



## Grain

“For some reason, the most vocal Christians among us never mention the Beatitudes.” –Kurt Vonnegut

## Field

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 receive 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 for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:3-12

## Thoughts

I'm accustomed to people disagreeing over scripture and also to parishioners hearing sermons in a variety of ways that the preacher may or may not have intended. And I understand that quoting isolated passages in the Bible to make a point without discussing its context happens. But a few years ago, for the first time, I heard of a number of people being offended by the mere reading of an assigned Gospel lesson. It was a text that embraced the voices of Old Testament prophets and the life of Jesus. In many ways the lesson expresses the core of our faith: Matthew 5:1-12. Yet, more than a handful of church leaders claimed they were accused of choosing the assigned Gospel reading of the Beatitudes to condemn the president. Let me repeat. Christians were offended by the Beatitudes read in church.

I'm used to more subtle idols, the types we painfully become aware of when glimpsing how we've failed to see Christ in our neighbor. But worrying about how the reading of the Beatitudes places a government official in a bad light? And then I learned that this experience wasn't confined to Wisconsin. Was there a momentary group lapse in judgment, stress over divisions, a pervasive evil?

The good news is that the Beatitudes have power. They remind us of who our God is. And even when it is a difficult reminder, we are invited into scenery of blessedness. Blessed are we when we are broken. Blessed are those waiting in lines at homeless shelters. Blessed are the children who were kept in cages and are still removed from their families. Blessed are people profoundly separated from any land they can call home. Blessed are people doing all they can to get through the pandemic. Blessed are those who open their arms to forgiveness. Blessed are our loved ones who taught us about love and mercy while they were alive on this earth. Free in Christ are we when by grace we know the beautiful scenery of the Beatitudes. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy