

13 February 2022

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

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

Blessed are you when people hate you on account of the Son of man. Rejoice and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. Luke 6.23

### 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 challenge the powers that rule this world, and you show favour to the oppressed: instil in us a true sense of justice, that we may discern the signs of your kingdom and strive for right to prevail; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

### Jeremiah 17.5-10

<sup>5</sup> This is what the Lord says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord . <sup>6</sup> That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.

<sup>7</sup> 'But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord , whose confidence is in him. <sup>8</sup> They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.'

<sup>9</sup> The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? <sup>10</sup> 'I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.'

### Psalm 1

<sup>1</sup> Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the ungodly:  
nor followed the way of sinners, nor taken their seat amongst the scornful.

<sup>2</sup> But their delight is in the law of the Lord:  
and on that law will they ponder day and night.

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted beside streams of water:  
that yield their fruit in due season.

<sup>4</sup> Their leaves also shall not wither:  
and look, whatever they do, it shall prosper.

<sup>5</sup> As for the ungodly, it is not so with them:  
they are like the chaff which the wind scatters.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore the ungodly shall not stand up at the judgement:  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

<sup>7</sup> For the Lord cares for the way of the righteous:  
but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

## 1 Corinthians 15.12-20

<sup>12</sup> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

<sup>15</sup> More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

<sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. <sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

## Luke 6.17-26

<sup>17</sup> He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, <sup>18</sup> who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, <sup>19</sup> and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

<sup>20</sup> Looking at his disciples, he said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> ‘Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

<sup>24</sup> ‘But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. <sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

## The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Let us pray for the world and for the church.

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: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:35

### Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

### Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

**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.**

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

### THANKSGIVING

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.**

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 sufferings 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.**

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

*We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. 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 with thanksgiving.*

*The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen*

*The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen*

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.

Most loving God, **you send us into the world you love.**

**Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage in the power of your Spirit. Amen**

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.

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



Our gospel reading today follows immediately on from when Jesus chose the twelve disciples. As we read in this passage there were a large crowd of disciples with Jesus Many of whom were committed and following him full time, but he chose the twelve that later became known as the Apostles.

Twelve is a direct reference to the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve is a manageable size for in depth training, but this does not mean that the others are cast aside, when they come down and sit down for some basic teaching the large crowd of disciples is very prominently there and they are joined by a great number of people. Jesus want to give them some simple things they can remember to be his followers: Four thing to do and four things not to do.



This passage is often referred to as the Beatitudes. Which simply means the blessings. In many churches the service ends with a Blessing and in the Anglican Church that formal Blessing is one of the things that only a priest is allowed to do but let me assure you, anyone can bless someone else, and anyone can be blessed. If you don't know how to pray for someone pray that the Lord will Bless them.

One of the reasons I love being a priest is that privilege of being able to bless people, I love doing it in church, but I also delight in doing it on less formal occasions, just saying goodbye or any time. I enjoy just being that conduit of God's love to his people.

But these blessings are not quite what we might expect.

<sup>1</sup>Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.



I've been relatively poor by Australian standards once or twice in my life, I did not find going to the charities to get food for my children a remarkable blessing, it was a blessing that I lived in Australia where I could feed my children this way, but it is sobering to be in that position. Perhaps relying on God to get me through is a blessing and it certainly built my faith to see the many ways he did provide but it was not something I would wish on anyone.

Actually, these beatitudes are not saying there is anything virtuous about being poor or hungry in itself. What they are saying is that God is doing something new, he is turning the world's view of justice on its head.

They declare God's commitment to the poor, The coming of the kingdom will bring a reversal of fortunes. One of the principal hallmarks of the kingdom will be the redemption of the poor. They will be released from their degradation. Oppressed now, they will enjoy God's blessings in the kingdom.



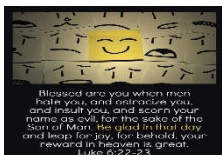
Hunger and weeping are treated as aspects of poverty, preventing any romanticised view of the poor. God's promise is that the hungry will be fed. This promise echoes OT expectation of a heavenly banquet but the beatitude will be fulfilled by Jesus. The early church and many churches today.

A few years ago, I worked in a Food Pantry, where people could buy food at very low prices but if they couldn't afford that we would give it to them for free. We also served morning tea and chatted to the people. We did not insist of seeing their health cards or hearing their sob story, we treated them with respect and if they said they needed help we believed them and helped out however we could. Basically, we treated them as Children of God, and they responded to that. They became a community and part of the church family.



The first beatitudes describe a way of life, and we who are not poor - not really - run to Matthew in relief. But our preference for 'Poor in Spirit' says more about us than about the words of Jesus. The real poor are those whose desperate need and inability to help themselves have driven them to turn to God for their hope, but we are being called to recognize that Jesus really did mean the poor and not just the humble.

Because we are not poor, this beatitude either confuses us or leaves us feeling guilty, rather than happy. Our first response needs to be repentance and a reordering of our lives and our priorities. But that is very difficult.



<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> 'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

The fourth beatitude is different in form and presumes the situation which occurred in the early church, which was heavily persecuted for several hundred years. The promise is that those who are reviled will receive their reward if they are faithful to the Lord.

The last beatitude implies that those who live by God's blessing will find themselves so estranged from the world that others will persecute them. The

world has little tolerance for saints who set their sights on values and principles the world does not share. But those who are persecuted for participating in God's work will find that God has prepared the kingdom for them.

Woe to you that are full!  
for you shall hunger. Woe  
to you that laugh now!  
for you shall mourn and  
weep.

The four woes drive home the message of the four beatitudes by following them in order and stating the opposite. Just as the beatitudes announced God's favour, which is an occasion for joy among the poor, so also the woes announce God's judgement, which should be a cause for grief and remorse among the rich.

If there is a connection between treasure on earth and treasures in heaven, it is an inverse one. Nevertheless, those of us like Zacchaeus who are rich, can still repent, but our repentance must be real, not just giving to charities out of our excess but divesting ourselves of whatever stops us from being totally dependant on God. That might be our actual wealth or our reliance upon it.

Woe to you that are full!  
for you shall hunger. Woe  
to you that laugh now!  
for you shall mourn and  
weep.

Like the fourth beatitude, the fourth woe differs in form and follows the pattern of the last beatitude. A good reputation is highly desirable but when all speak well of you it is probably a sign of false flattery or the popularity of the false prophets. We sometimes need to step out of our comfort zone and do things which are not popular but are truly following our Lord.

We are to see as God sees and act as God acts. Seeking to do not just the call of duty but the call of love, not just what is right but what is good. And acting in this way not just towards those who deserve it but also to those who are not worthy. Living in this way does not go unrewarded but the motivation for doing it can never be to receive the reward.

If Jesus is truly living through us in this world, what is he asking us to do?

"God does not deny justice...  
He rather envelops it and  
surpasses it with an even  
greater event (mercy) in  
which the experience (love) is  
the foundation of true  
justice."  
— Pope Francis

What Jesus began with the call of the twelve and the strong teaching of blessing and curses remains today. This is how the kingdom operates, it still turns the world upside down, or actually the right way up, just as much as it ever did.

Righteous God, you challenge the powers that rule this world and you show favour to the oppressed:  
instil in us a true sense of justice, that we may discern the signs of your kingdom and strive for right to prevail; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen