



Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church

All Saints, 2020

Readings

Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22;

1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-11

[Click here](#) to join Pr. Mark in a Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.
Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554, Password: 654321
Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV)

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, 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 will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people 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 in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This passage (often referred to as "The Beatitudes" based on the original Latin word for "Blessed") is the opening of a larger section of Matthew known as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7).

1. Why do you think the lectionary assigns this text to the Festival of All Saints?
2. When we call someone "a saint," what are we inferring?

The Greek word which is often translated *blessed* can also be translated *happy* or *congratulations*. Yet, a quick glance at the Beatitudes reveals Jesus is not offering a blessing because of things we would consider as good fortune. Instead, Jesus turns things upside down, naming things most would consider curses.

3. In the context of Jesus' day, would these opening words of the Sermon on the Mount be heard as good news?
4. What was Jesus trying to teach those who were listening?

It's important to consider the timing of the blessing in these teachings. The blessings appear to be written in the present tense, as in today.

5. *Can antipating a promise yet to come bring present blessings?*
6. *Are people who meet the description of the Beatitudes blessed today or the future?*

Eugene Peterson, in "The Message" paraphrase, seems to capture how blessings can be found now amid things most would consider burdens or even curses.

³ *"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.*

⁴ *"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.*

⁵ *"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.*

⁶ *"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.*

⁷ *"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'carefull,' you find yourselves cared for.*

⁸ *"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.*

⁹ *"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.*

¹⁰ *"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.*

7. *What has been your experience of being blessed as described in the Beatitudes?*
8. *Where have you found blessings amid the current pandemic?*

Like so many of the teachings of Jesus, the Beatitudes echo the paradox of the Christian faith. Blessings are experienced fully by those who, at first glance, do not seem blessed at all. It is to those who are emptied and who recognize a need for God that the true blessings are given.