

Lent, 2023

“Those Who”

*Virtues and Blessings in
Jesus' Kingdom...*

Lenten blessings! Our prayer is that this forthcoming email-based devotional series will be a great companion as we “set our face” towards the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The email that you're reading right now is a kind of introduction to the series. Starting next week, you'll receive one email devotional idea each week for the remainder of Lent. Your email will arrive on Sunday afternoons. Throughout the week, there'll also be a text or two to encourage you along the way.

The goal of Lent is not to survive a period of sacrifice, but rather to grow as “giving up” things creates space and time to “take on” disciplines and virtues. Lent is a time to walk with Jesus intentionally to the cross.

Throughout the devotional series we'll be considering two questions: 1. What do we learn about Jesus? 2. What do we learn about ourselves?

Each week you'll receive questions to prompt your study and meditation. We're focusing on Matthew 5:1-12 and specifically the virtues and blessings in living as a subjects of Jesus' Kingdom. We've put together a **podcast conversation** between the three of us that we're hoping you'll very helpful. Listen to it as soon as possible and it'll help provide a foundation for the entire series (find that [podcast here](#)). Pastor Rick also created a **daily prayer** based on Matthew 5:3-12 to incorporate into your Lenten journey (which we'll both provide at church and also [digitally here](#)). We challenge you to start each day with this prayer.

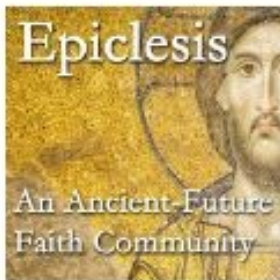
Pay careful attention to how the virtues and blessings build on each other in Jesus' teaching. It's not just a random “to do” list... it's an invitation to step into Kingdom-shaped living right now!

One final important word: Join us on Ash Wednesday, February 22, at 7 PM, at our [Carmichael Chapel location](#) for a very special service of communion and ashes to launch the Season of Lent.

Now, grace and peace as you explore the kingdom virtues and blessings through this Lenten journey!

Pastors Rick, Ellen, and Chris





Lent, 2023

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It's week one of our Lenten Devotional Series. Here are some helpful prompts for your prayer and study...

God blesses those who are poor (in spirit) and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:3-4 (NLT)

Read all of Matthew 5:1-12 and concentrate on 3-4:

The word *poor* (in spirit) in the Greek means crouch; cower; worthless.

What does it look like to be poor in spirit? Can you think of examples in the Bible where people are poor in spirit? What actions, attitudes, and beliefs are connected to this virtue?

And how might mourning be a virtue? *Hint, mourn can also be translated *lament*. What are we called to lament in our lives? To lament in our culture?

How might being poor in spirit and mourning be connected?

What do we learn here about Jesus and living in his Kingdom?

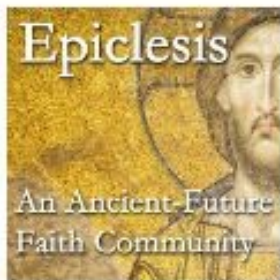
What do you learn about yourself from v.3 and 4? How can you embrace these kingdom virtues in your life today?

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It's week two of our Lenten Devotional Series. Here are some helpful prompts for your prayer and study...

God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, (righteousness) for they will be satisfied.

Matthew 5:5-6 (NLT)

Read all of Matthew 5:1-12 and concentrate on 5-6:

Looking through the lenses of last week's virtues (poverty of spirit & mourning/lamentation), what does Kingdom humbleness look like?

Can you think of anyone from the Bible who demonstrated humbleness? What was the context? How do the humble inherit the whole world? Is this just a "new heavens and new earth" blessing?

Justice/righteousness in the Greek means "correct; innocent".

Jesus himself said that he is the bread of life (John 6:35) and living water (John 4:10). What does it mean to hunger and thirst for justice/righteousness?

In what ways are our hunger and thirst satisfied?

What do we learn here about Jesus and living in his Kingdom?

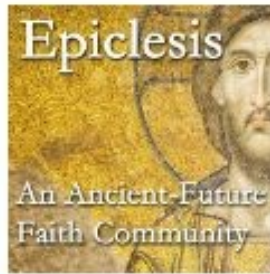
What do you learn about yourself from v.5 and 6? How can you embrace these Kingdom virtues in your life today?

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It's week three of our Lenten Devotional Series. Here are some helpful prompts for your prayer and study...

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

Matthew 5:7-8 (NLT)

Read all of Matthew 5:1-12 and concentrate on 7-8:

Mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Think about the relationship in your daily life. What is one specific way you can better show mercy?

How might forgiveness and grace be linked to mercy?

The blessing here, God will show you mercy, seems also to be a warning. In what areas do you need to receive mercy from the Lord?

The word *pure* in the Greek means “clean or innocent”. How does being pure hearted enable us to see God? Read Matthew 18:20-22. How are mercy and being pure of heart linked?

Looking through the lenses of last week's virtues (humbleness & justice/righteousness), what does showing mercy and being pure in heart look like in Jesus' Kingdom?

What do we learn here about Jesus and living in his Kingdom?

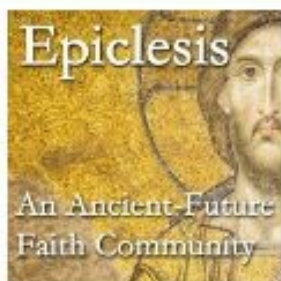
What do you learn about yourself from v.7 and 8? How can you embrace these Kingdom virtues in your life today?

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“Those Who”

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It's week four of our Lenten Devotional Series. Here are some helpful prompts for your prayer and study...

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:9-10 (NLT)

Read all of Matthew 5:1-12 and concentrate on 9-10:

Peace in the Greek means “to join”. What does joining with Jesus to work for peace in your life look like? If peacemaking is an identifier as one of God's children, what are some ways God is bring about peace in the world? How is peacemaking and peace-keeping different?

In what ways does God bless you when you are persecuted for doing right?

Notice that v.3 and v.10 have the same blessing. This is known as an “inclusio” and is common in Hebrew literature, especially the Psalms. It's like bookends that help shape everything in between. How then might being poor in spirit and persecuted for doing right be connected? How do they shape the other virtues of v.4-9?

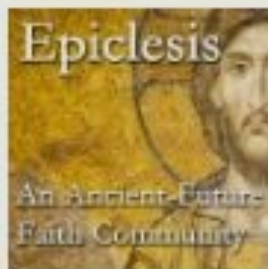
Looking through the lenses of last week's virtues (mercy and purity of heart), what does being a peacemaker and persecution for doing right look like in Jesus' Kingdom?

What do we learn here about Jesus and living in his Kingdom?

What do you learn about yourself from v.9 and 10? How can you embrace these Kingdom virtues in your life today?

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“Those Who”

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It's week five of our Lenten Devotional Series. Here are some helpful prompts for your prayer and study...

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:11-12 (NLT)

Read all of Matthew 5:1-12 and concentrate on 11-12:

What are the four things Jesus points out here that are a result of being mocked and persecuted?

In the Greek, “reward” comes from the root word “wages”. What are our reward/wages in heaven? List as many elements of your reward in heaven as you can.

Why can we rejoice about being mocked and persecuted?

What do we learn here about Jesus and living in his Kingdom?

What do you learn about yourself from v.11 and 12? How can you embrace these Kingdom virtues in your life today?

Reflect on this Lenten season. How did you do with the commitments you made? What 2 or 3 virtues developed over Lent for you? What 1 or 2 would you like to invest more into as you move forward?

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