

Order of Worship for February 1, 2026

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 5th 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: “Son of God, Eternal Savior” - Hymn #842

Sermon: “Truly Blessed” – Matthew 5:1-12

At the end of the American Revolution, as the British surrendered, the band played a song that shared the feelings of all involved, “A world turned upside down.” That idea was so powerful that that’s how Lin-Manuel Miranda ends his telling of the Revolutionary War in Act 1 of his musical masterpiece, *Hamilton*. Miranda makes it clear, that for all his turning of American mythology on its head, the core story of that “young, scrappy and hungry” rag-tag army of George Washington’s improbable win against the might of the British empire is still compelling and inspiring.

We see worlds turned upside down in other places, too. DC Comics has a bizarro world, where everything is reversed, where good is bad and bad is good. Star Trek has the Mirror Universe, a parallel dimension where the good guys are the bad guys and vice versa, and you can tell who’s bad by their goatees. Netflix’s recently concluded hit series *Stranger Things* featured the Upside Down as the home of the Demogorgon, the Mind Flayer, and Vecna, the forces of evil.

In today’s Gospel lesson, Jesus shares the introduction to His three-chapter long Sermon on the Mount, a section we call The Beatitudes. The word beatitude comes from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning fortunate, happy, well-off, or blessed. Whenever beatitudes are uttered in the Bible, because Jesus wasn’t the first person to give beatitudes, the speaker is not saying, “You will be blessed if,” but “You are blessed now and in the future.”

And every beatitude is from God...not from the world, not from coincidence or luck, not from the sweat of our brow or our hard work...but from God alone. It’s better to be blessed than to be lucky because blessings come from God while luck doesn’t exist.

And so, in the Beatitudes, Jesus isn’t laying down a new law that He expects us to keep. Jesus isn’t saying, “If you do these things, you will be blessed.” Jesus isn’t saying, “If you behave in these ways, life will be all sunshine.”

Jesus, in fact, is describing life in an alternative world He calls the Kingdom of Heaven. He is saying that all who seek to follow Him each day are blessed. They live in His kingdom in all circumstances. And to the world, that looks like the world is upside down.

It does not begin with power. It does not feed on self-aggrandizement. The religion of the cross can't be about winning. It begins with sacrificial love -- Christ's love for us and all people. It includes welcoming the outsider, caring for the sick, forgiving enemies, forgoing violence, upholding life and glorifying God in all that we do.

We have trouble believing these beatitudes, though, and so we try to change them, turn them upside down, in a couple different ways. The first is to make them as though they are things we need to do. We try to make them our Be-Attitudes, the attitudes we should have as we go through life, and face these challenges. But that's not the case. Many of these blessings come from circumstances we can't control.

More than that, we're not the ones who make ourselves blessed. Only God does that. The passive voice makes it a bit awkward in English. In fact, in several of the Beatitudes, the agency of the verb in the second half is in the passive voice: they will be advocated on behalf of, they will be filled, they will be shown mercy, they will be called children of God. If it's passive, who is doing the action? God! God is the one doing the blessing. God is the one showing mercy. God is the one bringing children into his family. God is the one doing the actions.

Jesus isn't just telling us to try hard to live like this. These are not simply timeless truths about the way the world is. They instead show us an upside-down world, or perhaps more that we live in an upside down and the world described in the beatitudes is right side up. And in Jesus, with his work, it's starting to come true. This is an announcement, not philosophical analysis. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. God's rule and reign is breaking into the world. And when it does, the world looks different than it did.

The second way we misinterpret the Beatitudes is to think they don't apply in the real world. They only apply in church, in Jesus' world, in heaven, but not here, not yet.

Russell Moore was president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention's official entity assigned to address social, moral, and ethical concerns, from 2013-2021. In an interview with NPR after resigning from the SBC, he said "it was the result of having multiple pastors tell me, essentially, the same story about quoting the Sermon on the Mount, parenthetically, in their preaching — "turn the other cheek" — [and] to have someone come up after to say, "Where did you get those liberal talking points?" And what was alarming to me is that in most of these scenarios, when the pastor would say, "I'm literally quoting Jesus Christ," the response would not be, "I apologize." The response would be, "Yes, but that doesn't work anymore. That's weak." And when we get to the point where the teachings of Jesus himself are seen as subversive to us, then we're in a crisis."

That's the point, though. The Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, all of Jesus' teachings go against how we think the world works. We live in a world tainted by sin, where might makes

right, where the one with the gold makes the rules, where the context where the word “blessed” is often associated with and hijacked by the wealthy, the healthy and the most powerful. That’s the way the world works.

But that’s not the way God works. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Jesus clarifies that it is precisely the poor, the sick and the meek that are entitled to the blessings of the new kingdom. Not because of what they have done, but because of what Jesus has done for them.

Blessed is not something we do. Blessed is something Christ does and gives. The sermon on the mount shows us how Jesus molds and shapes the life and will of his disciples, leading them to a life wholly drawn from God. Because of His love and mercy flowing from His life given up on the cross, we are blessed with His kingdom of heaven, His comfort, His righteousness, His peace.

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 remind you of how the world should really work, and does really work, in God’s kingdom. 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.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering

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: