

In this lesson we learn that through God's love, disciples are now children of God; their destiny is to be like Christ. Those who did not recognize Jesus will not recognize his disciples either. Though the mystery of what those disciples are to become has not been fully revealed, Christians know that a dramatic change has taken place in their lives; an earnest of the transformation underway. Those who stand in this hope will purify themselves as Christ is pure.

And now the reading from First John

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Matthew 5:1-12

The gospel is the opening sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, words of both comfort and challenge. The values of the kingdom are quite different from worldly standards. Those who are to find blessing will know want and thirst, if not because of their own circumstances, then for the sake of others. Those who hunger for righteousness will find fulfillment, but first they must suffer persecution.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew.

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior.

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.