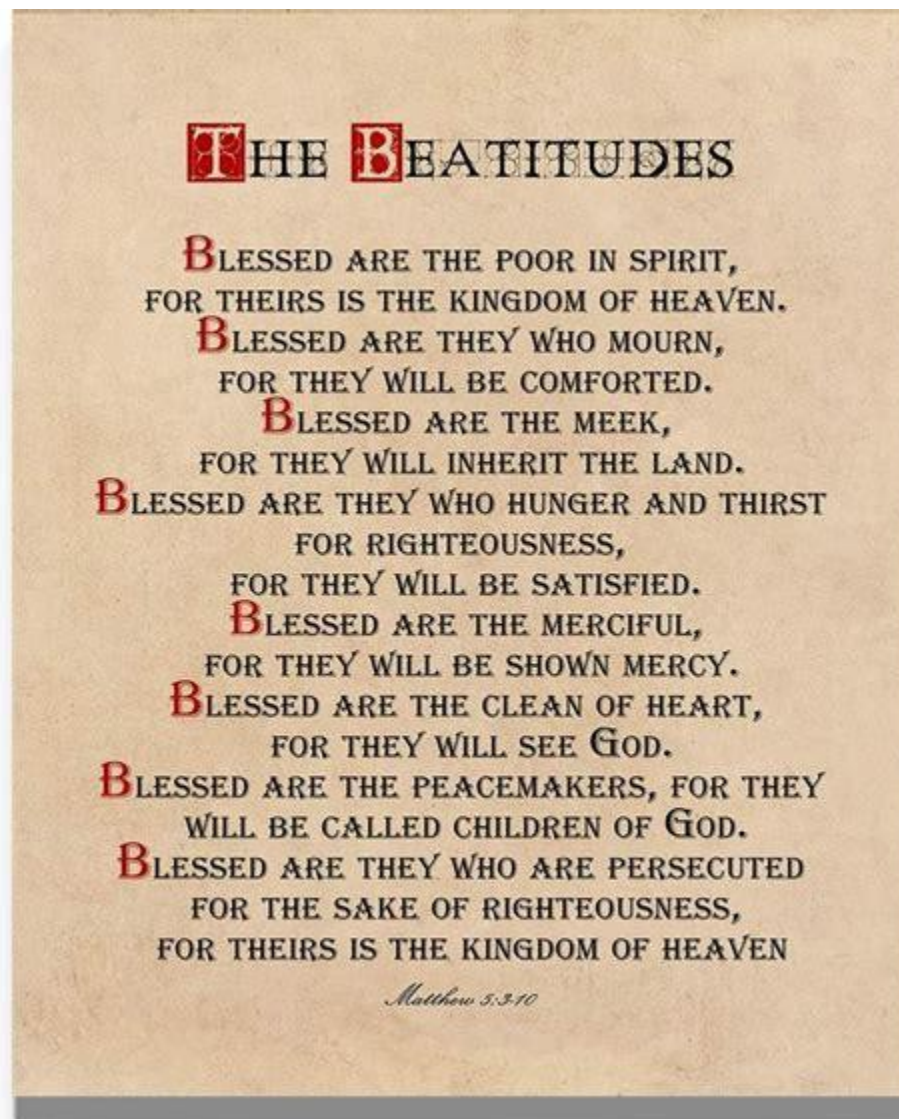


FROM FATHER JOHN: *"I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me? My help is from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. ... The LORD will guard you from all evil; he will guard your life. The LORD will guard your coming and your going, both now and forever."* ~ Psalm 121

Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.



Our Lord Jesus gives us the beatitudes but before He does that, the scriptures tell us that "When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:"

The first thing to pay attention to is that Jesus goes “up the mountain.” If we remember our scripture, Moses received the Ten Commandments on a mountain. And, Jesus’ transfiguration takes place on a mountain. And, when Jesus commissions the disciples at the end of Matthew’s gospel, it too takes place on a mountain. A mountain is a place of revelation. When Jesus went up the mountain in the passage above, we are being warned that revelation is about to happen; that Jesus is going to reveal something to us that is essential to our faith.

The second thing to pay attention to is that Jesus sat down; “After he sat down.” This is an important detail. In ancient Israel, Rabbi’s would sit down whenever they taught officially, whenever they were teaching something about the Law of Moses, they sat down. The fact that Jesus sits down tells us He is about to teach authoritatively, prophetically and that He is going to share something important to us.

In the beatitudes, Jesus says “Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are they who mourn... Blessed are the meek... Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness... Blessed are the merciful... Blessed are the clean of heart... Blessed are the peacemakers... Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness... Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you.”

He specifically chooses to use the word “Blessed” over and over again. He does not use “happiness”. Happiness is random. It comes from the words *happen and perhaps*. It’s a relative term that is hit or miss. Happiness is all about how we feel emotionally.

Blessed on the other hand is objective and has nothing to do with our feelings. We can be Blessed and not even know it. Or, we can be blessed and not even appreciate it. Someone once said, “When you have a toothache, you realize how wonderful it is not to have a toothache.” It is when we are sick that we most appreciate the blessing of good health.

Our Lord Jesus is telling us that we are Blessed not that we are just happy. He tells us that we are Blessed whether we know it or not, whether we appreciate it or not. Being Blessed is an objective state of *Being or Existing* in the world. Being Blessed does not come from a changing world but rather comes from the objective love, mercy and grace that our Lord shares with us. It is based on aligning our lives with the way of our Lord Jesus and how He lived in the world. When we embody his way of life in our own lives, when we align our lives with Him, we realize how truly Blessed we are.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.