

# Sunday, February 2, 2020

## 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

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### Matthew 5:1-12

#### Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

<sup>5</sup> Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.

#### The Beatitudes

He said:

- <sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.
- <sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.
- <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness,  
for they will be filled.
- <sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.
- <sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.
- <sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.
- <sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted  
because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- <sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when people insult you,  
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of  
evil against you because of me.
- <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your  
reward in heaven, for in the same way  
they persecuted the prophets who were  
before you.

#### QUESTIONS

1. (Matthew 5:3-11) Each Beatitude consists of two parts. What are these parts? Why do you think Jesus made each Beatitude a paradox?
2. What is the relationship of the Beatitudes to the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?
3. (Matthew 5:3-4) Why is it necessary to be aware of your spiritual poverty before you can become a Christian?
4. (Matthew 5:5) How does this sort of gentleness contrast with the world’s ideal? How is humility important to Christlikeness?
5. (Matthew 5:6) How can an intense desire for righteousness put you at odds with the world? What sort of righteousness is Jesus talking about, do you think? What promise are we given in this Beatitude?
6. (Matthew 5:8) Why can people with a pure heart see, know, and discern God? Why can’t “chronic” sinners see God? How do we obtain the pure or clean heart that Jesus describes?
7. (Matthew 5:10-11) Why should we rejoice when we are persecuted? What keeps this from being some kind of sick masochism, or finding pleasure in pain? Why is the blessing “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” appropriate for the persecuted?



# Sunday, January 26, 2020

## Third Sunday after the Epiphany

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### Matthew 4:12-23

#### Jesus Begins to Preach

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali — <sup>14</sup> to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

<sup>16</sup> the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” <sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup> From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

#### Jesus Calls His First Disciples

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

#### Jesus Heals the Sick

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>a</sup> see Isaiah 9:1,2

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#### QUESTIONS

1. Isaiah spoke of the ancient lands of Zebulun and Naphtali; but how about today? From where does the “darkness” in today’s world come? Can you think of some recent times when God has dispelled darkness in a significant way?
2. As soon as Jesus heard that John was arrested he immediately went into Herod’s territory and began an intense program of teaching, healing and preaching repentance. What would cause him to make such a dangerous move? Are you able to stand up and get involved for what is right when you know you will suffer pain or loss when you do? What do you think of Jesus when he acts like this? Name some others who have gone to jail for their protests against injustice.
3. “At once they left their nets and followed him.” Do you think Jesus also needed friends? How long did it take Peter and Andrew to respond to his invitation of a personal encounter? What do you think was going on in their heads and hearts? Could they have been excited by the mission of communicating life to others?

