

Blessed are You

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our text for All Saints Day is from the Gospel reading. **His disciples came to him. And Jesus opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are you.”** Here ends our text.

In this cold and flu season, when we hear someone cough and sneeze, we often say to them, “God bless you,” or its German equivalent, “Gashuntite.” We recognize their sick and suffering condition and pronounce God’s blessing upon them. We want God to bless them with better health. Or when someone has done a kind deed to us, we thank them and say, “The Lord bless you.” We want the Lord to bless them because they were a blessing to us. But I usually don’t say to a person in poor or ill condition, “Blessed are you.” After all they don’t look too Blessed. And I usually don’t tell someone after doing a good deed, “Blessed are you.” I want God to bless them but I don’t always think of them as already being blessed. But this is exactly what Jesus says of his disciples in the Beatitudes. He doesn’t look at the lowly and merciful and say, “The Lord bless you.” He says, “Blessed are you,” meaning they’re already blessed. Even when it doesn’t look like it. The world might look at a wealthy and healthy person who has no problems and say, “Blessed are you.” But Jesus says this of people who often look quite the opposite of that, the poor and persecuted. He says it of his disciples. “Blessed are you.” He says it of his saints, his holy ones. He says it of you, his saint, whom he made holy by forgiving your sins. “Blessed are you.” As we look at the Beatitudes, we’ll look at some of the blessed saints from the Bible. And we’ll see that though the world may not see us as blessed, we are already blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”** Now Jesus isn’t necessarily talking about the economically poor, but the spiritually poor. To be poor means to be in need. To be poor in spirit is to be in spiritual need. Jesus tells of two men who went up to the Temple in Jerusalem. One of them prayed, “Lord, I thank you that I’m not like other men, robbers and cheats like this tax collector next to me. Look at all the wonderful things I do.” He had no spiritual need. But the other man would not even look up to heaven. He beat his breast and said, “God have mercy on me, a sinner.” This man had a spiritual need. He was poor in spirit. Jesus says, “This man, not the other, went home justified before God.” The kingdom of God was his! He was blessed! And when we bow at this altar, we show our spiritual need. Jesus fills our need and forgives our sins. We go home justified before God. We are poor in spirit, but the kingdom of God is ours. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”** Now we weep and mourn at funerals because we’ve lost a loved one. But the Scriptures tell of a woman who wept and mourned her sin. She was a woman known to have led a sinful life, but she came to see Jesus while he ate at the house of a Pharisee. She wept at Jesus feet, washed his feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair. The Pharisee was repulsed, but Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven, your faith has saved you, go in peace.” Jesus comforted this woman who mourned her sin. He forgave her and made her a saint. And here this morning at the very beginning of our service, we mourned and confessed our sin to God and received Christ’s forgiveness. We’re sinners just like that woman, but Jesus forgives us and comforts us. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”** Now a meek person is one who’s humble and lowly. He doesn’t push himself forward but goes unnoticed. He might seem lacking in self-confidence. One day Jesus was at the temple and was watching the crowd put money into the temple treasury. The rich threw in large amounts. But along came a lowly widow who put in two small copper coins. What she did went quite unnoticed to everyone else. But Jesus noticed her. He told his disciples that this meek woman put in more than all the others. They gave out of their wealth, but she put in everything she had, all she had to live on. In faith she trusted that God would provide for her needs. Her confidence wasn’t in herself but in her Lord. This poor widow would receive no earthly inheritance, but yet as God’s saint she would inherit the new creation, the new earth. And we come to God’s temple like

this poor widow. Humble and in poverty of spirit, not pushing ourselves forward in self confidence but confident in our Lord. Trusting him to provide all our needs. And Jesus says we will inherit the new heaven and new earth. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”** Many people needed feeding that day at the home of Mary and Martha. But Mary chose the better portion. She sat at Jesus feet and listened to his Word. She hungered and thirsted for the righteousness that only Christ can give. He gave her his righteousness through the means of his Word, and she was filled. In the same way we hunger and thirst for righteousness. But we can’t feed ourselves. Our own righteousness only makes us nauseous. But Jesus feeds us with his own body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. He gives us his righteousness and makes us holy. He fills us and satisfies our hunger. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”** Jacob’s son Joseph wasn’t shown any mercy by his brothers when they sold him into slavery in Egypt. And Potiphar didn’t show him any mercy when he wrongly cast Joseph into prison. But God was merciful to Joseph. He delivered him from the pit and exalted him to Pharaoh’s right hand. And because God showed mercy to Joseph, he showed mercy to his brothers when they fell before him. He didn’t punish them but forgave their sin against him. And because God has shown mercy to us, not punishing us but forgiving us through Jesus Christ, so we have mercy on one another. We forgive as we have been forgiven. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”** In the town of Nazareth lived a young virgin girl whose name was Mary. She found favor with God and rejoiced in God her Savior. All generations called her blessed for she bore the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. She saw God as she cradled him as a baby in her arms. She watched him grow and cherished those moments in her heart. And finally her heart was pierced as if by a sword when she looked upon God crucified for her on the cross. Through the blood that poured from his side, God made Mary pure in heart. He made her holy, his saint. In the same way God makes us holy, he makes us his saints, through faith in this God-man upon the cross. God makes our hearts pure, so that we and all the rest of the saints will see God in his full glory in heaven. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”** A peacemaker is someone who reconciles two parties, who brings two alienated people back together again. Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to be peacemakers. They proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. They announced that people’s sins were forgiven and they now had peace with God. They were sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And whenever you tell someone else of Jesus Christ and his forgiveness, you’re a peacemaker. The Holy Spirit uses your words of the Gospel to bring them together with God. You’re a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Blessed are you.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”** Now this is the hardest one to understand of all. How could Stephen be blessed when he was being stoned? How could Paul be blessed when he was flogged and imprisoned? How are you blessed when your peers jeer at you and your neighbors discredit you because of your faith in Jesus Christ? Understand that the persecution isn’t the blessing, but the faith in Christ that causes the persecution is. Your faith in Christ blesses you with heaven. Jesus said, **“Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** As a believer in Jesus Christ who’s persecuted on account of him, you stand in good company. You stand with Noah and Moses, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and all who were persecuted for speaking the Lord’s Word. You stand with all the saints who are now in heaven. And though you’re insulted and persecuted and slandered for the name of Christ, you are blessed. For you are one of his holy ones, one of his saints who will soon be marching through the gates of heaven. Blessed are you. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your pure hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.