

Beatitude 5 – Merciful

Oslo's father was a kind and wise otter. He loved to teach his children, but his children were not always eager to learn. One warm spring day he visited them as they were playing in the pond and asked, "Who would like to go on a long and hard journey with me today?" Oslo, his brothers, and his sisters all stopped to listen to their father but they didn't "hear" the same things. All but Oslo heard only the words "long and hard" and one by one said to their father, "No thanks papa." But what Oslo heard was "long... journey...with me..." and proclaimed, "I'll come with you Papa."

That said, the two of them were off. Oslo's father told him, "Now son you must stay very close behind me and follow me or you will not have enough strength to make this journey. My father taught me how to swim upstream to the Great Waterfall the same way I'm going to take you today." The Great Waterfall, Oslo thought. So that is where we are going! "We start by swimming up Shiloh Stream," his father added, "but we will have to swim and climb a long way before we get there."

At first the swim seemed easy. The stream was gentle and the current was not strong at all. In fact Oslo had swum in this part of the stream often. It wasn't too long until they reached a part of the stream that was not familiar to Oslo. The current was strong and the water rushed over rocks and fallen trees. Often Oslo's father would turn around and say, "Remember stay close behind me." Often when the stream was too strong his dad would jump out of the water and climb along the bank. They swam and ran for most of the day, and as the journey was almost over – there it was! The tallest most spectacular waterfall Oslo had ever seen! The water was falling from the top of a high cliff and it seemed as if an entire stream was falling from the sky and crashing into the rocks and a pond that were below.

"We're not finished Oslo," said his father, noticing how big his son's eyes were in amazement. "We're going to climb to the top along a trail my father taught me. When we reach the top I have a lesson to teach you about God's mercy." The climb to the top of the Great Waterfall was long and hard also, but it was an amazing climb! At times the path led behind the waterfall and Oslo could feel the thundering rush of the water deep down in his stomach!

When they reached the top and sat down Oslo's father started to teach him. He said, "When I was a little otter about your age my papa brought me here and taught me the lesson I'm about to teach you. Look way down the stream. What do you see?" Oslo said, "Our pond, Papa." "That's right," he replied. "And from here you can see that this stream and this waterfall are the main source of water to our little pond. If this stream and waterfall stopped flowing our pond would dry up. Many of the frogs and otters of our pond have never seen this grand and wonderful place. Most have heard about it, but only a few have been here." Oslo's father went on to explain, "This is like God's love. The source of God's love is grand and awesome! Many have heard about God's love but not everyone has truly seen His love. They have not been changed by His love. Those who have come to this place see things differently. It's because of God's love that I teach you. I want you to know Him and His love also. My son, will you remember this place and this lesson? And, if God makes you a father someday would you bring your sons or daughters here and teach them as I am teaching you?" Oslo thought to himself that he most certainly would – if they would be willing to come with him.

Yeshua teaches, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." God's love and kindness fill the earth – but not everyone sees His love. In fact in the very presence of His love many are cruel and selfish instead. God is not pleased! Who are those who are blessed and will receive his mercy in the end according to this teaching? The merciful will receive mercy. It's God's mercy that teaches us to be merciful. If we refuse to listen to God He will not be pleased with us! Children and parents, on this day of rest, if you are caught up in your own self-centered world – then STOP IT – take a day off! You have full permission to take a day off from any selfish pursuits – in fact God commands it! On this Sabbath day remember that God has given you this day, right now in this place, to serve you. Look to Him and His mercy and see what kind of journey He would take you on today.

For Further Study: together as families read and consider these topics for discussion:

- 1) 1 John 4:7-11 Discuss how God demonstrates His love first to those who aren't loving
- 2) Rom 1:21 Not being thankful – what are the dangers? What is a darkened heart?
- 3) Matt 13:1-23 Are we listening to God's revelation – discuss 4 ways of hearing