

Remembering & Reflecting Goodness

All Saints Day A – Nov. 1 2020

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Matthew 5:1-12

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.

Many scholars believe the Beatitudes to be a compilation of Jesus' sayings. Jesus has just announced that the Kingdom of God has come near and invited people to turn toward it and be transformed by it. Since his announcement/invitation Jesus has traveled the countryside, recruited others and brought healing to the people. This listing description reveals what this new community looks like and how hope comes to all the people who have the resonance of God pulsating even unknowingly in their spirit as it urges them daily. The beatitudes promise blessing to those who experience various kinds of oppressive life burdens and those who have been targeted because of their pursuit/desire for goodness/righteousness. The blessings take the form of God's protective promises. From ancient Wisdom literature of many cultures there is a promised reversal of fortunes and that is true in these as well. So how are the oppressed blessed and does this deliverance come? More than comfort and consolation (which are important) people are promised to receive an advocate. Not to comfort for the day only but to literally speak to and change the system of everyone's tomorrows. The passive language indicates this ultimately is prompted by God and yet is carried forward by all who hear this call of Promise. We are to be the hands, feet, mouth of God bridging the pain, isolation, poverty, frustration and despair; we are the words speaking the truth of understanding and partnership to and with those who are living in stunted silence; we are the bearers of bandages and also fashioning and bearing the banner that protests for reform. Indeed, GOD is the reason, Jesus is the model, the Holy Spirit is the guide and motivator and WE are the voices, hands bringing mercy and compassion, as well as advocating for justice and equity for all of God's children. All have been made saints by what Jesus has done and secured for us and those are saintly as they have showed and taught us what that faith and living Promise for all looks like.

- i. Who introduced you to what Love, Forgiveness, Justice, True Serving, Compassion & Faith look like?

- ii. How has that impacted your life? What specific change has that brought in who you are and how you live?
- iii. Which Beatitude most resonates with you? Why?
- iv. What legacy do you desire to leave? If faith is a matter for how we live today and continues into the promised eternal life – then how will you urge that importance of faith for others on this side of paradise?