

Luke 6: 20 – 31

'All Saints and Baptism'

Introduction ...

Well, what a gospel reading for Lily's baptism. It could sound like we want her to have a life of poverty, hunger, crying and being hated ... which we don't ...

So what is going on?

You may have heard of an old experiment in which participants wore glasses that made the world appear upside down. After wearing these glasses for a period of time they began to see everything 'right way up' when wearing the glasses, and upside down when not.

In the same kind of way, the view of being 'blessed' given in Luke could be described as 'upside down.' Maybe we need to consider them carefully for long enough to understand what is going on.

One way to look at this passage in Luke – also known as the 'Sermon on the Plain' is that it gives us some hints about getting ready to feel at home among the saints in God's Kingdom, and the implications for our everyday lives in this 'in between' time.

The first two blessings and woes paint a picture of being too full to have room for the real treasure or the best food. Getting a taste of saintly living involves having space for God's gifts and concerns in our lives.

This links with the promises made by Lily's parents – Will and Georgie – and her godparents: Emma, Annabel and Adam – to help her to follow Christ – to have this as a foundation in life rather than an optional add-on that gets squeezed out by other things.

Then – at the end of the passage, we come to the 'Golden Rule.' This is not absolutely unique to the teaching of Jesus. But many of the examples from other faiths and philosophies put the rule negatively: "don't do things to others that you wouldn't like done to you." We can often express it this way to children. Jesus, however, wants some positive engagement from us and so tells those around him "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Attitudes such as this are often better "Caught" than "Taught." For Lily – if she sees her parents, godparents and others around her following this command ... it becomes a normal part of her life to do the same.

For older children and adults – think of someone you know who exemplifies this teaching – who is a great example of positive action, of "Doing to others as we would have them do to us" – and be inspired to be like them.

This passage in Luke follows directly on from Jesus choosing who would be his 12 closest followers – so he wants them to understand this upside down world of greatness and fulfilments coming from serving rather than being served ... clearly it's important for them – and so for us.

Let's pray that Lily will find this way of life and that each of us, including Lily, will be given God's grace in our attitudes and behaviours – towards Jesus and towards other people.

Amen