

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

We have heard this Gospel about the Beatitudes in another form. The Beatitudes outline the blessings that Jesus offers those who follow him. While Matthew has Jesus offering them on the mountain, Luke has Jesus proclaiming them on level ground. We can conclude that they are for any situation, anywhere.

The core message is basically the same in both accounts: In God's Kingdom, our lives will be different. The Kingdom is for those in need, the poor and the hungry, and will not easily be grasped by those who already believe that they have everything.

A Gospel Word for the Home

Luke 6:17, 20-26

In forming the Beatitudes, Jesus uses the time-honored language of paradox to emphasize his powerful message. Often the New Testament will present ideas that appear as difficult to understand, for instance, "the last shall be first" or "in dying, we will live." In a sense, Jesus is combating the world of sin with all its empty promises. In our world, a great deal of attention is placed on celebrities and their lavish lifestyles or on the blessings that come to the rich. Regardless of all the stories of sadness and difficulties that occur among so many of them, we still feel that it would be nice to have what they have. Even in the times of Jesus the well-to-do were envied.

Yet Jesus teaches us that real happiness can come to the poor, the hungry and those who are ridiculed or insulted because of their connection with Jesus and his ways. It's not enough to hear this just once. We need reminders because the opposite message comes to us daily through advertising and the media.

Thought for the Week

There is much wisdom in the saying that "true happiness comes in not getting what you want but wanting what you get." It has to do with accepting who we are as well as the basic conditions of our lives. In line with the spirit of the Beatitudes, as a result of recent economic difficulties, people have been engaged in a kind of examination of conscience about their buying habits. We are seeing more attention being given to what's called the simple life: doing more with less. While this can have a certain self-serving tone to it, it can also be a way of focusing more on what's really important in life, which is doing the will of God—in love.

Parent Survival

Mentioning simplicity of life as a Gospel value can help many parents slow down, refuse to enter the rat race, and enjoy life as it comes. Clearly, none of this is easy but maybe it's a good time to cut back and re-orient our values. Note that Jesus said that the poor will *now* experience God's kingdom. The Beatitudes are not rooted in promises or predictions about the future. They focus on the now. To survive well, one must be mindful and live in the day, and sometimes live in the minute right in front of you.

Car or Meal Talk

Read the Beatitudes and ask family members to choose their favorite, and then have them explain their choice.

One-Line Prayer

Dear God, open us to depend on you and give thanks for the many gifts we have received but often fail to notice. Amen.