

Panthers:

Who has seized an opportunity to wrong you? Do you find yourself believing that your desires can be satisfied only through condemnation of that person? Do you pray for God to bring justice, conviction, and punishment into the life of that person? Too often this is the case in our lives, and we discover that seeking satisfaction of our desires through condemnation of an offender leaves us dissatisfied. In His fifth secret to satisfaction through surrender, Jesus offered us a different way. He said, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*" (Matt. 5:7).

Who are satisfied? The merciful are satisfied. "*Blessed are the merciful.*" By definition mercy implies two components: (1) someone is condemned and (2) someone is forgiven. This takes place in our lives vertically with God and horizontally with others. As sinners, each of us stood condemned vertically with God (Rom. 5:16-18). Consequently, when we condemn others horizontally in our relationships, we are dissatisfied (Rom. 2:1). In His statement about the kingdom of heaven—God's divine reign, rule, and order in our hearts and lives now and in the future—Jesus said that horizontal mercy is evidence of vertical mercy received from God.

The Bible tells us that mercy is the desire of Christ's heart (Matt. 9:13, 36; 12:7; Jn. 3:17-18). One of the most powerful images of mercy rests in the story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8:1-11). "Mercy" in Latin, *misericordia*, combines two words "pity" and "heart." Mercy flows from the heart cheerfully and only by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:8).

Why are they satisfied? "*They will be shown mercy.*" They will receive mercy vertically from God. They will be free of condemnation. Paul said that there is no condemnation for those who are in the mercy of Christ (Rom. 8:1). The Old Testament prophet Micah said that God delights in giving mercy to those who are condemned (Micah 7:18-19). Recognizing our mercy received vertically from God in Christ frees us to show mercy horizontally to others.

How are they satisfied? They surrender their condemnation—vertically and horizontally (Lk. 6:36-37). Jesus said that if we are not characterized and known by administering mercy horizontally to others, then we will not receive mercy from God (Matt. 6:14-15). To do so, we must surrender our condemnation. Surrender says to God, "I can't. You can. I can't satisfy my desires through condemnation of the person who wronged me. You can satisfy my desires through mercy." By the power of the Holy Spirit, surrender your condemnation of the person who wronged you today. You will be satisfied through mercy.

Satisfied through surrender,

Mitch