

Ministry of Grace

Matthew 6

¹Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

¹⁶And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²²The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell

you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Parallel Passages

Mark 11:25

²⁵And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Luke 11:1-4, 34-36

¹Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

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."

Luke 12:22-34

²²And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

²⁹And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³²Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Luke 16:13

¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Notes

General

This entire Sermon on the Mount is about righteousness. Righteousness means “doing what is right according to God’s standard.” My earthly father was not a Christian, but he had a strong sense of what was right and what was wrong. In fact, I can still hear his voice in my head saying, “Anything worth doing is worth doing right.” In today’s world, however, there seems to be a significant lack in this area. Not only do people not seem to care whether or not what they’re doing is right, they don’t even have a good sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Unfortunately, this laxness of doing what is right has crept into God’s church. Many people in the church can’t really distinguish between what is righteous and what isn’t. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us all a message about what righteousness is. He started out the message with the Beatitudes, in which Jesus instructed us in God’s reaction to our deeds of righteousness. That is, he told his disciples (and us) the kind of things that make God smile. In the remainder of chapter 5, He gave us example after example of what righteousness looks like (being salt and light to the world, not retaliating, showing love to others whether they are nice to you or not). He also gave us examples of what unrighteousness looks like (anger, lust, divorce, swearing of oaths, hating your enemies).

In the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us that righteousness must be practiced in every activity of life. In the first half of chapter six He talks about righteousness as it is expressed in our relationship to God. In the remainder of chapter six, He talks about righteousness as it is expressed in our relationship to material things. Then in chapter seven He talks about righteousness as it is expressed in our relationship to others.

Let’s dive in and see what He teaches us about righteousness.

Matthew 6:1 - 4

¹Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Beware” – This is from the Greek word *prosechō*, made up of *pros*, meaning “to” or “toward” and *echo*, meaning “to have” or “to hold.” *Prosechō* literally means “to hold the mind or the ear toward something.” In other words, it means to pay close attention to someone or something. In the 20 different translations of the Bible that I looked at, this word is translated as either “Beware,” “Take heed,” or “Be careful.”

“righteousness” – Translated from *dikaioṣunē*, which means “doing what is right according to God’s standard.” *Dikaioṣ* means “just” or “right” and the *sunē* ending gives it abstraction so that it means doing what is right or just.

“to be seen” – From *theathēnai*, meaning “to observe, as you might view a performance.” This is the word from which we get our English word “theater” or “theatrics.” It is expressed in the passive voice, thus it describes a person who is doing acts of righteousness as a performance, to be seen by others.

One of the hallmarks of Jesus’ teaching on righteousness is that it comes from the heart and is evidenced by our actions. Without a heart of righteousness, our actions are phony and profit us nothing. We must recognize that the natural tendency of all believers is to do things to make others see what good Christians we are. Jesus warns us about this (He says, take heed, be careful, or beware!). When our acts of righteousness are done for show, we are no different than actors on a stage who try to convince us that they are someone they aren’t.

We are told here that we act this way to receive a reward. In fact, the implication is that we do all things for a reward. That’s part of our fallen human nature. In reality, we all do only those things that we want to do. Even those things that we don’t like, we do because we believe that we will receive some kind of reward, either intrinsic or extrinsic. That reward may be the absence of physical or emotional pain, but avoiding something painful is a kind of a reward. For instance, no one likes to go to the dentist for a root canal. However, when the pain gets bad enough, we will gladly go, we actually want to go, just to be free of the pain. That is our reward.

“**when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do**” – In the Jewish day there was a specific time for giving alms to the poor. It was indicated by the sounding of a trumpet blast. Those who wanted to appear righteous would scurry along the busy streets heading to the temple so that others would see them doing their righteous deed. Like actors on the stage, they want to be seen as someone who they really weren’t. Jesus calls them hypocrites. How appropriate, since the Greek word for hypocrite is *hupocritēs*, which refers to an actor in a play, performing so that others will see them as something they aren’t.

Being seen is their reward. Actors do it for the applause. Hypocrites do it for the admiration of the observers.

Matthew 6:5 - 8

⁵And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Just like giving to the poor because you truly care about them, praying is a sign of Christian maturity. Listening to someone pray in public will tell you a lot about their prayer life. If they use a lot of thee’s and thou’s and pronounce great platitudes about God, if they pray long and make it a great show, chances are they are not praying to God so much as they are praying to man. In the synagogues, each Sabbath one of the attendees would be asked to pray. He would stand up in front of the rest, raise his hands, and pray. It was easy to act out the part that he thought others wanted to see. Being seen and admired was what they wanted, not an audience

with God. That would require humility and, as someone once said, “It’s hard to be humble when you’re as great as I am.”

Like the time for giving alms, the time of prayer was announced with a trumpet blast. The Pharisees and others who wanted to appear righteous would often time their afternoon walk to coincide with the sounding of the trumpet so that they would be seen by others doing their righteous deed. They would stop on a busy street corner, lift their hands and pray loud and long so that everyone around could see how righteous they were.

Jesus said, instead of doing that, we should go into a private place and close the door so that nobody can see or hear you. It doesn’t matter whether you pray silently or out loud, God does not pay attention to your words, He pays attention to your heart.

As I have told you before, I grew up in an area with a lot of Catholics. Many of my friends attended the local Catholic Church and occasionally I heard them “praying the rosary.” Even as a non-believer, it seemed strange to me that they would repeat the same phrases over and over. It was as if their God was more interested in counting the number of times they recited it, than actually listening to their words. And, even then it seemed they were more interested in talking about how blessed Mary is than about how great God is and what their own needs were.

Jesus tells us not to be like that, because even before we lay our needs before our Lord, He knows what our needs are. I vividly remember learning this lesson as a very young Christian. When I attended Bible College there was a time that I had a bill to pay and I didn’t have the money to pay for it. I prayed about it, even telling God how much I needed. Shortly afterward I went to the campus post office and found a letter from my home church, down in California. There I found a letter from my church family telling me that they had a little extra in the benevolence fund that month and decided to send me that money. Enclosed was a check for almost the exact amount I needed. Not only had God known what I needed before I asked, He had the money sent to me before I even prayed.

Matthew 6:9

⁹Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

This prayer, referred to by most Christians as “The Lord’s Prayer” is without a doubt the greatest prayer of the Christian Church. Thousands of sermons have been preached on it and some of the greatest Christian minds have examined and explained it. It has been translated into virtually every language on the planet. Great oratorios have been written with this prayer as the inspiration. As a result, it is familiar to virtually every Christian in every nation around the world. Because it has been called “The Lord’s Prayer” for nearly 2000 years, it would be futile to change that title, although more accurately, it is the disciple’s prayer.

It probably was not part of the Sermon on the Mount, although Matthew includes it here. It is more likely, as Luke tells us, a response to the disciples request for teaching on prayer after they had observed Jesus praying. However, Matthew’s recording of the prayer appears to be more complete than Luke’s and is a good rendition for us to look into a little deeper.

Before we get into the details, let’s look at the structure of this prayer. First off, it is addressed to “Our Father.” This was a radical departure from the normal Jewish prayers, which frequently started off with, “Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe ...”

This address to our Father is then followed by 6 requests, or petitions. The first three are requests for things to be done to or for God and the second three are requests for things to be done to or for us. Notice also, that this is not a prayer for self (me), but a corporate prayer for “us” (give us, forgive us, deliver us).

“**Our Father**” – Because we have recited this prayer so many times, we lose sight of just how radical, even blasphemous, this expression was to the first century Jews. Here’s how R. Kent Hughes explains it in his book *“The Sermon on the Mount:”*

The writers of the Old Testament certainly believed in the Fatherhood of God, but they saw it mainly in terms of a sovereign Creator-Father. In fact, God is only referred to as Father fourteen times in the Old Testament's thirty-nine books, and even then rather impersonally. In those fourteen occurrences of Father the term was always used with reference to the nation, not to individuals. You can search from Genesis to Malachi, and you will not find one individual speaking of God as Father.

And yet, Jesus not only referred to Him as father (more than 60 times in the four gospels), but He taught His disciples to also call Him “Father.” To the Jewish mind of the first century, calling God your father was tantamount to claiming to be divine. It was seen by many as blasphemy. And yet – there is not a single recorded instance of anyone challenging Jesus or His disciples for this form of prayer.

As Christians, we often do not realize the honored position we hold in God’s creation. The Apostle Paul teaches us in Romans and in Galatians that we are, indeed, the sons of God. We are His adopted children:

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ ... (Romans 8:15-17a)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

As God’s adopted children, we not only are joint heirs with Christ, we are a special class of believers who can call God our “Abba.” This is an Aramaic word that is both intensely personal, and at the same time respectful. Some have taught that Abba is roughly equivalent to “Papa” or “Daddy,” and yet it carries with it an air of supreme respect. A better rendition of it would be something like “Daddy Dearest” or “Daddy, Sir.”

“**hallowed be your name**” – This is the first of the three petitions for things to be done to God. The word “hallowed” is translated from *hagiadzō*. This is not a noun as most of us read it (your name is hallowed), but a verb meaning “to sanctify, to make holy, or to revere.” The form of this verb is aorist, passive, imperative. The aorist tense indicates that it is a “once for all time” action and therefore, is probably a reference to the end of time when all of creation will bow before our creator and proclaim Him Lord of all. The passive voice of the verb indicates that the action is to be done “to” God’s name. The imperative mood typically implies a command, but here it indicates a sincere request. It’s sort of like at the Thanksgiving dinner table when someone says,

“Pass the gravy, please.” It is a command form, but expressed as a request. This is the manner in which all six of the petitions in the Lord’s Prayer are expressed.

What is a name? We think of it as simply a label for identifying something. If I were to ask you, “What is rose?” most of you would answer, “It is a flower.” But I did not ask, “What is a rose?” So, the proper response to my question would be, “It is a name.” The name of this particular flower is not just a label, but a description of the essence of the flower (pun intended). It generally tells us what this particular flower looks like, what it smells like, and what to be wary of (its thorns). Likewise, the name of God tells us something about Him. Yahweh (or Jehovah) is what God told Moses to call him.

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:13-14)

Our God is the self-existent one, the I AM, who has no beginning and no end. He is the eternal God, who exists outside of time and creation and, therefore, is the creator.

This petition requests that God, the self-existent one, the creator of heaven and earth, be honored and glorified for who He is.

Matthew 6:10 - 13

¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

“**Your kingdom come**” – This petition focuses on God’s sovereignty. It is a request that a present reality, which is ignored by most people (including many Christians), might become evident to all. In the first petition we ask that God be honored and glorified for who He is. In this petition in addition to who He is, we recognize what He is (the King of heaven and earth). And more than that, we request that what we Christians know as a present reality may become undeniable to every creature in heaven and on earth.

The message that John the Baptist preached was, “Repent, the **kingdom** of heaven is at hand.” Then, when Jesus began His ministry He proclaimed, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus’ whole purpose was to do the will of the father by bringing the kingdom of heaven down to mankind. But Jesus and His kingdom were rejected by the Jews. Christians are privileged to know the kingdom now as a spiritual reality. Someday the whole world will know His kingdom as a physical reality.

But – even though we can know his kingdom now as a spiritual reality, many Christians miss out on His kingdom by ignoring the fact that He is on the throne right now. They don’t treat Him like the king because they are more interested in doing their own will than His. Therefore, the next petition is:

“**your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**” – This petition is closely tied to the previous one. Since God is the King over all of creation, He has the right to demand that everything be as He has determined it should be. As we said above, spiritually, we are already in God’s kingdom, but when we pray “May your will be done here as it is up there” we are proclaiming that the only

reality that really matters is for us to do God's will – here and now! Many, many Christians are still living their everyday lives the way they want to live, thus denying God's sovereignty and God's will. When we pray this prayer we are condemning ourselves if we are not completely focused on living the way He wants us to live.

“Give us this day our daily bread” – There is a fair amount of debate over this phrase. It centers around the word translated “daily.” It is *epiousios*, which does not appear in any other Greek literature, only here in the Bible. The only other place it has ever been found is on a fragment of papyrus that appears to be a grocery list, where it seems to indicate the requirements of the day. Linguists tell us that it could mean either “today's bread” or “tomorrow's bread.” Either way it seems to indicate “the bread that is needed for a single day.”

We see, therefore, that Jesus is instructing us to ask the father for that which we need for sustenance on a day-by-day basis. This is not a prayer for the “heavenly mana” as is the claim of some who want to spiritualize this entire prayer. Neither is it a prayer for just bread alone. Jesus is instructing us to ask for the “necessities” of life, whether large or small. God wants us to bring our everyday needs to Him. When we come to Him for the little things, we do Him great honor. Later in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us:

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

By asking for that which we need for a single day and doing so on a daily basis, it fosters within us a daily dependence on God. Notice, however, that we are to pray for bread, not dessert!

“forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” – The word translated “debts” is the plural form of *opheilēma*, which refers to “that which is owed to someone.” It could also refer to something that is required as reparation for something damaging that we have done. Therefore, it is sometimes translated as “trespasses.” In verse fourteen the word *paraptōma* is used in a parallel construction with *opheilēma*, indicating a reference to the same type of things. *Paraptōma*, literally means a “side-slip.” In common usage it refers to “a fault, an offense, or an unintentional error.” This is not a reference to sins. That would be the Greek word *hamartia*. Just think about it; our sins have already been forgiven.

So, we are not in danger of losing our salvation if we don't forgive others, but we are in danger of losing our fellowship with the Father as well as our rewards. In this petition, we are basically asking God to treat us the way we treat others. If we harbor an unforgiving spirit toward others, we are asking God to have an unforgiving spirit toward us. If we refuse to give to others what is due to them, we are asking God to forgo giving us any rewards that we might otherwise deserve.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” – The final petition in this prayer is for God to deliver us. The first part of this phrase is “lead us not into temptation.” This is not expressed as an imperative as all the other petitions are. It could more accurately be translated as, “And may you not lead us into temptation ...” The final portion of this petition is where the imperative is used. This is what this petition is all about. The word translated “evil” is *poneros*, which also has the definite article (that would be the word “the” in English). So, a better translation of this portion would be, “but deliver us from the evil one.” We know that the evil one is Satan (the tempter). The word translated “deliver” is *rhuomai*, which means “to rescue” or

“to snatch from danger.” Therefore, this part of the Lord’s Prayer is asking God to rescue us from the tempter so that we will not be overly tempted.

“For yours is the kingdom . . .” This clause, called a doxology, is not found in the oldest manuscripts and is probably been added in.

So What?

As pointed out in the beginning of this message, the Sermon on the Mount is all about righteousness, doing what is right according to God’s standard. This sermon was delivered to people of Israel who were waiting for the Kingdom of God and they wanted to know what they needed to do to enter into the kingdom. The ordinary, common people believed that the Pharisees and Scribes would surely get into the kingdom because they were so “righteous.” As a result, they were shocked when they heard that they had to be more righteous than the Pharisees and Scribes in order to qualify for the kingdom. And, even the Scribes and Pharisees wouldn’t have believed Jesus’ message because they were so sure of their own righteousness. This sermon would have created more questions from the people than answers. As a result, throughout the gospel accounts we see people, both common people and the religious leaders, coming to Jesus wanting to know the answers to their questions.

But, calling God their father? Even when their questions were answered, they still would have had a hard time referring to God as Father. That was simply becoming too familiar with a God who they believed was transcendent and unreachable by mere mortals.

For the most part, the common people wanted to see Jesus’ miracles and learn more from His teaching. The Pharisees, on the other hand, (with the possible exception of Nicodemus) simply wanted to entrap Jesus so they could accuse Him of heresy and blasphemy. Even His closest disciples didn’t believe Jesus was really who he said He was – until after the resurrection. Before the resurrection the disciples were eager to learn, although they didn’t believe. After the resurrection, they were eager to spread the good news because they finally did believe.

As Christians, however, we have a different perspective on all of this. We are looking back at the cross and the events that transpired in the three and a half years preceding it. And – because of the teachings of Paul and the other apostles, we have learned that we can’t earn salvation and we can’t earn entrance into the kingdom. Just like those who lived before the cross, we could never be righteousness enough to qualify. And that’s where grace comes in. Through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we have been declared righteous by God. We have also been adopted into his family so we can truly refer to God as our father.

So, we don’t have to earn righteousness. Legally, we’re already there. Not only are we already righteous, we’re already in the Kingdom of God. So why do we care about the Sermon on the Mount? Because it tells us that we need to live out our righteousness, not so others can see us, but so that others can see God in us.

Look, we all know someone who professes to be a Christian, yet the way they live their life makes us wonder whether their salvation is real. They talk a good game (maybe), but their actions tell us a different story.

Remember what I said at the start of this message? Jesus began this sermon with the Beatitudes, in which He told us that when we do acts of righteousness it makes God smile. Is that what you want? Do you want to make God smile? If so, then you want to do acts of righteousness. Not so others can see how righteous you are, but because you want to put a smile on God's face. Before we were saved we were the slaves to sin as the Apostle Paul taught us:

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18) [NKJV]

We are no longer slaves to our sin nature. We now are God's property. He purchased us with the blood of Christ. Let us live out our acts of righteousness, so that others will see God in us.