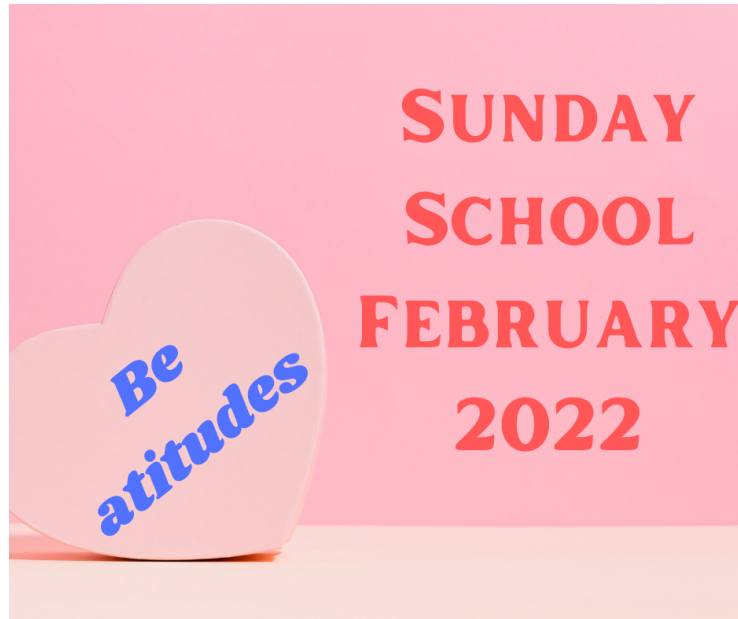


Beatitudes Sunday School Study

Week 3: February 20, 2022



Opening Prayer

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Read the Beatitudes from the Message Bible: Luke 6:17-31

17 Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. 18 They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. 19 Everyone was trying to touch him - so much energy surging from him, so

many people healed! 20 Then he spoke: You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding. 21 You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal. You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning. 22 "Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. 23 You can be glad when that happens - skip like a lamb, if you like! - for even though they don't like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this. Give Away Your Life 24 But it's trouble ahead if you think you have it made. What you have is all you'll ever get. 25 And it's trouble ahead if you're satisfied with yourself. Your self will not satisfy you for long. And it's trouble ahead if you think life's all fun and games. There's suffering to be met, and you're going to meet it. 26 "There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests - look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular. 27 "To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. 28 When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person. 29 If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. 30 If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously. 31 "Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them!

Pastor's Notes

Who is Luke writing his account of Jesus too? Someone named Theophilus. Who is he? Perhaps a patron, someone who supported Luke financially, a person of wealth and status, obviously a gentile as the name is Greek. Most importantly,

however, is the meaning of the name: friend of God. So, Luke is writing to disciples then and now, friends of God both Jew and gentile.

For Luke it is about a life of discipleship, and it is all verbs. Faith is BLAM: busy, living, active, and mighty, or so said a professor of mine at seminary. So says Luke as well: discipleship is a verb. It's action, not only thoughts and heart matters.

When a Christian mourns a loss of life or tragic event, it involves actions, intercessory prayer, care for people involved (i.e., food shelter, monetary funds, cleaning out or rebuilding homes), along with a listening ear and a sympathetic heart offering comfort. To mourn is to feel another's pain and to do something if able to alleviate it. Christians mourn not only loss of life, but the loss of righteousness with God, i.e., right relationship with God. We mourn our sins and those of others, because they separate us from God. We take action: confession and repentance to renew that relationship (Lent is all about this). We seek to assist those who do not have that close relationship with God to obtain it. It is said that to mourn is another deeper side of loving. To see this scripturally, read the scripture references listed here below:

- Scripture References About Mourning: Isaiah 61:1-3;2
Corinthians 1:3-5, and 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Jeremiah 31:15-17

When a Christian is persecuted, it comes in many forms. Slander, physical violence even death for some (Martyrs of the faith), hatred, isolation, reproach, belittling, avoided, rejection etc. Take heart as Jesus experienced all of these. In Luke 12:2-12 we are given advice for persecution.

Remember Paul the greatest apostle and missionary of the church? Yes, he was a persecutor of the church before meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road. After that, Paul suffered persecution for his faith. I commend Romans Chapter 12 to you where we read the marks of a true Christian. Persecution is to be expected, we Lutherans call it the theology of the cross.

Guiding Verses from the New Testament

- **Luke 1:41-56 The Magnificat**

⁶And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Definitions from *Websters and Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*

1. Mourn

Websters: to feel or express grief or sorrow: to show the customary signs of grief for a death

Wycliffe = the expression of grief occasioned by calamity or tragic loss such as death

2. Persecuted (for righteousness)

Websters : to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict, *specifically* : to cause to suffer because of belief.2: to annoy with persistent or urgent approaches

Wycliffe similar except the persecution is for believing in God and living by God's rules

What is righteousness? Goodness, godliness, justice compassion mercy (see the Magnificat Luke 1; Psalm 107:5-6)

Questions to Ponder

How do we rate? Here is a little questionnaire from the Serendipity Study Bible:

1. Poor in Spirit

- Do I recognize my spiritual bankruptcy?
- Do I recognize my need for God?
- Do I depend on God's grace or my own earning of his favor?

2. Spiritual Hunger

- Do I want to know God's will for my life more than my own pleasure?
- More than my status?
- More than my success?

3. Mourn

- Do I feel the pain that MY sin causes?
- Can I weep like Jesus? For people like Lazarus, for Jerusalem etc.
- Can I let others know I am hurting without embarrassment?

4. Persecution

- Do I know for whom and for what I am living?
- Am I willing to suffer for what is right? for Jesus?
- Can I take criticism without reacting defensively or feeling self-pity?