

THE 4TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY AD 2026
TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
KURTZVILLE, ONTARIO
REV. KURT E. REINHARDT

Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“ Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

“ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness 'sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“ Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Moses goes up on the mountain and he gives Israel the commandments. Jesus goes up on the mountain and he gives his disciples the beatitudes. Yes, beloved, there are a lot similarities between the two, but there are some important differences as well. The first thing that you can't miss is the connection between Moses and Jesus - a connection made plain by the fact that they both went up on the mountain. Matthew is highlighting this connection for you this morning by telling you about the time that Jesus gave this sermon to his disciples on the mountain, while Luke records the time that Jesus gave the same sermon on a plain.

Preaching the same sermon in different places at different times to different people - was a common practice for Jewish Rabbis - as was the practice of preaching the same sermon more than once in the hearing of their disciples. Preaching it in different places at different times brought the same teaching to different people - while preaching it several times in the hearing of their disciples helped their disciples to learn and remember it, so that they could pass it on to others. This is why we have an accurate record of Jesus' life and teaching in the Gospels, after all. The Holy Spirit was at work with the evangelists to get it all down right - but He did so in no small part by having Jesus say what He said more than once - something that He continues to do in the life of the Church, as He has you hear the same words and accounts of Jesus Sunday after Sunday throughout the Church year.

So, yes, Jesus gave this same teaching we hear today on the mountain and on the plain, but Matthew directs your eyes and hearts to the time that Jesus did it on the mountain because He wants you to see that Jesus is the greater prophet who was promised to come after Moses, who would fulfill all that Moses represented and complete his work. What Moses does Jesus fulfills and completes. And so what Moses does and gets by going up on the mountain Jesus fulfills and completes when He goes up on the mountain - because while Moses is a prophet who speaks for and represents God - Jesus is the prophet who is God with us who speaks as God made man. And so what Moses receives on the mountain is fulfilled and completed by what Jesus does on the mountain.

The ten commandments given by Moses are fulfilled and completed by Jesus as He sits down on the Mountain today and opens His mouth. The greatness of the commandments is fulfilled and excelled by the beatitudes of Jesus. While the ten commandments tell us what we need to do to be blessed by God, the beatitudes tell us how God makes us blessed in Jesus. What we could not get through the commandments because of our sin the Lord mercifully gives to us through His only begotten Son. The ten commandments begin with "you" to tell us what we must do, while the beatitudes all begin with what we are to tell us what we receive. The commandments demand while the beatitudes give - and so the commandments condemn while the beatitudes bless. Our weakness with the commandments leads to our condemnation while our weakness in the beatitudes leads to our blessing - as with the commandments we are called to be strong while the blessing of the beatitudes is given to the weak.

Yes, beloved, the ten commandments given to Moses are fulfilled and excelled in the great beatitudes of Jesus, who is the first and greatest of the beatitudes that is the source of the other nine - just as the first commandment is the source of the other nine. Yes, at first glance it may look like there are only nine beatitudes, because Jesus only speaks nine "blessed"s, but the first and greatest blessed is the blessed One, the Son of God made flesh in whom all the nations are

blessed - who opens His mouth to speak the other nine as the fount and source of them all. And so just as the first commandment orders and underlies all the other commandments - Jesus as the first beatitude orders and underlies all the other beatitudes. The blessed one, the Son of God made flesh orders and underlies all the blessings that God gives to us in each and everyone of the other beatitudes.

And so today, beloved, the Lord wants you to fix your eyes on Jesus as He sits down on this mountain with you today and opens His mouth to teach you. "See my beloved Son," He says, "in whom I am well pleased today, who has come to you that you might be blessed in Him. He is the one who takes away all your sin as He has paid for it all by His bitter suffering and death. He is the one who gives you life and salvation through His resurrection from the dead. He is the one who makes you my beloved children in who I am well pleased through your baptism into Him. He is the one who makes you holy and righteous through the gift of my Spirit. He is the one who shares His blessedness with you as He gives you His own flesh and lifeblood. He blesses you that you might be blessed in all your weaknesses and trials and troubles and be a source of blessing to others in theirs."

Yes, beloved, the One who speaks, His blessing nine times over you today in His Word, is with you in all that you are enduring in this world and life, so that you might truly be blessed in it all no matter how difficult and hard it may be, as He shares His life with you and is with you to carry and bear you through it all. No, you may not feel particularly blessed in it all, as you struggle with your weakness and the weakness of others, as you are weighed down and wearied by the troubles and trials of this life and the evils of our world, but blessed, you are, no matter what you might feel because of the blessed One who is in you and with you in it all. So hear Him, as He speaks His blessed blessing Word over you on this mountain today and believe what He says about you and over you and let its truth carry you through the trials of this life to that blessed place where you will be blessed for all eternity in the joys of eternal life.

And so yes, beloved, hear it and hold on to it, as you hear it spoken over you today, by the Word made flesh, "Blessed are you, because of me and in me, blessed now and forever, as the Lord blesses you and keeps you and makes His face to shine upon you and is gracious to you and lifts up His countenance upon you in me to give you peace now and forever." Amen.