

Sunday, October 25, 2020 - Prayer, Scripture & Message
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Background to Scripture: Before I read scripture, I would like to share this prayer that comes from one of my favorite books entitled, "Christ Beside Me, Christ Within Me" by Beth A. Richardson:

Some days
It seems like
Too much to bear.

Too much sickness,
Too much dying,
Too many stories of terror and sadness.

How can I bear it?
Those people I love
Are crazy with grief and fear.
This world I love
Has lost all sense and reason.

I watch, I weep, I wait.
I wait for you to show up
With your healing,
Your comfort,
Your wisdom.
Come quickly.
Please,
Be present.

I took this headline from a newspaper on the internet;

Today in Media History: Mr. Dooley: 'The job of the newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable'.

If this would be true of a newspaper, why wouldn't it be true for the church. The job of the church is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. The Beatitudes do this very thing. The Beatitudes and the teachings of Jesus have been doing this for 2000 years.

I believe God is present in these Beatitudes on how to be in this world especially during a time of crisis. Remember that the word beatitude means "*supreme blessing*." I invite you to listen and absorb the wisdom and inspiration of these verses and how these beatitudes are indeed a "*supreme blessing*" on our spiritual journey.

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 5:9-12

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.

Message

Rejoice and Be Glad

Matthias Krier

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So how are the Beatitudes making a difference in your life? How are they helping or empowering you to be different? If the Beatitudes are not changing the way in which you live, move and have your being, then you are not taking in these life changing teachings to heart! In these Beatitudes, Yeshua is preparing us to be the “*salt of the earth*” and the “*light of the world*” which follows the Beatitudes in scripture.

The past two weeks we have examined and I hope you have meditated on the prior Beatitudes outside of worship. The reason I say this is only paying attention to scripture on a Sunday morning would be like only eating a meal once a week. One cannot be nourished physically on only one meal a week. The same could be said of what we are doing in the way of eating spiritually during the week. One cannot be adequately nourished spiritually on just one meal or worship service a week. Spiritual practices of one form or another are needed all week just as we need food to nourish our bodies. We need spiritual food to nourish our spirits whether that be Bible Study, Scripture Prayer, Centering Prayer, Breath Prayers and some form of meditation.

My hope and my prayer is that you take the worship bulletin home with you to review and meditate on during the week. My hope and my prayer is that you get online each week to read the brief article introducing what is happening for today. Sometimes I include music videos for your edification and renewal. So how many of you read the article I write each week on the homepage of the website. Another question. How many of you even know that I write an article each week on the website? Well, if you didn't know, now you do. This is to help you prepare for what is to come as we worship together and grow into a more beloved community.

Now back to the Beatitudes! My summary of the Beatitudes thus far is this:

*We are supremely blessed when we are humble
and recognize our spiritual poverty and our need for God.*

We are supremely blessed and comforted when we mourn our losses.

We are supremely blessed when we possess gentle strength.

*We are supremely blessed when we hunger and thirst
To do what is right.
We are supremely blessed when we show mercy and compassion.*

*We are supremely blessed when we seek to be pure in heart
For then we shall see and experience the Living God!*

This is my summary of how *supremely blessed* we are when we learn how to *be* with our attitudes!

The Beatitudes are all about how to BE in this world as followers of Jesus.

If you thought the earlier Beatitudes were challenging, get ready, they get even more challenging! Let us hear the Beatitude once again in verse five and when you hear it, be like a sponge soaking in the wisdom:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Ah, this one is easy right? Why being a peacemaker simply means don't cause any trouble, right? Wrong!

There was this footnote I noticed in my study Bible: "*peacemakers, are not merely peaceable, but those working earnestly to "make peace"*" and I would also like to add the word, HARMONY. We may never be truly united as a people, but somehow, by the grace of God, we can agree to disagree but still live in harmony with one another.

Nelson Mandela said something all Christians need to hear: "As I have said, the first thing is to be honest with yourself. You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself ... Great peacemakers are all people of integrity, of honesty, but humility."

In order to be a true peacemaker, we need to have integrity, honesty and humility.

Our next two Beatitudes do not get any easier:

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.

Okay, we will stop for just a moment after verse 11 with something that was said by one in attendance at Mid-Week Reflections this week:

"I don't know about this one. Who is interested in being reviled and persecuted. I am not. I want people to like me."

I so appreciated this person's honesty because we all want people to like us. Most if not all of us want to be liked and that is the way we are wired, so to speak. We grew up in such a way that not only do we want to be liked, we want to be popular.

Well, I hate to break it to you, but that is not the way of Jesus.

When you are a follower of Yeshua, we are called to stand up for what is right and just ... we are called to speak the truth in love when lies are dominating the conversation ... we are called to pick up our cross and follow Jesus.

Let me re-read the last two verses again:

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.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. No one likes to be persecuted, but persecution comes when you stand up against injustice, inequality, prejudice, bullying and lying.

Let's be honest, we have been way too comfortable as Christians and have not danced the dance of Jesus. Speaking of dancing. What is your favorite dance to dance? Mine is square dancing.

Do not misunderstand dancing is not only great fun, it is great exercise!
What I am speaking here is a metaphor for the dance of Jesus and what that looks like.

Far too often, we have danced the dance of this world, but we have not danced the dance of Jesus.

I would like us to prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a little different fashion. I would like us to consider more deeply what exactly is the dance of Jesus for you and for this church? Are we willing to take up my cross and follow him? This song is a familiar one, but I would ask you not to sing during the verses of this hymn but just listen. Then when the refrain comes along, I would ask you to sing the refrain joyfully.

Keep in mind we are all called to be followers of Yeshua and dance the dance of Jesus wherever it may lead. As most of us already know, we have different gifts, different talents and different passions. Each of us are called to be in this world, just not of this world. Each of us is called to share our spiritual gifts with the community and the world! Are we fulfilling our calling or not? This song may help us contemplate more in depth how it is we will dance with Jesus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDdQhsjNHcw>

Lord of the Dance

As we prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion which is the Bread of Life to nourish our souls this day and everyday, let us pray in silence to reflect on dancing the dance of Jesus, whatever the steps may be, wherever the steps may lead.
Amen.