

The Singing Resistance

When Jesus saw the crowds

- the protestors
- the hurting
- the angry
- the weeping
- the fearful

The crowds in Minneapolis. The crowds in Iran. The crowds in Greenland.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain.

- Like Moses
- Like Elijah
- Like Martin Luther King Jr.
- Like Mahatmas Ghandi
- Like Louis Riel

He went up the mountain, and after he sat down

- Sat. Staying with us.
- Sat. Not a rally across a stage.
- Sat. As a teacher.
- Sat. Not stood and commanded.

After he sat down, his disciples came to him

- They came to him.
- Sought him out.
- Curiosity
- Wonder
- Seeking
- Of free will

His disciples came to him, and he began to speak and taught them

- Lecture? Nope.
- Dictate? Nope.
- Command? Nope.
- Yell and scream? Nope.
- He was Speaking. Inviting. Teaching.

He said: Blessed are the poor in spirit

- The depressed
- The sad
- The hopeless
- The oppressed
- The poor of material, poor of friendship, poor of wealth, poor of love – the poor!

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in – for the kingdom of God has drawn near, and this kin-dom is yours.

- The poor in spirit know this world is not the realm it could be
- The poor in spirit know the rulership of God is so different than the leadership of humans
- You are blessed!

He said: Blessed are those who mourn

- The grieving
- The heartaching
- The crying
- The sorrowful
- The ones missing what used to be

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For the kingdom of God is here, and you will be comforted.

- God's going to wipe away all tears
- God is with you in your mourning now
- God's reign is coming, here, arriving, and this reign is ending, leaving, going away
- God is with you – you are blessed!

He said: Blessed are the meek

- The non-violent protestors
- The powerless
- The landless
- The wealth-less
- The little ones

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For the kin-dom of God is here, and you will inherit the earth.

- Non-violence will win over violence
- The powerless will outlast the powerful
- Those with land stolen will have land returned
- Those deep in debt will be liberated
- The little ones will mature in a safe and good world.
- You are blessed!

He said: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst

- For righteousness
- For justice
- For food and drink
- For shelter and medical care
- For a world where no one knows poverty

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For the power of God is here, and you will be filled.

- Filled with justice – where no evil goes unaddressed. Where justice is restorative and not punitive!

- Filled with righteousness – convinced to live right lives and empowered to do so
- Filled with all you need to thrive – not just survive.
- Filled. Blessed.

He said: Blessed are the merciful

- The one who chooses to deescalate
- The one who has every right to vengeance, and chooses to forgive
- The one who goes out of their way to be kind, to people. To animals. To nature.
- The merciful – those full of unmerited kindness – are blessed.

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For mercy is given to the merciful.

- For nothing is lost to God, no little kindness you do is ignored
- and mercy – kindness, forgiveness, undeserved, unearned, unmerited – is coming your way
- You are blessed!

He said: Blessed are the pure in heart

- The innocent hearts
- The hearts who intend good
- The hearts who seek God
- The forgiven heart
- Hearts who love

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For you will see God.

- Keep on loving – and you will see God
- Keep on forgiving – and you will feel God
- Keep on seeking – and you will know God
- Keep on intending good, and trying good – and you will encounter God
- Keep on the good path, the innocent way, and you'll discover God is with you

He said: Blessed are the peacemakers

- The social justice warriors
- The advocates
- The activists
- The ones resisting violence
- And challenging a world to be more wholesome for all

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. For you will be called the children of God.

- You are God's own child
- God's chosen
- God's beloved
- Because you will not let war, chaos, injustice, vengeance and strife –
- Because you strive to bring peace, stability, justice, mercy and wholeness –
- you are like God.
- Like a child is similar to their parent

He said: Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness

- You who are suffering slander

- And have rights taken away
- You who are oppressed
- And hated for standing with the ways of God

You are BLESSED in this awful state you're in. For yours is the kingdom of heaven.

- In your determination to stand by the good – you enter God's realm
- In your determination to live out love – you enter God's heaven on earth
- In your commitment to doing what is right – you bring the realm of God to all

He said: You are blessed when people revile you, and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account

- The lies
- The AI generated images
- The slander
- The targeted laws
- The drummed up hate
- The culture of intolerance

BLESSED. You are blessed in this awful state you're in. Joy is yours, gladness is yours, for your reward is great in heaven. The prophets were persecuted too.

- And Jesus was arrested, and killed for living and preaching to be kind to one another
- And John was arrested, and killed, for living and preaching be true to God
- And Elijah was exiled, and hunted with death-threats, for speaking truth to power
- And Moses was hated, lied about, and reviled, for challenging those abusing power

Blessed. Honoured. Respectable. You – who are upset about the world, who feel weary and tired, who are strung out and have shoulders that just keep aching with tension – you, who don't know if a nuclear winter or a global climate collapse will happen first – you who are wondering if you need to stockpile resources – you, who avoid the news because it so hurts, and you who cannot stop looking at the horror – you are blessed.

Blessed. Honored. Respectable. God is with you and I. God us with all who are hurting. We have not lost our conscious. We have not become numb to the pain. Our Spirits are the Spirit of God, and not one of anger, hate, despair and fear. If you are upset now – rejoice and be glad – God needs you, wants you, blesses you for the godly work of loving a hurting world and bringing it to wholeness, peace, stability, thriving, heaven-on-earth for all creation.

How do we do this? In so many ways. Today, I leave you with inspiration from song. As we learned in the learning time – songs have been protest against slavery for centuries. But songs are still used.

From 1987 to 1991, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania used songs to protest the Soviet Union's oppression and occupation of their countries. Songs of cultural identity, songs of hope, songs of peace, songs to unite the people. Through song, nonviolent song, the Singing Revolution brought about freedom to these countries.

You likely have seen Les Misérables. The opening and last song is "Do You Hear The People Sing?"

*Do you hear the people sing?
Singing a song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!*

This song was written for the play set in the turbulent times of France under Napoleon and Louis 18th fight for control.

This song is adapted and used in protests around the world. “Who hasn’t spoken out?” is sang in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Thai, Korean, and Sri Lankan versions exist.

Modern day protestors use song to live out the beatitudes and bring heaven to hellish places. In Minnesota, the Singing Resistance choir and the Brass Solidarity band bring messages of hope, joy, mourning, protest, and unity.

*This is for our neighbours who are locked inside
Together we will abolish ICE*

Bruce Springstein released a song just this week in protest.

Have you heard Canadian protest songs such as “I Pity The Country” by Willie Dunn?

*I pity the country
I pity the state
And the mind of the man
Who thrives on hate
Small are the lives
Of cheats and of liars
Of bigoted news-press
Fascist town-crier*

And I recommend Danny Michel’s song “Northern Star”

*Climb in your rocket ship and fly off to Mars,
Take all your money and buy all the stars,
But we ain’t for sale like one of your cars—
And the Northern Star, that one’s ours.*

Michel lists lots of other good protest songs in “Northern Star” so you can populate your list with songs and artists who protest injustice.

And sing therapy is a thing. We know from science that singing draws more oxygen into the body and makes us feel better. Singing lets us express what we’re feeling. Singing with words – without words – sing! Sing the beatitudes. Sing your resistance. Sing in solidarity. Sing to be unified. Sing to be part of something larger than yourself. Sing to join yourself to creation, and God, and each other.

Sing, and be blessed.
Amen!

Scripture Readings – Feb. 1, 2026 – for LCUCPC
Micah 6: 1-8 NRSV ue God Challenges Israel

6 Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

2 Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

3 “O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

5 O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

What God Requires

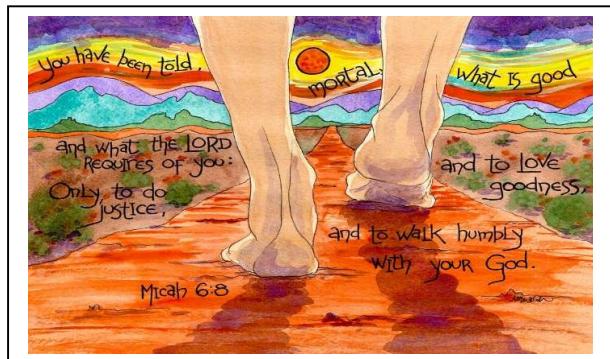
6 “With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?



Matthew 5: 1-12 The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

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

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

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

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

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

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

11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

May God's spirit shape our understanding of these words.

And may they awaken in our hearts