















Beatitudes 4

BEATITUDES
FOR A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

<p>BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAY INDOORS</p>  <p>FOR THEY HAVE PROTECTED OTHERS</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED</p>  <p>FOR THEIR NEED OF GOD IS GREAT</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE CORNER SHOPKEEPERS</p>  <p>FOR THEY ARE THE PURVEYORS OF SCARCE THINGS</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE DELIVERY DRIVERS AND THE POSTAL WORKERS</p>  <p>FOR THEY ARE THE BRINGERS OF ESSENTIAL THINGS</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE HOSPITAL WORKERS; THE AMBULANCE CREWS, THE DOCTORS, THE NURSES, THE CARE ASSISTANTS, AND THE CLEANERS</p>  <p>FOR THEY STAND BETWEEN US AND THE GRAVE, AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS SURELY THEIRS</p>
<p>BLESSED ARE THE CHECKOUT WORKERS</p>  <p>FOR THEY HAVE PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE IN THE FACE OF OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE REFUSE COLLECTORS</p>  <p>FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD DESPITE THE MOUNTAINS OF WASTE</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE TEACHERS</p>  <p>FOR THEY REMAIN STEADFAST AND CONSTANT IN DISTURBING TIMES</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE CHURCH WORKERS; THE DEACONS, PRIESTS AND BISHOPS</p>  <p>FOR THEY ARE A COMFORTING PRESENCE IN A HURTING WORLD AS THEY CONTINUE TO SIGNPOST TOWARDS GOD</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE SINGLE PARENTS.</p>  <p>FOR THEY ARE COPING ALONE WITH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND THERE IS NO RESPITE</p>
<p>BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALONE.</p>  <p>FOR THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD AND WITH HIM THEY WILL NEVER BE LONELY</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THE BEREAVED.</p>  <p>FOR WHOM THE WORST HAS ALREADY HAPPENED THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ISOLATED WITH THEIR ABUSERS</p>  <p>FOR ONE DAY - WE PRAY - THEY WILL KNOW SAFETY</p>	<p>BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS; ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY</p>  <p>MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN</p>	

TEXT: JAYNE MANFREDI CartoonChurch.com

Lent groups this year will take place on Zoom and will focus on The Beatitudes as a tool for thinking about all that we have been travelling through, and the Christian vision for the world going forward.

For Zoom links see our website / emailed details

Monday afternoon 2pm from 22 Feb

Friday evening 7pm from 26th Feb

Sunday afternoon 2pm from 28th Feb

All Welcome!

The Team Parish of Christ The King

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St Matthew's Dinnington

www.stmatthewsdinnington.org.uk

Church in the Park

www.churchinthepark.org.uk

Heal the brokenness of our world

Jesus Lord of tomorrow

Draw us into your future. Amen

When the civil war in our nature has been brought to an end and we are at peace with ourselves, then we ourselves will become peace. Only then can we be true to the name of Christ that we bear.

GREGORY OF NYSSA (C.330–94

Topic: Monday afternoon Lent Group

Time: 2pm

Meeting ID: 880 3265 9720

Passcode: 627678

Topic: Friday evening Lent Group

Time: 7pm

Meeting ID: 840 6254 9454

Passcode: 205705

Topic: Sunday afternoon Lent Group

Time: 2pm

Meeting ID: 884 7894 5665

Passcode: 045225

Week Three

Opening Prayers

Generous God, help me to live as a child of your kingdom

Give me the mind of Christ.

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

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

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' MATTHEW 5.3–10

God of our days and years

We set this time apart for you.

Form us in the likeness of Christ

So that we may learn of your love

And that our lives may give you glory.

Amen.

Conversation

Think of some people who you would call 'peacemakers'.

What is it about them that is so special?

Psalm 34.11-22

11 Come, my children, and listen to me; *
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
12 Who is there who delights in life *
and longs for days to enjoy good things?
13 Keep your tongue from evil *
and your lips from lying words.
14 Turn from evil and do good; *
seek peace and pursue it.
15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous *
and his ears are open to their cry.
16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, *
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
17 The righteous cry and the Lord hears them *
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted *
and will save those who are crushed in spirit.
19 Many are the troubles of the righteous; *
from them all will the Lord deliver them.
20 He keeps all their bones, *
so that not one of them is broken.
21 But evil shall slay the wicked *
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

ship constantly seeks to proclaim the particular good news of Jesus Christ, and transformative because that is the hallmark of the kingdom of heaven: everything is changed.

In short, Jesus calls us to 'seek peace peaceably'. This intentional peaceful search for peace reflects the deep character of God who also always and everywhere seeks for peace in the world.

For discussion

- How do you understand the words 'peacemaker' and 'persecution'?
- How should you be involved in making peace?
- Can you think of some examples of peacemaking and of people being persecuted? (locally as well as nationally or globally?)
- How has following God's will brought you into situations of conflict? How have you responded?
- Where do we need peace as we learn to live with the challenges uncovered by COVID?

Closing prayer

Jesus Lord of time

Hold us in your eternity

Jesus, image of God

Travel with us in the life of faith

Jesus, friend of sinners

heightens the shocking nature of Jesus' statement that the reward of persecution is the kingdom of heaven. Future promise impacts on present vulnerability. Future reward gives hope for present troubles. With that, the command is to seek peace, for that is reflective of the very character of God.

The word that Matthew uses for 'peacemakers' is worth noting because its Greek form in this verse is found nowhere else in the New Testament or in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of our Old Testament). It is significant because as a word it combines both an action as well as a reflection on the character of the action. It is as if Jesus is saying: 'Blessed are those who seek peace peaceably'. The emphasis on the manner of the action is important because that is where the real challenge lies. It is one thing to seek peace, but to attend to that seeking in a way that is utterly peaceful requires some effort, which becomes something of a virtue in itself. This is not to rule out the possibility of discord or even stronger than that, war, but the point seems to be that the distinctiveness of a Christian response might be known in the risk taken by seeking peace against the odds. In a first-century context where the Roman war machine was everywhere, this must have been shockingly challenging. But the surprises don't end there. The intentional peaceful search for peace enables the peacemaker to be reflective of God's very nature, which is both distinctive and transformative. Distinctive, because Christian disciple-

22The Lord ransoms the life of his servants *
and will condemn none who seek refuge in him.

- Read the passage through once
- Keep a few moments' silence
- Read the passage a second time with different voices
- Invite everyone to say aloud a word or phrase that strikes them
- Read the passage a third time
- Share together what this word or phrase might mean and what questions it raises.

Reflection HELEN-ANN HARTLEY

'Blessed are the peacemakers ...', 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake ...'

Words like 'peacemakers' and 'persecuted' are familiar enough, but what do they really mean? It can seem difficult to unpack them from the midst of diverse contemporary political and social contexts. Part of the challenge of appreciating the richness and deep challenge that Jesus sets out in these verses lies in the invitation to learn from present-day contexts where these words have urgent meaning. This is especially true of a word like 'persecution', which in some parts of the world can literally be a matter of life or death. While not wishing to downgrade whatever our personal struggles might be of living out our faith openly wherever we are located, the knowledge that one of our sisters or brothers in Christ might face death because of their faith