

## Order of Worship for January 29, 2023

### Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Opening Hymn: “*Songs of Thankfulness and Praise*” - Hymn #394

### Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P:: Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

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

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

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

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

### Praise Hymn: “*Jesus Sat with His Disciples*” - Hymn #932

### Psalm 1

P: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

**C: nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;**

P: but his delight is in the law of the LORD,

**C: and on His law he meditates day and night.**

P: He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

**C: In all that he does, he prospers.**

P: The wicked are not so,

**C: but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**

P: Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

**C: nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;**

P: for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

**C: but the way of the wicked will perish.**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

**C: nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Almighty Father, as You have blessed us in so many ways especially in how You have brought us back to You through Your Son, Jesus, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we live that blessed life following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Sermon Hymn:** *“When Peace Like a River”* – **Hymn #763**

**Sermon:** *“Blessed No Matter What”* – **Matthew 5:1-12**

Are you blessed? We say we're blessed when good things happen to us. Maybe you say you're blessed when you get a promotion or a raise. Maybe your kids said they were blessed when they come home with treats from someone's birthday at school. Maybe you felt blessed by the ISU victory over Kansas State Tuesday night, or by watching the success Brock Purdy has had in the NFL. Maybe you feel blessed when you get a good report from your doctor. Maybe you feel blessed when you get that internship with the company you've wanted to work for. Maybe you feel blessed just because you can afford a dozen eggs.

Most of the time, we say we're blessed only when good things are happening. But what about when bad things are happening? What about when your children don't listen? What about when your noisy neighbors keep you up all night? What about when your favorite team loses? What about when the test results aren't good? What about when you struggle to find a job that uses your degree? What about those days when nothing seems to go right, when your computer won't work and your car acts up? Are you blessed then?

We all seek to be blessed, yet it seems few people seem to have reached such a goal. We often equate being blessed with being happy. Happiness is a goal that we all strive for, but when that goal is reached, or when we think we've reached it, we realize that there is always something else that would make us even happier and more truly blessed. The Declaration of Independence says that we all have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but it doesn't guarantee that we will ever actually catch happiness.

When Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount, he begins with what we've come to know as the Beatitudes, because each sentence begins with blessed, and the Latin word for blessing is *beatitudo*. The Greek word that Matthew uses is *makarios*, which means happy, having a full life, free from normal cares and worries. But the people Jesus is talking to, and the people he is talking about, sure don't seem blessed or happy. Those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, those who are persecuted are not our usual candidates for happiness or blessedness.

This shows us that Jesus' definition of what it means to be blessed doesn't depend on us or what is happening around us. These "happiness" sayings of Jesus – the Beatitudes – present us with a whole new idea of what it means to be blessed. True happiness, true blessedness comes not from our circumstances, but has to do with knowing God, belonging to God's Kingdom, and being a part of God's family.

Some people will tell you that blessing is all a matter of perspective—of your attitude. Even now many Christians subscribe to the school of Norman Vincent Peale and his *Power of Positive Thinking*, or think they can manifest positive things with their good thoughts. They think that God loves us and wants us to be happy, and that our happiness is his goal. If you stay positive and keep a good outlook, then good things will come your way. For people of this mindset, the Beatitudes are really “Be Attitudes,” examples of moral virtues that we should try to cultivate within ourselves. In other words, the so-called “Be Attitudes” teach us how we should act and be in our daily lives—and the kind of blessings that we can expect from God in return. Treated this way, they lead to a vending machine god – put in good attitudes, get good blessings.

The trouble with viewing the Beatitudes as virtues is that it turns Gospel into Law. The beatitudes are not ideals to attain or moral requirements to strive for. They are blessings conferred upon those of lowly status: the poor, the weak, the sorrowful, the merciful, and the persecuted. Thus, as disciples of Jesus, we enter into the Christian community through the Word of blessing that Jesus speaks upon us. His Word is living and active, creating the reality that he speaks into being. Because Jesus calls you blessed, you are blessed, whether or not you feel like it. As Lutheran pastor Bo Giertz wrote, “The beatitudes are not a catalog of Christian virtues in terms of endeavors. Rather they are a proclamation, an intervention of God. They contain the promise of God's kingdom, a promise that is given to a gathering of people who live in affliction and have a hard time believing that they are children of the kingdom.”

In the middle of all the difficulties we have living out our Christian faith in our daily lives; when we are sad and sorrowful; when we are despondent and depressed; when others reject and ridicule us for our faith or for sticking up for what we believe is right; when we try to show mercy and love or bring about peace and we are told it's none of our business; God meets us, he forgives us, he comforts us, he strengthens us, he helps us endure, he gives us the courage to move on. He reminds us of our Baptism into the crucified and risen Christ, that we belong to Him for Christ's sake, and He will never let us go. In such circumstances our “weaknesses” become occasions for Christ's strengthening word of encouragement and his promising word of grace. This same kind of blessedness enabled Paul to write to the Philippians from his jail cell, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (4:4).

The blessedness comes not because of what we do, but because of what God does for us. In a world where we want to be independent, the Beatitudes invite us to recognize our dependence on God. The Beatitudes are declarations of salvation to those who place their trust in God. Those who are blessed are the “humble,” those who have realized their helplessness and know the desperate need for grace alone.

Because of what Jesus did, you are blessed, too. One of my pastor friends pointed out that when we read most of the Beatitudes, Jesus is talking in the third person, blessed are “they.” But in the last one, Jesus switches to the second person, blessed are “you.” Blessed are you! At the end, the Beatitudes become personal. Instead of speaking about “them,” Jesus speaks to “you”! You are blessed, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ! You are blessed because you are the disciples of Jesus. Jesus speaks blessing upon you. Even if you are poor in spirit, mourning, or meek, you are blessed. Even if you are hungry and thirsty, for righteousness or for food and drink, you are blessed. Even if you are in need of mercy and a purified heart, you are blessed. If you are a peacemaker or persecuted, you are blessed. They are promises that Jesus makes with authority. You are blessed. You are blessed no matter what happens in your life. You are blessed because Jesus died on the cross to forgive your sins. You are blessed because Christ Jesus rose from the dead. You are blessed because Christ will come again. You are blessed because Jesus calls you his disciples and calls you blessed.

The Beatitudes don’t tell you how you ought to be. The Beatitudes remind you who are—and whose you are—because of Jesus. And that makes you truly blessed.

## **Offering**

## **Sharing Our Ministry**

## **Confessing Our Sins and Receiving God’s Forgiveness**

### **Micah 6:1-8**

R: Hear what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against His people, and He will contend with Israel. “O My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer Me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O My people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.” “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

P: Lord God: You command us to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly before You. But so often we do what is unjust, unkind, and arrogant.

**C: Even more we fail to do justice and kindness and walk humbly before You.**

P: We are tempted to come to You with what we offer—going to church regularly, putting money in the collection plate, staying out of trouble, and earning an honest living.

**C: But all of that is like the empty sacrifices brought to You in Micah's day. What You desire is sincere hearts to follow You, not what we want.**

P: In front of You we stand condemned.

**C: We cannot talk our way out or avoid Your indictment. We are guilty.**

P: “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**C: Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD will never count against him.”**

P: By the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### **Responsive reading on the Beatitudes**

P: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

**C: “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”** (Psalm 34:18)

P: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

**C: “The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me because He has anointed me . . . to comfort all who mourn.”** (Isaiah 61:1-2)

P: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

**C: “But the meek will inherit land and enjoy great peace.”** (Psalm 37:11)

P: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

**C: “For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”**  
(Psalm 107:9)

P: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

**C: “For with the LORD there is mercy and with him is full redemption.”**  
(Psalm 130:7)

P: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

**C: “Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? . . . He who has clean hands and a pure**

**heart.”** (Psalm 34:3,4)

P: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

**C: “You, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your name.”** (Isaiah 63:16)

P: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

**C: “O LORD my God, I take refuge in You; save and deliver me from all who pursue me.”** (Psalm 7:1) P: “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of

evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**C: “Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults.”**  
(Psalm 51:7)

**ALL: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”** (Revelation 14:13)

## Prayers

### Call to Communion

P: Jesus said, “Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”  
He calls us to come to the blessed supper of His true body and blood. In that meal He takes away the burden of our sin and nails it to the cross where He died for us. We now follow His command and come to His table as we share in the New Covenant made by His blood shed for us for the forgiveness of all our sins. Let us in His name and by His command administer and receive the Lord’s Supper.

### The Words of Our Lord (Pastor)

#### Lord’s Prayer

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen.**

### Distribution of Holy Communion

#### Communion Hymns:

*“Blest Are They”*

1. Blest are they, the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they, full of sorrow; they shall be consoled.

*Refrain:* Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!

Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!

2. Blest are they, the lowly ones: they shall inherit the earth.  
 Blest are they, who hunger and thirst; they shall have their fill.  
*Refrain:* Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!  
 Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!
3. Blest are they, who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs.  
 Blest are they, the pure of heart; they shall see God!  
*Refrain:* Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!  
 Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!
4. Blest are they, who seek peace; they are the children of God.  
 Blest are they who suffer in faith; the glory of God is theirs.  
*Refrain:* Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!  
 Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!
5. Blest are you, who suffer hate, all because of me.  
 Rejoice and be glad, yours is the kingdom of God; shine for all to see.  
*Refrain:* Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!  
 Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!

*“Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread” - Hymn #625*

**Dismissal:** (Pastor)

**Prayer After Communion**

P: Lord Jesus, You have brought great blessing into our lives. We thank You for the special blessing You have given us in this meal as we have received Your true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Lead us to live as Your blessed people even when we are poor in spirit and mourn, who are meek and humble and thirst and hunger for what is right, who want to be merciful and bring peace, and who endure hardships because we follow. We pray this in Your name.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing:** (Pastor)

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** *“Blest the Children of Our God” - LW #370*

1. Blest the children of our God,  
 They are bought with Christ’s own blood;  
 They are ransomed from the grave,  
 Life eternal they will have:  
 With them numbered may we be  
 Here and in eternity!

2. They are justified by grace,  
They enjoy the Savior's peace;  
All their sins are washed away,  
They will stand in God's great day:  
With them numbered may we be  
Here and in eternity!
  
3. They are lights upon the earth,  
Children of a heavenly birth;  
One with God, with Jesus one;  
Glory is in them begun:  
With them numbered may we be  
Here and in eternity!

**Postlude:**