

2-19-17 *A perfect day*: “Be perfect just your heavenly Father is perfect,” says Jesus. So concludes Matthew Ch. 5. Recall, it began with the beatitudes, the call to be salt and light, a deeper understanding of the Ten Commandments and teaching of the prophets, and ends with the expansion of loving God and neighbor to include even our enemies. These are the life principles of Christians; we are to be different from other people as we imitate Jesus in our day to day lives.

“Be perfect just your heavenly Father is perfect.” How is this possible? It is helpful to try to understand the perfection of God. With God’s grace and our mind’s eye we can by analogy glimpse the Life and Love of the Trinity by looking at the life and love in our family. By analogy we can glimpse the beauty, truth, and goodness that exists within the God-head by examining the beauty, truth, and goodness we experience in our own lives. We can get a hint of God’s perfection through the goodness of his creation and his providence in our lives. This is what I will focus on this morning.

Have you ever said to someone “This was a perfect day” or “Everything worked-out perfectly.” This past week I made my way into my cabin in order to assess things and shovel snow off my roof. It has been a La Nina Winter and Northwest Wyoming got slammed. Teton Village in Jackson has had over 400 inches of snow. At my cabin there is 5 feet on the ground and God knows the totals. It is always an adventure trying to make it into my cabin during the winter months. This year I was heading in alone which has not always turned-out well. At the last minute, I had a friend join me. He was most welcome. We blazed a trail over recent snows and had to chain saw through fallen trees to cut a trail. We arrived safely to the cabin, removed the snow from the roof, and had an afternoon to snowmobile in pristine backcountry. Warm. Sunny. Deep blue sky. It was great. My mission was accomplished and I had a whole lot of fun to boot. Everything worked out perfectly. It would not have worked out perfectly had it not been for the Providence of Almighty God.

A few points: First, in addition to the beauty and goodness of creation, God is perfect in his guidance and care for everyone and everything – from the greatest events and people in world history to little ole’ me and you in all our daily concerns and plans. The Catechism teaches that God’s providence protects and governs all creation, “reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well.” Second, while creation has its own goodness and perfection proper to it, it is in a “state of journeying” toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained in accord with God’s purposes. Last point, from the Catechism, “For all are open and laid bare to his eyes, even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures.” In the words of St. Paul, “All things work for the good for those who love him.”

This opens another portal by which we gain insight into God’s perfection. We are free to participate in God’s plans. Our freedom is part and parcel of God’s perfection. He not only gives us our life but also our dignity in freely cooperating in the completion of his plans. Again, as God’s children we are called to be different from those who do not yet know him or who freely reject him. We are called to be holy as God is holy. God baptizes us and pours the Holy Spirit upon us with all his graces as we live, and move, and have our being. When we are humble before him, God will lead us, guide us, inspire us, and give us his own power to be co-workers with him in order to sanctify ourselves and our world by imitating Christ.

Ultimately, “to be perfect” means this: As God does, so do we; as God is, so we strive to be – to love without limit, to be kind and benevolent toward all, treating people not as they deserve but as God treats us. Our perfect model is Jesus who overcomes evil with good – perfectly displayed on the Cross -- praying for those who were killing him, forgiving them, and by his providence producing children of God throughout the generations. All with purpose; toward the ultimate perfection of all creation – which includes the likes of me and you.

As imperfect as we now are we belong to Him, we are in a “state of journeying,” co-operating with the Holy Spirit to become all God created us to be – freely, uniquely, day to day, season to season, youth to age – striving to love him and others as he loves us. Whether at work or at play, we rely upon God’s providence moving toward that perfect day when God becomes “all in all.” On that day, when we see God, we will then know how everything worked out perfectly.