2026-11-01 … 10am Service Sermon … Revd Bev Jameson
Matthew 5.1-12

PRAYER

Father may these spoken words be faithful to the written word and lead us into the living word, Jesus Christ our Lord – Amen

SERMON

Our Gospel reading is a famous one, sometimes called the Sermon on the Mount and is a list of blessings (sometimes called the beatitudes). Jesus is talking to his disciples and 2000 years on as disciples of Jesus I guess he is talking to us too.

The first blessing is **blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God** Poor in spirit in the bible frequently refers not to financial poverty but to an inner attitude of humility, contrition, and dependence on God. On other hand those who believe they can sort out their own problems, buy their comforts without relying on God are lulled into a false sense of security. Those who turn to God, rely on God inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Although this can obviously mean those who are bereaved, in a wider sense it means those who grieve deeply for all the ills of the world, the misery, wretchedness, sadness and the brokenness of this world. Those who mourn are in a spiritually favoured position because God promises them true comfort, forgiveness, and healing.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Meekness is not timidness but is characterized by humility, gentleness, and self-control. So not someone who is a wimp or a coward but those who are humble and gentle will receive spiritual and earthly blessings.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. The craving of bodily hunger has become a parable of that higher yearning after righteousness (ie being right with God, in alignment with his will), that thirsting after God is the most important thing in our lives Desires after earthly goods are shallow frustrated, an ultimately does not satisfy us without that yearning for God.

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. This verse emphasizes compassion, forgiveness, and extending grace to others, promising that those who show mercy will themselves receive mercy from God

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Those who have moral integrity and honour who are free from hypocrisy and insincerity will see God face to face

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. A Peacemaker is not merely someone who avoids conflict, but someone who actively works to reconcile people with God and with one another, promoting harmony and restoration in relationships and communities This involves taking initiative to resolve disputes, heal broken relationships, and foster environments of mutual respect and well-being. This goes beyond the absence of conflict; it, reflecting both personal and communal well-being

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness's sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The blessing is a little different – it states clearly that those who believe in Jesus will be persecuted, laughed at treated with scorn and derision, but we who believe are blessed, despite all of this, because we will have all the blessings Jesus brings and ultimately eternal life through him.

A lot of blessings but they all have a sting in them; it requires some hard work from us to achieve those blessings. In many if not all cases it means looking deep within ourselves, to be honest about our attitudes and behaviours. Perhaps it means changing our behaviours in order to achieve those blessings. Maybe it's being courageous when we would rather walk away.

- Are we poor enough in spirit to depend on God and seek his will rather than forge ahead on our own?
- Do we mourn enough for all the ills, the sadness and the brokenness of the world, or are we so content with our own lot so don't really think about anybody else's?
- Are we humble and gentle enough to receive blessings or do we fight our corner trampling over one other as the world does?
- Do we hunger, and this isn't a slight rumble of the tummy this is obsessively craving to be right with God's will?
- Are we merciful enough? Do we forgive enough? Is our mercy to others less than the mercy we expect from God and others for our own misdemeanours
- Do we have integrity and honour or do we sometimes slide into hypocrisy and insincerity?
- Do we actively work to reconcile people with God and with one another, in our relationships and communities? Or do we let sleeping dogs lie and do not interfere in disputes?
- Are we prepared to take the ridicule laughter and (in some places in the world) physical violence that goes with calling ourselves a Christian?

The beatitudes are not just lovely promises; they are brutal challenges to how we behave towards one another and towards God. We have a choice in how we act, how we conduct ourselves in this world and sometimes we have to pause and reflect, search deep within ourselves, be honest with God about our attitudes. But the Good news is if we feel we fall short, as I frequently do, God is a God of many chances. He will wipe the slate clean and we can begin again to be nearer To God and earn those blessings promised in the beatitudes

Amen