

Focus reading: Luke 6:17–26 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=415340481>)

Other lectionary readings: Jeremiah 17:5–10, Psalm 1, 1 Corinthians 15:12–20

Theme: Being Blessed

What does it mean to be “blessed?” Does it mean entitled? Does it mean privileged? That is, after all, how it might be perceived. Are those who are blessed elevated above others? Do blessings lead to separation from others who are less blessed? In Luke’s Sermon on the Plain, how are we to understand Jesus’ blessing of the poor, hungry, and marginalized? Could this be another example of the reversal about which Mary sings in the Magnificat, “he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty” (Luke 1:53)? Our reading begins by saying that the people have gathered to hear Jesus teach and to be healed by him. Jesus heals “all of them” (verse 19) before he delivers the well-known words of the Beatitudes. Healing in the Bible is about more than improved physical health. Healing provides wholeness and leads to reconciliation, as those who were once separated due to illness are now able to return to the community. Those who are healed by Jesus receive the blessing of connection with others. The blessings Jesus gives are life-changing. They lift up the most vulnerable and create a community where all belong, where all are made whole.

BE A BLESSING!

How can you be a blessing to others? At the start of each day, think of one thing you can do to be a blessing. At the end of the day, talk about what you did and how it went. Remember that we choose to be a blessing for the sake of others, not ourselves. When we do good because it “feels good,” we are coming from a place of privilege, and even the good that we do is about us rather than the ones Jesus blesses and calls us to bless.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Who are the poor? Who are the hungry? Who are those who weep? Look at each verse and identify who these people are today. How can we bless or lift up these people today? Pray for the people you have identified. Older children can look for these people in current news stories.

PRAYER

Loving God,
we thank you for the blessings you give to us.
Forgive us when we think that we are special or better
because of those blessings
and we allow our blessings to separate us from others.
Instead, may we be a blessing to others,
especially those who feel alone and forgotten.
Amen.