



# First Lutheran Church

## Gospel of Matthew

### Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



## Deep Dive: The Beatitudes

### Talking to the Kids

When you read the list of Beatitudes, notice how many times the word "Blessed" is used.

Now read Genesis 1:1-2:4, and take note how many times God says "It is good."

Jesus naming people who are blessed is like God calling creation good. It is a statement of reality.

Practice naming creation as good. Walk through your yard or a local park, look at trees, plants, bugs, birds, cats, dogs, other animals -- name each thing and say "It is good."

Then, practice naming groups of people and saying "Blessed are You ..."

Who are you naming? What groups of people? Are you naming your friends, your relatives? Are you naming people who might be different? Name as many groups as you can.

### Week 3: Matthew chapters 5 and 6

- The sermon on the mount begins with a list of nine statements that all begin "Blessed are ..." This list is called the Beatitudes. The word "Beatitude" comes from Latin, and is a translation of the Greek word "Makarism". In English, the idea is that a beatitude is a statement that declares certain people to be in a privileged or fortunate circumstance. Consider how you understand the words /phrases: "Fortunate" or "happy" or "in a privileged situation". These words are naming a reality for someone.
- The use of these Beatitudes are not new to the Gospel of Matthew. There are examples of beatitudes, or statements of blessings found in the Old Testament, in texts of other religious writings, and even pagan writings.
- Expressing a beatitude in the format we find in Jesus' sermon on the mount, we have to hear two things happening. One is how these words name a present moment reality, and the other is how these words proclaim a reality that will be fully realized when the full kingdom of God is experienced.
- These words are not conditional. They are not "if X" happens, "then Y" will occur. These declarations are not subjective to feelings. They apply to all who hear them. Matthew, specifically, records these words intending for everyone in the Church, that is all believers, to know this is the present moment experience of the Kingdom of God.
- It is radical to note who are named as being the fortunate, the privileged in God's Kingdom as announced by Jesus defies conventional thinking. These are not the wealthy, the healthy, the folks who think they have it all together. Read through this list again, and see who all is being named - the poor, the hungry, the mourning. These are not just fortunate or privileged, they are receiving a reversal, and it is a reversal taking place here and now, and fulfilled fully in the end times.
- But this second half of each beatitude, the receiving part, (being fed, having the kingdom, etc) are not just passive things those being named are receiving. These are actions they are now living. Being comforted is an action that the community gives to those mourning as well as an action mourners provide also to others; those who hunger for justice are not just being filled with justice but are actively working for justice; and so on.
- Matthew wants us to know these statements are true because of the authority of the speaker. Jesus is the Son of God and therefore has the authority to declare these statements on that authority alone.
- So, these are not just historical pronouncements, they are not just good ethical ponderings, they are a list of declarations that demonstrate what it is like to live as a community anticipating the kingdom of God happening here on earth as it is in heaven.

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

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