

Unexpected Blessings

Appetizer: In the Beatitudes we find a simplicity of word and intensity of thought that has attracted each fresh generation of Christians and many others besides. The more we explore their implications, the more seems to remain unexplored. Their wealth is inexhaustible. Truly, “we are near heaven here.”

Discussion: Who do you normally consider to be blessed or fortunate?

Main Course: Read Matthew 5:1-6.

1. How does our normal description of the blessed or fortunate person compare with those Jesus considers blessed?
2. To be “poor in spirit” (v.3) is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty, our bankruptcy before God. Why is this an indispensable condition for receiving the kingdom of heaven?
3. Those who mourn feel sorrow not only for their own sin but also for the sin they see around them. What have you heard in the news lately that causes you to mourn?
4. How do you think those who mourn will be comforted (v. 4)?
5. From the world’s point of view, why is it surprising that the meek will inherit the earth?
6. What has Jesus said so far that might lead us to hunger and thirst for righteousness (v. 6)?

Read verses 7-12.

7. Jesus says the merciful will be shown mercy (v. 7). Why do you think our treatment of others will affect God’s treatment of us?
8. Why would the promise of seeing God (v. 8) be reserved for those who are pure in heart?
9. How can we be peacemakers (v. 9) in our homes and in society?

Dessert: Why do you think that people of the world would hate the kind of people in the Beatitudes?