

St. Paul preaches, **not many of you are wise**. When I look at the likes of you, that's how I feel. **Wise according to world standards. Not many powerful, not many were of noble birth**. Have you ever wonder why so few Lutherans or Christians in the powerful, famous, noble arenas of the world? But that's the way it's always been. We certainly see it in our times, in Hollywood, industry leaders, politicians, celebrities, the influencers, those who wield power. We are looked upon by the world as foolish, weak, low, despised. They mock Christian virtue and plot to destroy the Christian family is ways you don't realize. You will continue to see what the world calls good is evil; that which is evil they called good. Congress passes a Respect for Marriage Act that only disrespects marriage, dishonors the gift God has given, established, instituted for our good and for all society. You see crowds and politicians, environmentalist everywhere working feverishly to destroy life. Demons and man have always plotted against the Church, the Christian family. Things were the same, perhaps worse in Paul's day. And Paul points you to nothing else but Jesus, the implications of His cross in your daily life.

Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount so that you would have hope; for though you are powerless in this world; despised, labeled unloving, chastise for be phobic on any number of issues, labeled of having many of the -isms and -ists; ignored if not oppressed and though you also suffer injustices, terrible pain and grief. And even though likewise you have added to these difficulties with your sins, errors that hurt those around you. **So you that hunger and thirst for righteousness, long for mercy, dream of peace -you shall be filled.**

This is what Jesus says. That your sorrows are neither without purpose nor are they without end here. Those who have faith in Him should not think that strange that you suffer in this world or are hated here or simply feel out of place. So they did to him. This world is not your home.

The Kingdom of heaven is yours -your home by divine declaration and the earth itself will also be yours even as it was once Adam and Eve's and you are already now a part of a great international ecumenical catholic Church. A family that spans all the generations of humanity. You are not out of place here, you belong. You belong to God. Loved by God. Even now though the world does not know it the earth belongs to you, you declared righteous for the sake of Christ. This is a present reality but it takes faith to see it. There's more than meets the eye.

The **poor in spirit** beloved by God often lack in material things, honor among men and grieve and suffer evil in this world; also know comfort and righteousness for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus turns and looks you in the eye in the last beatitude. He switches from 3rd person to 2nd person pronouns. He isn't just talking about Christians. **Blessed are you.** He's talking to you. He's saying that you are not less than the heroes of the faith of the past, have company of prophets, apostles, and family who went before you. You are the church baptized into God's own name. **Rejoiced and be glad** Jesus tells you because you belong to Him. That He is with you in this.

He has the right to bless you, to forgive you, to join you and so He does. He gives you His righteousness out of His mercy and if the Kingdom of heaven is anything it is a Kingdom of hope, to encourage and comfort you.

He wants to put your difficulties, sorrows, your pain into perspective for not only are they temporary but so also they are part of the pattern that He Himself lived and suffered; and which the church before you, through the ages also lived and suffered. Your pain, your loneliness, your headaches and heartaches are not insignificant to Him; He hears your prayers and He answers them.

Nothing that's befallen you, is just happenstance or bad luck; rather the Lord Himself in perfect love is leading you through laughter and tears, through joys that are but a glimpse of joys to come and lead you throw a life where there are always monkeys to throw poop on you. And you get hurt and suffer in this broken creation, He is leading you and this is the communion of saints. That you are not alone. Not is all as it appears; **for yours is the Kingdom you shall be satisfied**; your mourning will cease; some of your loved ones have already come to this reward and even that separation is not what it appears to be. It's not only temporary but also far less distant than it seems to be to mortal eyes for the saints in glory join us in the Holy Communion with the angels and archangels even as they wait for us in heaven. This is the hope that passes all understanding. it beats in us a song of war and a love ballad all rolled into one so that parts are brave again and arms are strong in His triumph. Blessed are you.

Do not be ashamed of the cross. Be wise unto Christ. Do not think it strange that fiery trials come upon you. Do not seek comfort in worldly things or long life. This world is temporary and so is your sorrow. The Lamb was slain, lives. Fear no man, do not fear those who can only kill the body. Jesus lives. The Kingdom is yours. Your blessedness is now and eternal.