

Like Moths to a Light

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[0 : 00] Last week, we looked at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, in the Beatitudes. And this is the second part to that series.

We are looking at the introduction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, because there are so many misunderstandings that people have when it comes to Jesus' most famous teaching on ethics. So, for these two sermons, we are clarifying some of those misconceptions, so that you can go into the Sermon on the Mount on your own.

So, if you would, please open in your Bibles to Matthew 5, verses 11 through 16. Matthew 5, 11 through 16. And if you weren't here last week, let me tell you what we looked at.

We looked at the Beatitudes. And the Beatitudes act as Jesus' introductory statements to what this Sermon on the Mount is about. And we saw that there's three movements in the Beatitudes.

[1 : 05] The first set of Beatitudes are all about spiritual poverty, about spiritual emptiness, and that God is the one who blesses those who recognize their spiritual emptiness.

And then, the second part is about God blessing those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. So, God blesses those who recognize they have no righteousness with righteousness.

And then, the final part of the Beatitudes is God blesses those who then live out the righteousness that God provides them. And then, this week, we're going to be looking at the second part to Jesus' introduction in verses 11 through 16.

Please keep your Bibles out as we read this passage together. But before we get into the passage, I want to ask the married couples if they remember their first big fight.

The first big fight as a married couple. I got my wife's permission to tell this story, so fear not. Our first big fight was when we were one year into our marriage, and we had just moved to start my graduate program in St. Louis, Missouri.

[2 : 23] And we're in a new apartment, we're still settling in, and then one day, one night, my wife just burst into tears. And for me, it came out of left field.

I had no idea why it was happening. Now, I don't remember the specifics, and I clarified with my wife, she couldn't remember the specifics either. But we both agree that the fight was about some chore, some household chore, that I was not doing, and that she alone had been doing.

And as the discussion, the marital discussion played out, we realized that we both had different expectations due to our family of origin. In my family, this particular chore, my mom always did, and my dad never did.

Whereas in her family, it was something that her mom and dad did together. And most marital conflicts are about unspoken expectations.

You and I do this same thing in our relationship with Jesus. We bring unspoken expectations into our relationship with Jesus.

[3 : 33] Sometimes we have the unspoken expectation that Jesus is a get-out-of-jail-free card, that he just offers blanket forgiveness, and we can continue living our lives as normal.

Or sometimes we expect that Jesus is there to give us the life that we want. Or even we expect that we have to earn Jesus' continual love.

We bring unspoken expectations into our relationship. And so as we read Matthew 5, verses 11 through 16, we are going to ask a question of the passage.

We're going to ask, what expectations does Jesus have for us? What expectations does Jesus have for us?

And in this passage, we're going to see that he has three expectations. He expects us to be slandered on his account. He expects us to be salty on his account.

[4 : 38] And he expects us to shine on his account. Slander, salty, shine. I was pretty proud of myself for that little alliteration. So with that structure in mind, let's read Matthew 5, 11 through 16 together.

And remember, this is the word of the Lord. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

[5 : 53] In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever. Will you join me in prayer and ask God to bless our time in his word? Lord God, we are your people, the sheep of your pasture.

Give us ears to hear your word, and may Jesus' teaching give us the gift of faith where we lack it, and strengthen our faith where we have it. May the preaching of your word glorify you in truth and edify your people in deed.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. So what does Jesus expect from his relationship with you? He expects you to be slandered on his account.

He expects you to be slandered. Look at verse 11. Jesus says, Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

[7 : 03] Now last week we saw that when Jesus uses the construction of blessed is or blessed are, God is the one doing the blessing, because Jewish people often refer to God indirectly lest they accidentally take his name in vain.

So in saying God blesses those, they would say those blessed are those. It's a way of referring indirectly to God. And this is what Jesus is doing because it's common in first century Jewish circles.

So God is the one doing the blessing here. And then we also spoke last week how this particular beatitude is a transition in Jesus' introduction.

We saw that last week each beatitude is very short and to the point. Blessed are, blessed are, blessed are. But then in verse 11, there's a transition.

There is blessed are you. Blessed are you. And then Jesus gives this long explanation. So we're entering a new portion of the section.

[8 : 13] Now here, when Jesus says, blessed are you, that pronoun in the original Greek is plural. As we say where I'm from, blessed are y'all.

Blessed are y'all. God blesses all y'all when people insult all y'all, persecute all y'all, and falsely accuse all y'all because of me.

It's plural. Jesus is specifically talking about the disciples. Remember, the Sermon on the Mount is for Jesus' disciples. The crowds are around.

They're listening. They're wanting to see miracles. But this is for his disciples, those who already are in Christ. Look again at verse 11.

Jesus says, blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

[9 : 17] Notice how persecution there is wedged between insult and say all kinds of evil. The type of persecution that Jesus has in mind is verbal slander.

Verbal slander. It's verbal persecution. Jesus isn't excluding the other forms of persecution, but he specifically has in mind verbal slander because he starts with a verbal action and he ends with a verbal action.

When his disciples began to live out their Christian life, this is what they faced the most. They mostly faced verbal slander for following Christ.

It's the first form of persecution that they face. And why were his disciples slandered? Well, in verse 11, Jesus says, because of me.

Blessed are you when you are slandered because of me. Jesus is not saying that God blesses you when you're slandered for being a jerk or for being rude or for spending your time at your work evangelizing when you should actually be working, doing your job.

[10:33] Jesus is saying not that you're blessed when you are slandered for those things. Rather, when you're slandered because of what you believe, because of what you're doing for Christ.

Blessed are you when you are slandered for doing justice because of Christ. Blessed are you when you are slandered for loving mercy because of Christ.

Blessed are you for walking humbly when you're slandered for walking humbly with the Lord because of Christ. This is verbal slander on Christ's account.

And what does Jesus say God will do? God blesses you because of Christ. This is why Jesus says in verse 12, Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.

For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Jesus says that when you're slandered on his accounts, God gives you a heavenly reward.

[11:44] Now, Revelation chapter 7 verses 9 through 17 goes into some of this reward. But God will give you a heavenly reward of his presence.

You will spend all eternity worshipping him in his overwhelming glory. You will worship him in a place where there's no hunger, where there's no pain, where there's no thirst, where there's no slander. That is the heavenly reward when he wipes away all your tears. Think of that time in your life when you were most happy.

Maybe even a single day. What was the best day of your life? Your heavenly reward when compared to that day will outshine your best day like the sunshine outshines a flickering torch during load shedding.

That's how great that day will be when you get your heavenly reward of God's presence. And so Jesus says rejoice, because great will be your heavenly reward when you are slandered.

[12:56] And he says to rejoice, because when you're slandered for Christ's sake, that is evidence that you are in Christ.

Slander is evidence that you are in Christ. Look again at verse 12. Jesus says, Now often when we think of the Old Testament prophets, we think of predicting the future.

And the prophets definitely did a lot of predicting the future. But that was a byproduct of their main task. A prophet's primary job was to deliver the word of God to God's people.

And in the Old Testament, God sent his prophets to God's people because they were in rebellion.

They were turning away from the Lord. They were not doing what God had called them to do, to live according to his law.

So God sent the prophets to God's people to call them back to God. The prophet said, If you do not follow the Lord, this will happen.

[14:08] The Assyrians will come and take you away. The Babylonians will come and take you away. You will die. You will be sick. The covenant's curses will fall down upon you.

And this is what the prophets did. They represented God and his word to the rebellious people. And when you read through the Old Testament, you see that God's people did not listen to God.

They slandered the prophets. They made fun of the prophets. They even killed the prophets. And they did this because the prophets represented God and they were in rebellion against God.

Christ's disciples represent Christ. Christ's disciples represent Christ.

Christ's people show mercy. They demonstrate purity in heart. They seek righteousness in the world around them. And by living out the righteousness that Christ has given them, they represent Christ to the world.

[15:16] Both in word and in deed. So when the world slanders Christ's people, they slander Christ. Now you might be thinking here, well, this is just Christians seeing persecution around every corner, under every bush.

Well, use this as a test case when you're thinking about slander, persecution as slander.

Jesus's teachings are quite clear in the Sermon on the Mount. And one of the things he's quite clear about is the use of marriage, that sex belongs in marriage between a man and a woman in a lifelong commitment.

And then Jesus's disciples were clear on the same fact, and Christian theology has been clear on the same fact. It's a basic Christian teaching that reflects Jesus's position. How does our society respond when you are clear about that teaching?

How does society portray that teaching in movies, in TV, in talk show? It's looked down upon. [16:40] It's seen as bigoted, as anti-love. Jesus was love, so surely he's for love in all its forms. Well, according to Jesus, this is slander, and it is a form of persecution.

Slander is persecution. So when you represent Jesus in his teaching, when you live out Jesus's teaching, he says, expect verbal slander.

Jesus expects verbal slander for his sake in his relationship with you. Now, in war, enemies slander one another.

That slander is called propaganda. I was a history major in university, and I love looking at old World War I propaganda posters, because they're absolutely outlandish.

And one of my favorite ones comes from the United Kingdom. And in this illustrated propaganda poster, there is a wounded English soldier lying in a hospital, and a German Red Cross sister taking a cup of water and pouring it on the ground.

[17:56] And two uniformed German officers in their spiked helmets are laughing at what is happening. Now, this is what the propaganda poster says.

Red Cross or Iron Cross? Wounded in a prisoner, our soldier cries for water. The German sister pours it on the ground before his eyes.

There is no woman in Britain who would do it. There is no woman in Britain who will forget it. Now, there's no record that this ever happened in a German Red Cross hospital.

But that doesn't matter. The UK government was trying to slander the German government, the German military, in order to increase fighting spirit in its population.

Propaganda is another word for slander. According to Jesus in Matthew 5, he expects his disciples to be slandered because his disciples represent him, just as a soldier represents the government.

[19:11] God's enemies are at war with God, and they will slander God's Christ disciples, just as the Old Testament prophets were slandered.

So what does this mean for you? It means expect slander. Jesus tells you to expect slander to come to you for his sake.

Expect slander when you share the gospel. When you share the gospel, expect someone to think you're a fool for believing this. Expect that. Expect someone to say that you're anti-science for believing the gospel.

Expect for people to roll their eyes at you or to make fun of you behind your back when you're not present for sharing the gospel. Expect verbal slander because Jesus says it will happen.

Expect slander for doing what Jesus commands. Expect slander for doing what Jesus commands.

[20:18] So when you're at work and you refuse to engage in locker room talk, expect to be slandered for refusing to engage.

Expect people to try to pull you into such talk. Expect people to call you a hypocrite at some point, even if not to your face.

Expect slander for living out Christ's commands. Now I'm not saying this is going to happen every day. I'm not saying when you walk out this door today you're going to be slandered eight times.

Most people will probably be politely dismissive when you share the gospel. Or they won't engage. But the minute you start following Christ's commands, when it runs up against some of the central idolatries of our time, expect slander.

What if you're not receiving any slander? What if you're not being slandered? Why? Why are you not being slandered? Ask yourself that question.

[21:38] Am I not being slandered? Is it because I'm keeping my faith too private? Do people know I'm even a Christian? Am I sharing the gospel with people?

Am I loving mercy? Doing justice? Walking humbly with God? What does my faith look like to the watching world?

Ask yourself these questions because Jesus expects you to be slandered for his sake. And he expects you to be slandered for his sake because he expects you to be salty for his sake.

He expects you to be salty. Look at verse 13. Jesus says, You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Now, salt was an important mineral in the ancient world, even more so than it is now in our era of modern refrigeration.

[22 : 45] It was used to flavor food. It was used to preserve food against bacterial growth. The Roman army used salt as a form of judgment when a province rebelled.

They would sow salt into the ground so that you could not grow crops there. And if salt was useless, if it had lost its saltiness, it means that the chunk of rock that the salt had encrusted around had been exposed to water and was just rock.

So then the rock would be used to construct the Roman roads. So salt was used to flavor, preserve, to judge, and to construct roads.

Now, Jesus says that his disciples are the salt of the earth. In the ancient Greek, the original language of the New Testament, that you there, you are the salt of the earth, is emphatic.

Jesus is drawing attention to you, his disciples. It's as if he's saying you, you, you are the salt of the earth.

[23 : 55] And Jesus expects his disciples to be salty when they live out to the alien righteousness that they have in Christ.

Because remember, the Christian walk begins in spiritual poverty, recognizing that you have no righteousness, and turning to God for a feast of righteousness in Christ.

And then once you have that feast of righteousness, you begin to exhibit the fruit of righteousness. We call that fruit, the process of growing fruit, the process of sanctification.

Through the process of sanctification, Jesus' disciples grow in their walk with God. They grow in their love for the Lord. They grow in their love for neighbor, as doing to others what they want done to them.

And that is salty. That is salty. Sanctification is salty. It's salty in that it preserves your little realm of the world from the destructive bacterial effects of sin.

[25 : 03] Salt preserves your part of the world from sin when you live out the law of the Lord. But also, it brings out the flavor of this life.

God designed this world to be lived according to his commandments. And when you walk in that way, you experience life as it's supposed to be lived, a unique joy, a little extra flavor.

That's what Psalm 1 is about. And then, when you act salty and live out the righteousness that you have in Christ, you are a signpost to the unbelieving world how one is supposed to live.

In your person, you are a sign of judgment. You are the salt of the earth. Jesus goes on to say in verse 13, But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?

Jesus literally says, if you translate the Greek quite literally, he says, But if salt loses its saltiness, what will you salt it with? What will you salt it with?

[26 : 22] Once salt is no longer salt, you can't re-salt it. The salt is the salt. If it's worthless, the only use left to it is to be thrown out and trampled on the roads, just like the Romans did with it.

Jesus expects you to be salty because you are in him and you have his righteousness. Christ's righteousness is transformative.

It changes you. You can't continue living the old life that you had before you had his righteousness.

So if you are not demonstrating the fruit of righteousness, you must not have the righteousness.

You must not have the salt if you are not acting salty. The Apostle John writes this in 1 John 3, verses 9-10.

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

[27 : 34] By this it is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

So in his relationship, Jesus expects you to be slandered, and he expects you to be salty. Now this process of sanctification doesn't happen overnight.

When you receive the righteous feast of Christ, you don't act 100% salt immediately. In fact, it will take the rest of your life of growing in this, in the fruits of the Spirit, but you will only be pure salt when Christ returns, and you are given a resurrected body.

But in the meantime, Jesus does expect you to be salty, to demonstrate some fruit of the alien righteousness that you have in him. Now, I love Indian food.

My wife and I, when we get to go out on date nights, we love to eat Indian food because it's spicy. And our children don't like spicy food, shockingly.

[28 : 53] And so when we get time together, we eat, we go to new Indian restaurants. And I love to order Hyderabad biryani. And I like a spicy biryani.

It's incredibly disappointing when I go to a new place and I get that biryani and I take a bite of it and it's flavorless. It's so disappointing.

I don't even want to continue eating the dish. I just want to get rid of it because I'm so disappointed in it. In Matthew 5, Jesus calls his disciples to be salty.

He calls those who have experienced, who have received the righteousness of Christ to demonstrate the fruits of righteousness, to live out the righteousness in their daily life.

By being salt, he expects you to preserve your corner of the world from the destructive effects of sin. He expects you to be salty and give the life flavor of righteousness.

[30 : 01] And he expects you to live out that righteousness among your unbelieving friends. Jesus expects you to act salty for his sake.

So act salty. Act salty. And how do you act salty? Well, remember, this message today is all about the introduction of the Sermon on the Mount.

So if you want to really investigate what it looks like to be salty in Christ, go read the rest of Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Read the rest of the Sermon on the Mount this week and look at what the salty life looks like.

But as you do that, remember the outline that we looked at in the Beatitudes, that the Christian life begins in recognizing your lack of righteousness.

The Christian life of saltiness begins with repentance and turning. So you act salty by repenting of your sins. You act salty by repenting of your anger, by repenting of sexual immorality, by repenting of revenge, by repenting of dishonesty, of idolatry.

[31 : 19] That's where the salty life begins. Because you don't receive the righteousness of Christ until you repent and put your faith in Christ. So that's the second part of acting salty.

Put your faith in Christ. Recognize that you don't have the salt, you don't have the righteousness, and you must have him as your righteous feast.

only he could be salt for you. And then you act salty by living out the righteousness that Christ gives you.

You live out loving God with all that you are. You live out the righteousness by loving your neighbor as yourself, by forgiving people over and over and over, by giving to the poor and laying up your treasures in heaven, by honoring marriage and forsaking divorce.

That is how you live a salty life. By turning from sin and resting in Christ alone for your salvation, you experience the fruits of the Spirit in Christ.

[32 : 34] These fruits will transform your little piece of the world around you, and you will act salty. Christ expects you to be slandered for his sake because you're acting salty for his sake.

Perhaps if you're not being slandered, you're not acting salty. But is slander the only thing you can expect when you act salty?

Well, not according to Jesus. Jesus expects you to be slandered for his sake when you're acting salty. But he also expects you to shine and be praised.

Jesus expects you to shine and be praised for his sake. Look at verses 14 through 15. Jesus says, You are the light of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house.

[33 : 41] So in the modern world with torches built into our phones and lighting infrastructure, we underestimate the importance of light in the ancient world.

We get a taste of it when load shedding comes around, but in the ancient world it was a whole another level. The only light you had was when you made a little fire and lit an actual torch.

When people traveled in the ancient world, they tried to time their travel so that they would only travel by daylight. And when the sun began to set and you were still on the road, you realized you were in danger from an ambush.

And when you saw a city glowing on the hill with its torches, you thanked God that that city was close by. People in the ancient world in the cities, when night fell, they would lock themselves in their homes and they wouldn't come out.

Light provided visibility and by providing visibility, light provided safety. And Jesus calls his disciples to be the light of the world.

[34 : 55] Jesus' disciples are to be the light of the world. And again, when he says you to his disciples, he's being emphatic once again. You, you, you are the light of the world.

Look at verse 16. Jesus says, in the same way as the city and as the basket or the candle, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. When Jesus says, let your light shine in the world, what does that mean? What is your light? Is it just your human spirit? Well, the gospel of John, chapter 8, verse 12, Jesus answers that question. In John, chapter 8, verse 12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world. whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Jesus is the light of the world, the righteous Son of God. And those who are in him have his light, his righteousness. And when they walk in him, that righteousness shines out.

[36 : 20] and it illuminates the world around them. It is a signpost to God and his glory and how he expects people to live.

It shines in the darkness, the darkness of sin. Now, why does Jesus say to let your light shine? Well, in verse 16, he says, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. So, when you let the righteousness that you have in Christ shine out, it does two things.

First, it illuminates God's law. It illuminates how one must live. It brings clarity in a world of confusion. And then second, God uses your righteousness to care for other people.

When you do what you are called to do for the glory of God in the right way, God uses that to care for other people. Martin Luther, the reformer who started the Protestant Reformation, once said this, God milks the cows through the hands of the milkmaid.

[37 : 37] God milks the cows through the hands of the milkmaid. And what he means is that God cares for his people through his people.

When God's people do their work for God's glory, God uses that to care for others. your shining righteousness illuminates God's standards and cares for other people.

And the response that Jesus expects is that people will praise you for your righteousness, for your good work. Now think about marriage since we keep coming back to that.

In our society, marriages have fallen apart everywhere. you may be the product of a broken marriage.

And a broken marriage causes devastating pain and untold sorrow. It affects those involved, it affects the kids for the rest of their lives.

[38 : 44] It really makes an impact on people. However, what about a healthy marriage? What about a marriage when the husband and the wife really love each other?

When they are really kind with one another? When they are forgiving one another? When they're loyal to one another? When they're generous and kind to their children? Teaching them to walk in the way of the Lord?

Exhibiting grace and righteousness to one another? When people see marriage like that, even in our modern society, what do they say?

I wish I had that. I wish my marriage was like that. I wish my parents' marriage was like that. People admire it when they see a marriage that glorifies God.

Now, if they're believers, they glorify God for that marriage and how God is at work in the hearts of the husband and the wife. So, you see, Jesus not only expects you to be slandered when you're salty for his sake, but he expects you to shine for his sake and receive praise.

[40 : 05] And God receives praise. Jesus expects you to shine for his sake. Now, a foreign diplomat does not represent his or her own interest.

When a foreign diplomat goes to another country, they represent the interest of the sending government. government. And so, the government tells the diplomat to live life a certain way, to have a certain standard of living.

The government will provide the diplomat with a fancy car and a fancy house. And when the diplomat goes about his or her daily life, the government says, you represent us.

The diplomat represents the home country and is supposed to make the home country glitter. In Matthew 5, Jesus says that he expects his disciples to shine for his sake because they represent him and his interest.

Jesus expects his disciples who have been given the righteousness of Christ to walk in that righteousness, to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. it. And then that shining forth of righteousness results

in the praise of the Lord.

[41 : 27] So, disciples of Christ, let your good works shine. Let your good works shine and expect praise to result in it.

Do people praise God when your good works shine? You who are married, do others praise God when they look at your marriage? Husbands, when they see you loving your wife, do they praise the Lord?

When they see you laying down your life for your wife, being caring and tender to your wife, do they praise the Lord? Do unbelievers wonder what is happening in your marriage?

and do believers praise the Lord for how he is at work in your marriage? Husbands, do they praise God because you're holding fast in loyalty to your wife?

Wives, do they praise God when they see how you treat your husband? do the other women in mom's group see how you speak about your husband with love and respect and praise God because of it?

[42 : 54] Single people, do others praise God when they see your singleness? Do they see how you exercise self-control in your singleness and praise God for his work in your life?

Do they see you patiently trusting in the Lord for a husband and wife? And do they praise God that he is at work in your life? Perhaps others praise your good work even though they don't realize it's your good work.

And when you get further into the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about giving and how you give in secrets so that others don't know that you're doing it.

When people talk about how God has preserved Union Chapel, are they praising God because your giving to this church has helped contribute toward it?

Or when a man or a woman who has no home gets a warm bed and food at U-Turn, who I know partners with this church, and they praise God for his provision, are they also praising you and they don't realize it because your gift to U-Turn helped provide for this person?

[44 : 19] Let's your good work shine because Christ is at work in you. when you enter into any relationship, you have certain expectations for that relationship.

Whether it's a new employee relationship, a new romantic relationship, a new friendship, you bring in unspoken expectations. And if you have the wrong expectation about that relationship, conflict will happen.

You're going to have a bad time. in Matthew 5, verses 11 through 16, we see that Jesus has expectations for his disciples. He expects his disciples to be slandered for his sake.

He expects his disciples to shine for his sake. And he expects his disciples to be salty for his sake.

Jesus expects others to encounter his righteousness in you because he has given you righteousness.

[45 : 26] Will you please pray with me? Almighty God, you are the author of our salvation.

We have no righteousness to bring to the table. We are spiritually poor and in need of righteousness. And so today, we turn to you and we ask that you would give us righteousness.

Where our faith is failing, we ask that you would increase it. Where we are not salty, where we are not shining, we ask that you would grow us in holiness so that we would exhibit the fruit of the Spirit.

We ask that you would do this for your glory, would we exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, not to earn your righteousness, but because we already have it.

It's in Christ's name that we pray. Amen.