

4. Introduction to Blessed are the Persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12):

- Mounce briefly mentions that they will discuss the final Beatitude, concerning persecution, after a break.

Overall Emphasis: Dr. Mounce's lecture underscores that the Beatitudes are not merely aspirational ideals but descriptions of the character of those who are part of God's kingdom. He stresses the transformative power of God's grace, which should naturally lead to outward expressions of mercy and a pursuit of inner purity, ultimately resulting in a desire and action towards peacemaking, even in the face of difficulty. He also raises challenging questions about the genuineness of faith if these qualities are consistently absent in a person's life.

4. Study Guide: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3, Beatitudes, Part 3

Sermon on the Mount: Beatitudes, Part 3 - Study Guide

Key Concepts

- **Mercy:** Compassion for those in need that moves one to action ("compassion with feet"). It is distinct from grace, which is compassion for the undeserving.
- **Reciprocity Principle:** The idea that experiencing God's mercy should lead to extending mercy to others. This is not a quid pro quo arrangement but a natural outflowing of a changed heart.
- **Legalism (as an enemy of mercy):** Substituting rules and being "right" for love and compassion towards others.
- **Purity of Heart:** Being single-minded in devotion to God, undivided in loyalty, and free from moral and spiritual filth. Focuses on the inner being rather than outward actions.
- **Peacemakers:** Individuals who are at peace with God, possess an inward disposition of peace (shalom), and actively work to reconcile broken relationships and foster peace in their spheres of influence.
- **Sons (Children) of God:** A designation for peacemakers, signifying their full membership in God's family and their resemblance to God, the ultimate peacemaker.
- **Spiritual Depravity (as a starting point):** Recognizing one's own sinfulness and need for God's grace as foundational to developing other godly characteristics like mercy and a desire for peace.
- **Holiness:** Striving for moral and spiritual purity, an experiential aspect of a changed life that enables one to see God.
- **Assurance:** Confidence in one's salvation, evidenced in part by a changed life that includes showing mercy and offering forgiveness.

Short-Answer Quiz

1. Define mercy as presented in the lecture. How does it differ from grace?

2. Explain the "compassion with feet" concept of mercy. Provide an example of this type of mercy in action.
3. What is the "reciprocity principle" in the context of the beatitude on mercy? Is it a guarantee of receiving mercy if you give it? Explain.
4. According to the lecture, what are two keys to extending mercy to "irregular people" in your life?
5. Define "purity of heart." Why is it emphasized over outward religious acts?
6. How does the lecture connect the concept of "being" with the Chinese cultural emphasis on "doing"?
7. According to the lecture, what are the three components of being a peacemaker?
8. What does it mean for peacemakers to be called "sons (children) of God"? What does this designation imply?
9. Why is spiritual depravity considered an important starting point for understanding and living out the Beatitudes?
10. What is the relationship between striving for holiness and seeing God, according to the lecture's interpretation of Hebrews 12:14?

Answer Key

1. Mercy is defined as having compassion for people in need that moves one to action. Grace is God's compassion for people who do not deserve it, while mercy is God's compassion for those in need.
2. "Compassion with feet" means that mercy is not just a feeling but an active expression of compassion that involves doing something to help those in need. The Good Samaritan, who aided the injured man, is presented as an example of this.
3. The reciprocity principle suggests that those who have experienced God's mercy will naturally extend mercy to others as a result of their changed hearts. It is not a quid pro quo where God is obligated to show mercy, but rather a consequence of genuine transformation.
4. Two keys to extending mercy to "irregular people" are to look at that person for who they could be (still in the image of God) rather than who they currently are,

and to view sin in their life as a foreign object that is actively working against them.

5. Purity of heart means being single-minded in devotion to God, undivided in loyalty, and free from moral and spiritual filth within one's being. It is emphasized over outward acts because God is primarily concerned with the inner state of the heart, not just external displays of religiosity.
6. The lecture notes that Chinese culture, influenced by historical events, tends to emphasize "doing" over "being." This makes it challenging for some to grasp the concept of purity of heart, which focuses on one's inner character and devotion rather than just outward obedience.
7. The three components of being a peacemaker are: being at peace with God (justified by faith), having an inward disposition of peace (shalom - inner calmness and wholeness), and actively working to make peace and reconcile broken relationships.
8. For peacemakers to be called "sons (children) of God" signifies that they are fully members of God's family and that they begin to reflect God's character as the ultimate peacemaker. It implies an inheritance and a resemblance to their Father.
9. Spiritual depravity is important because recognizing one's own fallen state and need for God's mercy and grace is the foundation upon which other virtues, such as extending mercy and seeking peace, can be built. It fosters humility and empathy.
10. The lecture interprets Hebrews 12:14 ("strive for holiness, without which no one will see God") as indicating that striving for purity of heart and holiness is an experiential aspect of the Christian life, a journey of discipleship and sanctification. This striving is presented as necessary for truly perceiving and knowing God.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the biblical understanding of mercy as presented in the lecture, differentiating it from grace and emphasizing the importance of action. Use the examples of the Good Samaritan and the unmerciful servant to illustrate your points.
2. Analyze the "reciprocity principle" in the context of the Beatitude "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Explore whether this principle implies a transactional relationship with God or something more profound regarding the nature of a transformed life.
3. Explain the concept of "purity of heart" as taught in the lecture. How does this beatitude challenge traditional views of religiosity that focus on outward observances? Use the discussion of the Pharisees and the challenges faced in the Chinese church to support your analysis.
4. Describe the characteristics of a peacemaker according to the lecture. Detail the three key aspects of this identity and discuss why peacemaking is often a difficult and non-peaceful process.
5. Examine the connection between experiencing God's mercy and the necessity of extending mercy and forgiveness to others. Drawing on the parable of the unmerciful servant and the lecturer's comments on assurance, discuss the implications of a persistent refusal to show mercy.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Beatitudes:** The series of blessings spoken by Jesus at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love extended to those who do not deserve it.
- **Mercy:** Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm; in the lecture, specifically defined as compassion for those in need that results in action.
- **Reciprocity:** The practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit; in the lecture's context, the principle that experiencing something (like mercy) should lead to a corresponding action (extending mercy).
- **Legalism:** Strict adherence to law or prescription, especially in a superficial or excessive manner; in the lecture, characterized by prioritizing rules and being "right" over love and mercy.
- **Purity of Heart:** A state of being inwardly clean, morally and spiritually, with a singular devotion and loyalty to God.
- **Peacemaker:** One who actively works to establish peace and reconciliation in relationships and communities.
- **Shalom:** A Hebrew word often translated as "peace," but encompassing a broader sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being, particularly in one's inner life.
- **Spiritual Depravity:** The theological doctrine that humanity, as a result of the Fall, is inherently corrupt and inclined toward sin.
- **Holiness:** The state of being set apart for God and conforming to His standards of righteousness; in the lecture, presented as an ongoing process of growth and striving.
- **Assurance:** The conviction or certainty that one has eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy or set apart by God's grace, a lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ.

5. FAQs on Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 3, Beatitudes, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Dr. Mounce on the Beatitudes: An FAQ

1. What is the central theme of the fifth beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"?

The central theme revolves around the concept of mercy as compassion with action. It emphasizes that true mercy isn't just a feeling but an active demonstration of compassion towards those in need. Furthermore, it introduces the principle of reciprocity, suggesting a connection between showing mercy and receiving it. However, this isn't a quid pro quo arrangement but rather a natural outflow of a heart changed by God's mercy.

2. How does Dr. Mounce define mercy, and how does it differ from grace?

Dr. Mounce defines mercy as having compassion for people in need, leading to action on their behalf. He distinguishes it from grace, which he describes as God's compassion for people who do not deserve it. Mercy focuses on alleviating the suffering of those in need, while grace addresses the undeserving nature of those receiving compassion.

3. What are some practical ways to cultivate a merciful heart, according to Dr. Mounce?

Dr. Mounce suggests two key mental exercises. First, to see "irregular" people in your life for who they *could* be, rather than who they currently are, recognizing their potential and the image of God within them. Second, to view sin in their lives as a foreign object, an aggressive entity controlling them, which can help in separating the person from their actions. He also highlights the importance of remembering God's grace in our own lives ("there, but for the grace of God, go I"), fostering empathy and a willingness to extend mercy.

4. What does Dr. Mounce mean by the "reciprocity principle" in the context of the beatitude on mercy? Is it a guarantee of receiving mercy if we show it?

The reciprocity principle suggests that there is a connection between showing mercy and being shown mercy. However, Dr. Mounce clarifies that it is not a quid pro quo guarantee where God is obligated to show mercy like a "soda machine." Instead, he argues that those who have truly experienced God's mercy will be changed at their core and will naturally, though imperfectly, begin to extend mercy to others. A consistent refusal to show mercy might indicate a lack of genuine experience of God's mercy in the first place.

5. What is the meaning of the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"?

This beatitude emphasizes inward purity and undivided devotion to God. A pure heart is described as unsoiled, untainted, spotless, and wholly committed to God without hypocrisy. Dr. Mounce highlights that this blessing is not on outward religious acts but on the state of one's inner being. The promise of seeing God is linked to this inner purity, suggesting that a divided or morally compromised heart will hinder one's ability to truly perceive and know God.

6. Why does Dr. Mounce emphasize "being" over "doing" when discussing purity of heart, particularly in the context of his experiences in China?

Dr. Mounce emphasizes "being" over "doing" because he observes a tendency, both in some cultures (like the stereotypical emphasis on action in the Chinese church due to historical factors) and in general human nature, to define oneself and others primarily by accomplishments and external actions. He argues that the purity of heart blessed in this beatitude focuses on who we are inwardly – our character, devotion, and undivided loyalty to God – rather than just what we do outwardly. True relationship with God and others stems from this inner state of being.

7. What are the three components of being a "peacemaker" according to Dr. Mounce in the seventh beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God"?

Dr. Mounce defines a peacemaker as someone who: 1) is at peace with God (reconciled through faith), 2) has an inward disposition of peace (an inner life characterized by calmness and wholeness, shalom), and 3) actively works to make peace (engaging in actions of reconciliation, starting within the body of Christ and extending to communities and the world).

8. What does it mean to be called "sons of God" in the context of the beatitude on peacemakers, and how does Dr. Mounce connect this to the concept of adoption?

Being called "sons of God" in this context signifies full membership in God's family and inheriting the characteristics of God, who is the ultimate peacemaker. Dr. Mounce connects this to the doctrine of adoption, emphasizing that through God's grace, believers are adopted into His family. Just as a natural child resembles their parents, those who are peacemakers demonstrate their familial connection to God by reflecting His peacemaking nature. This is not just a title received at conversion but a characteristic that develops as one grows in their faith and strives to be like their Father.