



# PRAYING

## MATTHEW 5

**3**“Father, we are blessed when we are at the end of our rope. With less of us there is more of You and Your rule – keep us at the end of our rope.

**4**“We are blessed when we feel we’ve lost what is most dear to us. Only then do we feel the embrace of the One most dear to us – may your presence overwhelm our losses.

**5**“We are blessed when we are content with just who we are—no more, no less. That’s the moment we find ourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought – deepen our acceptance of who you have made us to be.

**6**“We are blessed when we’ve worked up a good appetite for You God. You are food and drink, the best meal we’ll ever eat – increase our appetite for You above all else.

**7**“We are blessed when we care. At the moment of being ‘full of care’ we find ourselves being fully cared for by You – may we reach across the street to care for our neighbor.

**8**“We are blessed when we get our inside world—our mind and heart—put right. Then we can see You, Oh God, in the outside world – help us to pay greater attention to our heart...our whole heart that we may know You more fully.

**9**“We’re blessed when we can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when we discover who we really are, and our place in Your family – God of peace, be our peace, and be peace through us to others.

**10**“We’re blessed when our commitment to You Father provokes persecution. Because persecution drives us even deeper into Your kingdom.

**11-12**“We count ourselves blessed every time people put us down or throw us out or speak lies about us to discredit Jesus. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. We can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, Jesus, You do! And all heaven applauds. And we know that we are in good company. Your prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble – May our commitment to You bring the kind of trouble that makes that makes much of Your Kingdom...not our own.

**13**“Jesus, you have told us we are here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If we lose our saltiness, how will people taste godliness? We have lost our usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

**14-16**“You say we are here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. You are not a secret to be kept. Who You are and all You are must be as public as a city on a hill. You have made us light-bearers, You are not going to hide us under a bucket. You put us on a light stand You set us on a hilltop—shine through us! Keep us an “open” house; may we be generous with our lives that in so doing, we prompt people to open up to our generous Father in heaven.

**21-22**“Jesus, we are familiar with the command to the ancients, ‘Do not murder.’ You tell us that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘idiot!’ and we just might find ourselves hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid!’ at a sister and we are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill – Please guard our tongues Jesus...may what we say, how we say it be words of life, not words of death.

**38-42**“Jesus, that saying: ‘Eye for eye, tooth for tooth’ is getting us nowhere. We need your Spirit in us to keep us from hitting back at all. If someone strikes us, enable us to stand there and take it. If someone drags us into court and sues for the shirt off our back, may we giftwrap our best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of us, help us to use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. We choose to live generously – with our hearts opened wide by the Gospel...move us to extend our arms and open our hands to give when it is not deserved or warranted.

**43-47**“We are familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ You don’t agree with it. You tell us to let our enemy bring out the best in us, not the worst. When someone gives us a hard time, lead us to respond with the energies of prayer, for then we are working out of our true selves, our God-created selves. This is what You do God – You give Your best —the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty – May our enemies know our kindness, may those who give us trouble get back our blessing, may your good be the good we give all people.

**48**“Jesus, in a word, you are telling us to Grow up. We are kingdom subjects. May we live like it. In the strength of Your Spirit may we live out our God-created identity. Living generously and graciously toward others, the way You live toward us, our God.

Resting in your unshakeable Kingdom, and eager to bring the hope of Your Kingdom to every hurting, fearful, and anxious heart in our path...we pray in the name and authority of Jesus Christ...the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of kings on the earth...the One who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood...and made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father...to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever...AMEN. (Revelation 1:5-6)