

Blessed are...

The gospel for this coming Sunday (All Saints Sunday) is Matthew 5:1-12. These verses are the Sermon on the Mount featuring the Beatitudes.

Jesus began His sermon by nine times declaring His disciples blessed because of what God had in store for them. Jesus was not making ethical demands of His followers but was describing blessings they would fully enjoy in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1). (TLSB)

The word "*blessed*" means more than "happy," because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. "Blessed" here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.

When Jesus says "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" he is not saying that the kingdom is something earned. It is a gift of our faith which is also a gift given to by God. It is a possession that disciples enjoy even now here on earth.

In verse 12 Jesus says: "*rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.*" The source of joy for a disciple who suffers persecution is the promise of heaven. (TLSB) Heaven is the ultimate reward. Knowing that we are going to heaven even gives a joy and peace here on earth.

Though Jesus used this term when referring to heavenly blessings, He taught that the reward would be based on God's goodness, not the amount of work done. Any reward our heavenly Father gives is an expression of His grace.

On this Sunday many churches recognize those saints who have departed from this life in the past year. It reminds all of us of what God has in store for us when our lives end here on earth. We as Christians can rejoice in the news of these eternal blessings.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding us of what you accomplished for us while you were here on earth. Thank you for the comfort these "blessings" provide for us in our daily lives. Amen