

KALS Radio Program #6

Matthew 5:48

I. This statement, which in essence is a commandment, has always been most intriguing and challenging to me personally. As a very young Christian, it caught my eye, and I've been trying to fully understand God's meaning here ever since.

A. This same statement by Jesus is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, Luke 6:36. Here Jesus says, "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful."

The different wording of Jesus' statement reveals the synoptic or parallel nature of the Gospel accounts as recorded by Matthew and Luke. Here God uses two separate accounts; one by an inspired eyewitness, Matthew, and the other by the prophet Luke, in recording the statement of Jesus. In this way God defines His own terms, so that we need not lean on our own understanding or interpretation.

Mercy is the defining synonym for perfect. We are then to be as merciful to others as God is to us. Isn't that beautiful!

The context for Matthew 5:48, the command to be perfect, is love. Verse 43 and following states: (Read Matthew 5:43-48.) We are to love our enemies as well as our friends and those who love us! But didn't Jesus do that? Romans 5:8 & 10 state: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Such is the perfect calling of Christ Jesus!

B. Being perfect and merciful would explain other statements in the Sermon on the Mount, such as:

1. Matthew 6:14&15
2. Matthew 7:1&2
3. Matthew 7:12
4. Matthew 5: 7

II. Conclusion

The pivotal importance of being "merciful" to our salvation is graphically seen in the positioning of Jesus' statement of Matthew 5:48 in the context of His Sermon on the Mount. Not only is such a perfection of character attainable for the Christian, but it is essential to his being saved.

May we all someday hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master."

Today let's make being merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful our #1 priority.