

Ministry of Grace

Matthew 5 (Part 1)

¹Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. ²⁶Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

³¹"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Parallel Passages

Luke 6:17-49 11:33-36

¹⁷And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

²⁰And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. ²²"Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

²⁴"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵"Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. ²⁶"Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

²⁷"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. ³²"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to

those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

³⁷"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." ³⁹He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

⁴³"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

⁴⁶"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

³³"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

Notes

General

There is a great deal of discussion among Bible teachers as to whether this "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Sermon on the Plain" (Luke 6:12-49) are descriptions of the same event or if they are two separate events. Although Matthew's description is much longer and contains teachings that are not in Luke's gospel, much of the information is the same. We must keep in mind that Matthew does not present his gospel account of the life of Jesus in chronological order. His gospel is arranged, instead, by subject matter. It's entirely possible that Jesus delivered portions of the Sermon on the Mount on several occasions and Matthew gathered them all together in this one account.

There is also a difference of opinion as to who this sermon applies to and what the intent is. Since Matthew wrote this gospel account to Jews to introduce their King to them, some believe that the

precepts delivered here are for kingdom living. Others believe that following the precepts outlined in the Sermon on the Mount will lead to salvation and entrance into the Kingdom. Still others believe that these teachings do not apply to today but will apply to some future time (such as the Millennium.) Rather than a path to salvation and righteousness, this sermon is a description of what true righteousness looks like.

No one can earn righteousness. This was true before the Law and was true after the Law. It is still true today during the church age and will be true during the future reign of Christ. Righteousness begins internally as character and is expressed outwardly as the evidence of what's inside. The Scribes and Pharisees believed that their "righteous" actions and attention to minute details of the Law made them righteous. But those of us who have a sin nature (all humans except Jesus) can only become righteous as a gift from God.

The bottom line is: **The Sermon on the Mount shows how a person who is in a right relationship with God should conduct his, or her, life.**

Matthew 5:1, 2

¹Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

As a result of his performing miracles and healing all who came to him, Jesus attracted large crowds. Going up into the mountain, he sat down to teach as was customary of the Rabbis. The "disciples" mentioned here almost certainly included more than just the twelve. It probably is a reference to the "crowds" in verse one, because at the end of his teaching (if this was a single event) Matthew says that the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29)

Matthew 5:3 - 12

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

All nine of the "beatitudes" begin with "Blessed are ...". The word translated "blessed" is *makarios*, meaning "possessing the favor of God." Some translations use the English word "happy" to translate *makarios*, however "happy" (from the root *hap* meaning luck as a favorable circumstance) describes a person who has good luck. Those who are "blessed" by God should be fully satisfied no matter what the circumstances. They do not depend on luck. R. Kent Hughes in his book "Sermon on the Mount" says:

Contrary to popular opinion, blessed does not mean "happy," even though some translations have rendered it this way. Happiness is a subjective state, a feeling. But Jesus is not declaring how people feel.... Of course, there is no doubt that such blessing will bring feelings of

happiness and that blessed people are generally happy. But we must remember that the root idea of “blessed” is an awareness of approval by God. Blessedness is not simply a nice wish from God; it is a pronouncement of what we actually are—approved. Blessedness indicates the smile of God.

The first four beatitudes focus on our relationship with God and the others focus on our relationship with people.

3. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Some have misinterpreted this verse, claiming that Jesus is not talking about the Messianic Kingdom here on the earth (the millennium) because He calls it “the kingdom of heaven.” We must keep in mind, however, that Matthew is a Jew sharing his gospel account with Jews and they avoid the use of God’s name for fear of mispronouncing it and thereby offending God. Therefore, what the other gospel writers would call the kingdom of God, Matthew calls the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven) has several aspects. First of all, it is a reference to all of creation in which the Creator is King. But, it only becomes real to those who recognize who the King is. This refers to all of time from the moment of creation until the end of time when God creates the new heavens and the new earth. The second aspect of the kingdom is what the Jews of Jesus’ day were looking forward to. It is the kingdom of God on Earth, what we call the millennial reign of Christ. The third aspect of the kingdom is the eternal kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth.

“the poor in spirit” – This verse describes those who recognize their own spiritual poverty; that is, those who recognize their total unworthiness to come to God. The word “poor” is *ptochos*, which refers to abject poverty. James and Peter both put it this way:

...God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6 & 1 Peter 5:5)

Both of these are rough quotes of **Proverbs 3:34**:

... Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor. (Proverbs 3:34)

Those who recognize their spiritual poverty learn to depend on God and truly live in His kingdom.

4. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” – This describes a person’s attitude toward his or her sins. Those who mourn over their abject sinfulness and recognize God’s complete holiness will receive God’s comfort.

5. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” – “Meekness is not weakness.” Both Jesus and Moses are described in the Bible as being “meek.” This word is from *praus*, a form of *prautēs*, meaning **“that attitude of spirit by which we accept God’s dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist.”** It does not describe weakness or feebleness; it describes “power under control.”

6. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” – These are those who reject evil, or as Paul says in Romans:

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. (Romans 12:9)

Righteousness here refers to a desire to live in a way that conforms to God’s standards of right and wrong, and to do what pleases Him.

Our enemy does not distinguish between what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong. He is focused on what will separate us from God. Therefore, we need to focus on what will

grow our relationship with Him and draw us closer to Him. As we learn to reject evil and focus on what is good, it will produce in us a feeling of satisfaction.

7. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” – One of the key indicators of spiritual maturity is showing mercy. When someone wrongs us or does us harm intentionally, our natural reaction (that is, sin nature natural) is to lash out at them and to strike back.

God’s grace is the gift of “**forgiveness** of our sin.” (giving us what we don’t deserve) God’s mercy is the “**removal of the consequences** of our sin.” (not giving us what we do deserve). When God forgives us our sins, he casts them away as far as the East is from the West and He remembers them no more. But, there are consequences for our actions. God’s mercy removes the consequences for our sins.

8. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” – The word translated “pure” is *katharos*, which means “clean, clear, or pure.”

Only a person with a heart cleansed from the defilement of sin, whose heart is laid bare before God can see the invisible God and hear His voice speaking to him or her.

9. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” – Only those who are truly at peace with God can point others to the path of peace. If there is bitter jealousy, hatred, envy, and strife in one’s heart, he becomes blinded by them and shows himself to be inwardly focused. Those who are truly upwardly focused are those who have God in their heart. They are truly the children of God.

10. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – The word translated “persecuted” is *diōkō*, which means “to pursue someone, in either a good sense or a bad sense.” Most often, it means “to persecute.” The Apostle Paul suffered great persecution. Here’s how he described it in his second letter to his spiritual son, Timothy:

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

Those of us who are currently members of the Kingdom of God (all Christians and believing Jews) and who live out their faith (live a godly life) will experience persecution. The integrity of a believer living his or her faith condemns the ungodly world and brings out its hostility. People dislike a righteous life because it exposes their own unrighteousness. According to this verse, however, we will also know His heavenly Kingdom, both now and eternally.

11. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – This sounds almost like a repeat of the previous beatitude. Notice, however, that there is a significant difference. The persecution in the previous beatitude was the result of righteous living (persecuted for being who you are, your lifestyle). Such a lifestyle offends those who live a life of sin. The current beatitude refers to persecution simply for being devoted to following God (persecuted for what you believe about God, your faith).

Matthew 5:13 - 16

13"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the salt of the earth" – Salt has three primary uses. The first, and the one we are most familiar with, is to enhance flavor, the second is to act as a preservative, and the third is to act as a disinfectant. What most of us are familiar with today is table salt. In most cases this is purified Sodium Chloride (NaCl), which has few, if any, impurities in it. It is collected by evaporating sea water or dug out of deep salt deposits in the ground. Then the impure crystals are treated with various chemicals until the pure form is produced. The salt used in the time of Jesus was either evaporated from salt water (the ocean or the dead sea) without further chemical treatment, or dug out of the surface ground. With either of these methods of obtaining salt, the final product contained many impurities including a lot of gypsum. Both salt and gypsum are hygroscopic, which means that they attract and trap water. Salt enhances flavor by stimulating the salt receptors on our tongue. As a preservative, salt reduces the water content of the thing it is preserving thereby reducing the spoiling process. And, it reduces the ability for bacteria and microbes to survive because they can't get enough water. After salt has been used as a preservative or a disinfectant, it becomes "waterlogged" and can no longer produce the water reducing function. This is salt that has lost its saltiness. It can no longer function as a preservative or a disinfectant and has a reduced effect as a flavor enhancer. However, it will affect the soil's ability to take up nutrients, so it is thrown on the pathway to keep weeds down.

Those who have a relationship with God are like salt in that they enhance society through their good deeds and demonstrations of love. They also tend to keep evil deeds of others in check because others see them and their good works and are convicted by the righteous behavior of believers. However, if those who have a relationship with God cease to demonstrate their relationship, that is, they cease to do works of righteousness and demonstrations of love, they cease to be of use to God and His purpose.

14"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15**Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

"You are the light of the world" – Followers of Jesus are supposed to be a light to the world. In verse sixteen we are told that we shine our light by doing good works. Light has an amazing property in that even the smallest amount of light pierces the darkness and chases it away. That's why a city situated on a hill can't be hidden. No matter how dark it is, the smallest amount of light from the city will be seen.

"light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand" – In the first century, there was no electricity, so houses were illuminated with oil lamps. The lamp was set on a special shelf protruding from the wall where it could illuminate the entire room.

"a basket" – Literally, "the measuring container." This was a basket used in the marketplace to measure dry goods. It is also a reference to the bowl that was common to every household which was used to measure out both wet goods and dry goods. That's why the definite article (the) is used. Jesus was referring to a specific item that every household had. One of the purposes for the bowl was to place over the lamp when they wanted to snuff it out.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others” – Just as the lamp is set on its shelf to light the entire room, believers are commanded to live a life of good works that demonstrate the presence of God to everyone around.

Matthew 5:17 - 18

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

“**abolish**” – This is from the Greek word *kataluō*, which is made up of *kata*, meaning “down” and *luō*, meaning “to let loose.” This word has two primary meanings in everyday language; the first is “to destroy” and the second is “to unload and relax.” The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to come and defeat all their enemies, both political and spiritual. They believed that this would mean that a new form of normal would be established and that the Law would be replaced by something better. The first part of this Sermon on the Mount would have given them the impression that He was about to abolish the Law, but not so.

“**For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**” – Not only was Jesus not going to abolish the Law, He told his disciples that He was not going to change even the smallest part of it.

“**iota**” – This is the 9th letter of the Greek alphabet and is the smallest of all. Its counterpart in Hebrew is called a “jot” which is a slang expression for the letter *yodh*, the smallest letter in Hebrew, very similar to our apostrophe. In Hebrew, although *yodh* is the smallest letter it is also the most common letter in Hebrew writing.

“**dot**” – This is the Greek word *kerasia* which is a reference to the “bend” or “point” (called a tittle) of a letter. The presence or absence of this mark can dramatically change the meaning of a Hebrew word.

So, what Jesus was saying was that not only was He not coming to abolish the Law, He was not going to change even the smallest part of it.

Matthew 5:19 - 20

¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

“**relaxes**” – From the Greek word *luō*, meaning “to loosen, to relax, or to destroy.”

There are two important truths to be gleaned from this verse. The first is that legal obedience to the Law is not a prerequisite for entry into the kingdom of heaven. The people Jesus is talking about are teachers who discount some of the Law and teach others that it’s alright to not obey them. And yet, they are still in the kingdom of Heaven, in spite of their disobedience.

The second thing we learn from this verse is that teachers will receive stricter judgment than those whom they teach. This is the same warning that James gives in his letter.

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. (James 3:1) [NASB]

“unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” – Jesus now makes it very clear that entrance into the Kingdom is not dependent on following a set of rules. The key to the door of the Kingdom is righteousness. That righteousness can only come by faith.

So What?

As Christians, we are already in the kingdom of heaven. We are children of the King and we are engaged to His Son. There is nothing that we have to do to gain entrance, because we are already there. There is nothing we have to do to remain there, because our position and standing in the kingdom are forever. The kingdom that we are in is the earthly kingdom of heaven and our future in the heavenly kingdom of heaven is assured. Doing, or not doing, the things contained in the Sermon on the Mount will not gain us entrance to or bar us from entering God’s eternal heavenly kingdom.

So – why do we care what Jesus taught His disciples about the kingdom of heaven. We are already blessed in so many ways, aren’t we? Remember what R. Kent Hughes said:

Blessedness is not simply a nice wish from God; it is a pronouncement of what we actually are—approved. Blessedness indicates the smile of God.

Do you want to put a smile on God’s face? One way to do that is to learn, and practice, what Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount:

1. Recognize that without the Spirit of God and His precious gift of salvation we are nothing. In fact, we are less than nothing. Without Him we have no spiritual value at all!
2. Recognize that it is your own sins that caused Jesus’ pain. Real pain. Physical pain. Emotional pain (remember in the Garden the night he was arrested?) Mourn the fact that God had to send His only son to the cross in order to have a loving relationship with you.
3. Recognize that we don’t deserve all the good that God allows to come into our lives and accept everything else as the will of God.
4. In spite of all the evil and selfishness that we see around us every day, focus on being unselfishly good and doing what is the right thing to do.
5. Learn to show mercy, especially to those who don’t deserve it.
6. Be aware of your own sins and confess them immediately. Cultivate a close relationship with God.
7. Be at peace with God and with those around you. Let your neighbors see God through your deeds.
8. Live a life that is pleasing to God, doing what you know is right and don’t worry about what others say about you. Share your faith openly, even with the scornful.
9. Be salt and light. The testimony of your actions says more than constant preaching to others.
10. Read and study the Word daily to know God better and to better understand what He wants from you.

Select the one or two things from the list above that you are weakest in and put them into action this week and bask in the warmth of God’s smile.