

“We Are Blessed in Christ”

(Matthew 5:1-12 – Epiphany 4 – February 1, 2026)

Matthew 5:1-12 – ¹*And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ²Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Dear Redeemed, blessed children of God in Jesus Christ:

Here as Jesus begins His Sermon on the Mount, He speaks first to His disciples. Again and again, He calls them “*blessed*.” This includes all of us as believers. To the world, the reasons He gives may not sound like blessings, but points of weakness and loss. Yet what Jesus’ statements of blessing all have in common is the promise that we are beneficiaries of the riches of God’s grace. Even when we experience weakness and loss in this world, we are receiving great gain in His Kingdom and eternal life. Jesus’ statements are not commands we must obey to become blessed; they are gracious blessings that are already ours through faith in Him. **“We Are Blessed in Christ”:** 1) **As we look in faith to His saving grace;** 2) **As we share His grace with other people;** 3) **As we suffer with Him in view of glory.**

1) As we look in faith to His saving grace

Verse 3: “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” As believers we bow before God, confessing that we are poor sinners who have nothing to offer deserving His blessing. We are beggars of His saving grace in Christ. The unbelieving world is not poor in spirit. It proudly continues in unrepented sin. It wants to believe it can earn heaven by its goodness. But with the tax collector in God’s house, we cry: “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*” (Luke 18:13). And God sends us home justified, forgiven and cleansed of all sin by the blood of His Son. He shows us the riches of His grace in Christ, who became poor in His suffering and death to win for us eternal riches (2 Corinthians 8:9). Already we are heirs of His Kingdom through Baptism and faith. Already eternal life is ours as a gift. And one day, He will raise us up to enjoy the incomparable riches of His heavenly Kingdom!

Verse 4: *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* Though we are heirs of such a great Kingdom, often we still mourn in this fallen world; for things are not as they should be. We mourn for our own sin. We mourn because sin is at the root every evil – from hurt and wrongs we endure, to sickness and suffering, to death and sorrow. The unbelieving world mourns without repentance in a kind of sorrow that leads to death (2 Corinthians 7:10). But in faith, we cry to God for His mercy and grace in Christ. He comforts us by His Gospel of forgiveness. He comforts us with His promise to deliver us from every evil of body and soul. He is making all things new for us in heaven, where there will be no more effects of sin. There at last, He will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 7:14; 21:4), and we will live with Him in the everlasting comfort and joys of heaven.

Verse 5: *“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”* The meek are humble, gentle, and patient; even suffering mistreatment without retaliating. The world sees only weakness. It seeks strength in pride, pushing others down to raise oneself up, taking vengeance on enemies. But meekness is not weakness. As the strongest One of all, Jesus showed meekness: *“Who... when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously”* (1 Peter 2:23). In Christ, God is for us no matter who is against us (Romans 8:31). So instead of vengeance, we can forgive. We can commit our lives to Him who suffered for us and will make all things right. Psalm 37:10-11 says: *“Yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more... But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”* Already we are blessed as heirs of all things in Christ. Our heavenly Father blesses us with every earthly need. And He will bless us beyond all expectation in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1 ff.).

Verse 6: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”* As believers, God’s Spirit gives us the desire to do what is right and be more like Jesus. Yet we struggle with our sinful nature. We confess that we have not always responded to evil with good, but we have done what is wrong and hurtful. Painfully aware of our sinfulness, we hunger and thirst for righteousness. We cry out to God confessing our sins, we plead only the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Already we are filled by the grace of God. He has emptied our account of all sin and put it on His Son on the cross; and He has filled our account with Jesus’ sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21). Already, God declares us righteous in Christ. We look forward to the day when God will make us perfect in righteousness even as He is perfect.

Truly we are blessed in Christ, as we look in faith to His saving grace. We are heirs of incomparable riches in His heavenly Kingdom, even as He generously gives us all we need in this world! We are comforted and filled by His gift of eternal life!

2) As we share His grace with other people

Now our faith responds to God's grace with its fruit, as we want to share His grace in Christ with other people. This is the focus of Jesus' next three blessings.

Verse 7: *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* As believers we understand mercy. In mercy, God lifted us from the poverty of sin and death to give us the riches of His forgiveness and eternal life in Christ. In thankfulness, we can show mercy to fellow sinners, forgiving as God forgives us. We can show mercy to those in need, sharing generously as God provides for us. Like the Good Samaritan in the parable (Luke 10:29-37), we can even show mercy to enemies. For this is what Jesus did when we were enemies of God. He gave His life for us, so He could give His all to us. Faith, acting in love, wants to share God's grace and mercy with others. As we pray in faith for our needs and the needs of others, He hears and answers for Jesus' sake. So we can say with Psalm 23:6: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."*

Verse 8: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* As Jesus speaks of sharing God's grace with others, purity of heart has to do with our motivation. It describes a sincere heart of faith, without hypocrisy. A person may do outwardly good deeds with impure motives, seeking to earn the favor of God or man. An outwardly clean life does not make a person's heart pure. But by faith we pray: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me"* (Psalm 51:10). As God cleanses our heart by the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7), His love moves us to serve in true faith and love, to His glory alone and for the good of others. Already we see God through His Word and faith in Jesus. We want to share His grace with others, that they too may see and know Him by faith. We pray that at last, they too will stand with us in heaven as we see Him face to face in eternal joys.

Verse 9: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."* We have been reconciled to God in peace by the blood of His Son (Colossians 1:20). We know the Prince of Peace, Jesus our Savior. His saving grace moves us to live at peace with others as far as we are able (Romans 12:8) – to be reconciled to enemies in forgiveness and love, and to help others be reconciled. This shows that we are true sons of God. But it does not mean giving up the truth of God's Word for false peace in this world. We speak God's truth in love, because we want others to be reconciled to Him in peace by true repentance and faith in Christ. We want them to be with us in heaven, where we will live with God and one another in perfect peace forever.

3) As we suffer with Him in view of glory

This brings us to our final point. As we look in faith to God's saving grace, and we share His grace with others in mercy and peace, Jesus warns that the world will not be at peace with us. Yet we are blessed, as we suffer with Him in view of glory.

Verses 10-12: *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

As we confess God's unchanging Word of truth and we live our faith, Jesus says: *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden"* (vs. 14). But the world cannot tolerate us any more than it did Jesus. Those who love the darkness of falsehood and sin hate the light of His truth shining in us (John 3:19-20). How many faithful prophets, apostles, and martyrs before us can attest to this painful truth. For our faithfulness, we can expect persecution in some form or other – slander, ridicule, rejection, pain, even death for the sake of Jesus and His truth.

Yet moved by the grace of God and strengthened by His Spirit, we can pray as Jesus did from the cross: *"Father forgive them"* (Luke 23:34). Like Stephen, as he was being stoned to death for his faithful witness, we look to our risen and ascended Savior in heaven and pray that our enemies may be brought to repent and to know His forgiveness too (Acts 7:55-60). To the end that, by saving faith, they too may share with us in His gift of eternal life.

In all this, Jesus says *"Blessed are you.... Rejoice and be exceedingly glad."* When we suffer with Jesus in this world, it is in view of sharing His heavenly glory. Romans 8:18 says: *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* Great is our reward in heaven – not by our merit, but as a gift of God's grace. There at last, the crown of thorns is turned to the crown of glory; great suffering is turned to far greater glory.

We are blessed in Christ. As we look in faith to His saving grace, we are comforted and satisfied. As we share His grace with others, wanting them to know His forgiveness and love, we are living in true faith as children of God in Christ. What is imperfect here will turn to perfection, when He brings us into His heavenly Kingdom of glory to share in His everlasting righteousness, peace, and joy!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.