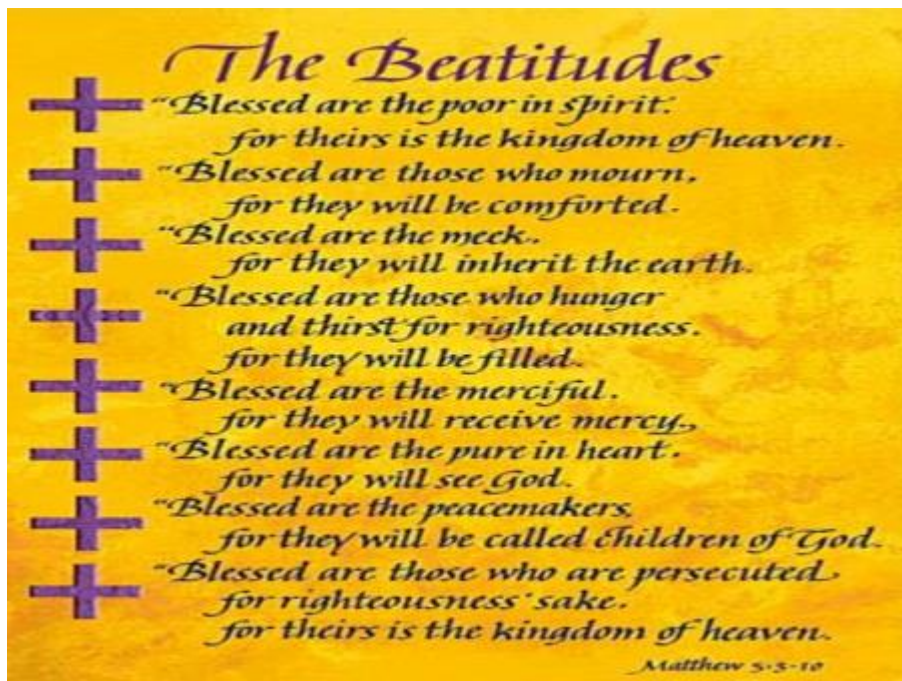


Dear Beloved,

This week's gospel reading is the beatitudes. How Blessed are we to have such a wonderful God who supplies all our needs.



Many Blessings

Wendy

AGMS

Bredbo 5th February

Numerella 12th February

Nimitabel 19th February

Adaminaby 19th February

Cooma 26th February

Jerangle TBA

Parish 2nd April

--

Parish Council has decided
to recommence Morning Tea
after the 10.00 Service
in Cooma

On 2nd and 4th Sundays
please volunteer
for the roster.

--

Autumn Open Garden Day
16th April
Please pot plants up now
and tell Nella how you can help

--

Midweek Services
will recommence
on Wednesday
1st February

--

Please volunteer
for the roster,
well in advance.

--

Prayer and Praise
Wendy as she navigates this difficult time

--

Edith and Colin Mayhew as they serve in Adaminaby
Glenn Fletcher .. for his recovery
our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts
in Yallambie.

Leanne Lowery

--

Mary Mitchell .. recovering

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

--

all congregations in Jerangle

The New Catholic priest
Father Mark Croker
as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

--

for each other
that we may become
a living reflection
of who Christ is within us

--

People everywhere
who are living
through war or disasters
of every kind.

20 1 23 second order, second thanksgiving

Hymn 225 **My heart and voice I raise,**

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence

Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. 1 Corinthians 13.14

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, you confound the world's wisdom by giving your blessing to the lowly and pure in heart: give us such a hunger and thirst for justice and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the promise of your kingdom, which has been revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Micah 6.1-8

¹ Listen to what the Lord says: 'Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. ² 'Hear, you mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. ³ 'My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. ⁴ I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. ⁵ My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.' ⁶ With what shall I come before the and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸ He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Psalms 15

¹ Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle: or who may dwell upon your holy hill? ² Whoever leads an incorrupt life and does the thing which is right: who speaks the truth from the heart, and has not slandered with the tongue; ³ Who has done no evil to a friend: nor vented abuse against a neighbour; ⁴ In whose eyes the worthless have no honour: but who makes much of those that fear the Lord; ⁵ Whoever has sworn to a neighbour: and will not go back on that oath; ⁶ Who has not put money to usury: nor taken a bribe against the innocent. ⁷ Whoever does these things: shall never be overthrown.

1 Corinthians 1.18-31

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' ²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. ²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: 'Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

Matthew 5.1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them. He said: 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 be shown 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 because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

the prayers

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. Challenge our values again. Jesus and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.** Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Jesus said: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Confession

Christ the Son of God has been revealed as a light to the nations.
Let us bring our darkness to his light, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.
Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**
Hymn TIS 518 For the bread and for the Wine

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving 2

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** It is right to praise you, faithful God, always and everywhere, for with your only begotten Son and life-giving Spirit, you are the one true God from everlasting to everlasting. At the dawn of time you wrought from nothing a universe of beauty and splendour, bringing light from darkness and order from chaos.

You formed us, male and female, in your image, and endowed us with creative power. We turned away from you but you did not abandon us. You called us by name and searched us out, making a covenant of mercy, giving the law, and teaching justice by the prophets.

And so we praise you, joining with your faithful people of every time and place, singing the eternal song: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

When the fullness of time was come, you sent your Son to be born of Mary.

Bright image of your glory, he learnt obedience to you in all things, even to death on a cross, breaking the power of evil, freeing us from sin, and putting death to flight. You raised him from death, exalting him to glory, and the new day dawned. On the night he was betrayed your Son Jesus Christ shared food with his friends, his companions on the way. While at table he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and giving it to them, said: 'Take, eat; this is my body.' He took a cup of wine, and, giving thanks, he gave it to them, and said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, living God, as we obey his command, we remember his life of obedience to you, his suffering and death, his resurrection and exaltation, and his promise to be with us for ever. With this bread and this cup we celebrate his saving death until he comes.

Accept, we pray, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and our celebration that all who eat and drink at this table may be strengthened by Christ's body and blood to serve you in the world. As one body and one holy people, may we proclaim the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, eternal God, now and for ever.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: **so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

AFTER COMMUNION

God of the nations,
we thank you for nourishing us with this holy sacrament.

Guide us by your presence,
that we may bring your light to those who dwell in darkness,
and establish your justice in the earth.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn TIS 454 **Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,**

Blessing

May Christ the Son of God be manifest to you, that your lives may be a light to the world; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.'

Have you noticed the poor in spirit, those who are mourning, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers and those being persecuted rejoicing in their blessings? It is not exactly how the world works is it? So, what was Jesus talking about in the beatitudes, what did he mean?

We need to understand that Jesus was not just a great teacher, he was the Son of God telling us how the kingdom of God really works. If we think that Jesus was simply sitting there telling people how to behave, we will miss what is really going on. These blessings, this wonderful news that Jesus is announcing are not saying 'try hard to live like this'. They are saying that people who are already like this are in good shape.



Jesus is talking about an upside-down world or perhaps it's really a right way up world; and what Jesus is saying that with his work it is beginning to come true. He is talking about something that is starting to happen, not a general truth of life. This is gospel, good news, not good advice. This wonderful news is part of his invitation to those first disciples, to the crowd and us, saying that God is at work in a fresh way and this is what it looks like. In our day still, most people think that wonderful news consists of success, wealth, long life etc but Jesus is offering wonderful news to the humble, the poor the mourners, the peacemakers.

The first nine pronouncements are not statements about general human virtues - they are usually opposite to common wisdom. Rather they pronounce blessing on authentic disciples in the Christian community. These blessing do not describe nine different kinds of good people but are nine declarations about the blessedness, contrary to all appearances, of the Christian community living in anticipation of God's reign.



The poor not only refers to literal poverty but also means a lack of arrogance and a sense of one's own need. By adding 'in spirit' he shifts the emphasis but does not exclude literal poverty. From the time of the Psalms 'the poor' had been understood as the representation of the true people of God, those who know their lives are not in their own control and that they are dependant on God. The blessed are those whose identity and self-worth and security are in God. Their identity is not in what they know but in having a certain poverty of spirit. What it means is the identity of the people of God. Just as the king of this kingdom is meek and poor in spirit so also are those to whom his kingdom belongs.



The next beatitude taps into the deep biblical tradition that one of the characteristics of the true people of God is that they lament the present condition of God's people and God's world. This can be seen most explicitly in Lamentations, many of the Psalms and prophets. The people of God do not resign themselves to the present conditions of the world but lament the fact that God's kingdom has not yet fully come, and that God's will is not yet complete. They will be blessed because they will see God's kingdom.



Meekness here is a synonym for 'poor in spirit'. It is not a particular attitude one is urged to adopt, but characterises those who are aware of their identity as the people of God in this world, who have renounced the violent methods of worldly power. This beatitude might be based on Psalm 37 (9) where the land to be inherited was the promised land but here means the renewed earth of God's kingdom.



People who hunger and thirst for righteousness and not those who merely long to be personally pious or idealistic dreamers or do gooders, but they are persons who long for the coming of God's kingdom and the vindication of right, which will come with it and who on the basis of this hope actively do God's will: now. This longing is not an empty hope but will be satisfied. God will do it.



In this beatitude the word mercy refers to concrete acts of mercy rather than merely a merciful attitude. In this gospel mercy and justice are not alternatives but two facets of the same integrity. Again this is not advice for getting along in this world, where mercy is more likely to be regarded as a sign of weakness than to be rewarded in kind. Again, this mercy will be received from God.



Purity of heart is not merely the avoidance of impure thoughts but refers to the single-minded devotion to God. Faith in the one God requires that one be devoted to God with all one's heart (like in the greatest commandment). One cannot serve two masters or have two minds. Seeing God does not mean we will have a mystic vision but that we will be there when God comes in his kingdom.



Peacemakers does not represent a passive attitude, but positive actions for reconciliation. Reconciliation of conflicting religious and cultural groups and anyone in any form of conflict, family, neighbourhood and friends. Again it is God's action to claim them as his sons. To be declared sons of God is not an individual identity but to be accepted as belonging to the true people of God and entering into its inheritance.



The last beatitude in this group is a bookend with the first. The group who will receive the blessing is not those who are oppressed in general but those who are persecuted because of their commitment to righteousness. Righteousness is not an abstract but has a Christian foundation based on their identity in Jesus.



The last beatitude involves a shift in form, it shifts third to second person and includes the imperative 'rejoice'. The joy to which the disciples are called is not in spite of persecution but because of it. This is not a martyr complex, but the joyful acceptance of the badge of belonging to the people of God who are out of step with the value system of this age. The blessing is for the purpose of their becoming an agent of blessings to others.



The beatitudes are not practical advice for successful living, but prophetic declarations made on the conviction of the coming and already present kingdom of God. These are the marks of the church. The community that hears itself pronounced blessed by its Lord does not remain passive but acts in accord with the coming kingdom.

Each beatitude begins in the present: 'Blessed are' and moves to the future: 'for they will'. The beatitudes are already true about the Christian Community. Not every member of every congregation can claim to be meek, merciful and pure in heart, but the beatitudes are addressed to the faith community. In each faith community are persons of meekness, mercy, and peace. Their presence and activity among us is a sign of god's blessing and a call to all of us to confirm our common life more and more to these kingdom values. As we follow Jesus more closely, so we grasp these virtues and become more blessed.



So, when do these promises come true for us? There is a temptation to read 'kingdom of heaven' as heaven: that all these promises will come true after we die but the Kingdom of Heaven is God's space, anywhere where the full reality of God exists, interwoven with our reality here and now. Every time we pray the Lord's prayer, we pray that God's kingdom will come, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Where God is already reigning, where he is the life of the world, he is transforming the present world into the place of beauty and delight that He always intended. And as we follow Jesus, we begin to live by this rule here and now. This reading and the ones we read over the next few weeks are a summons to live in the present in the way that makes sense of God's promised future, because that future has arrived in the present in Jesus. It may seem upside down, but we are called to believe with great daring, that it is in fact the right way up. Let's try it and see.