Matthew 5:1–16 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. 2 And 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 obtain 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 men 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 men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In this study we will examine the next two beatitudes and how they can help us be more like Jesus.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

Christ revealed God as absolute mercy. He came to die for us and cancel the debt of sin, which we were unable to pay. The Latin word for mercy is misericordia (miser, cor, dia). The word means “the heart (cor) of God (Deus) touching our misery (miser). God enters into our misery by becoming man in the Person of Christ. He does so to inject the comfort of his presence into the depths of our darkness so that when life becomes dark for us, we do not have to suffer alone. When we have been touched by his mercy, we too become merciful; to follow him is to become a channel of his mercy (MacManaman, 2014). Mercy, forgiveness – is there a difference? How have I been shown mercy by God? By others? In what areas of my life do I need to show mercy?

Luke 18:9–14. He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

What is the main difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector? As we grow in our faith, we sometimes may act more like the Pharisee than the tax collector. Why do you think this is the case? What can we do not to fall into this trap?
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What is pure is unmixed. For example, we speak of pure maple syrup that is unmixed with anything else. To be pure in heart is to have an undivided love for God, a heart unmixed with any other competing love. Some people love creation more than the Creator; they love things; they worship things, wealth, the pleasures of the earth, the glorification of the self, etc. They may love God, but their love is mixed with a disordered love of self. We are what we love (MacManaman, 2014).

What things/concerns in our life compete with our love for God? What practical ways can help us become “pure in heart?”

As go about our daily lives this week, remember – be merciful as Jesus is Divine Mercy, and be pure in heart for God.

To be continued...