Questions Sermon 6: Being Merciful

 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Matthew 5:7

1. In my introduction I say that the beatitudes are simply the description of being a Christian. Read them again, and ask yourself, what do I really believe about that? Give yourself a minute, and share with the group your thoughts.
2. Here is a tougher question. I say that we cannot do this 5th beatitude unless it is built on the 4 previous. Think about that, and engage with the group on why, if you agree, do you think I say that?
3. Here was my definition of mercy – “It is an inner feeling of compassion and empathy from the heart we extend to another.” In what ways does speak to the whole of the Christian life?
4. If the Christian’s life is following Jesus in how He actually lived, in what ways do we see Jesus as the supreme merciful example?
5. I give three reasons why mercy is to be our default, our DNA. (1) it is how Jesus compares the kingdom of light and darkness (2) it is how we ourselves are treated by God (3) it is the sure-fire characteristic that shows the world that we are not Pharisees. When you think about these three reasons, there is no way we can think of mercy as an optional “add-on” but an essential quality. In practical terms what would our church look like? In practical terms, what would our mission to our community look like?
6. Lastly, read Matthew 18:23-35, and then Ephesians 4:31. In the Ephesians passage, Paul says that God has forgiven us by His grace in Christ. He tells us that is how we are to be towards one another. In what ways does he say that is done? And to what extent are we to live out being forgiven?
7. In the Matthew passage, to what extent have you been forgiven? Here is an exercise. Take a sheet of paper. Reflect on the last 24 hours. Record every sin in thought, word and deed. Did it take long? Now destroy that paper. All I want is for us to know the comparison of that slave’s debt of $6, 382, 559, 000 is meant to show us the extent of God’s mercy. That is, you and me. That is the extent of God’s mercy to us. Look at the things Jesus said on that basis. (1) what are the indicators that the slave who owned so much, still didn’t care about that forgiveness? (2) Why was he unwilling to forgive the lesser debt? Why do we have such trouble in our relationships? (3) The king expected the slave to forgive in the same way he was shown mercy, but to what extent? (4) What does it say about us if we live a life of habitual unforgiveness, coldness, and distance? (5) According to the beatitude, we are blessed when we are merciful. What does that mean for us now and for eternity?