



'Worship at home' January 29th 2023



We are still in the liturgical season of Epiphany, a time when we reflect on the many ways in which God is revealed in our world.

As God's blessings of love and grace are shown to us, we can respond by blessing others with love and grace.

Today as we consider our blessings, you might bring a **piece of paper** and a **pen** to aid your prayers.

Opening

Blessed are we

when our treasures cannot be quantified.

Blessed are we

when we know the gift of God's love.

Blessed are we

when we live in God's strength and wisdom.

Blessed are we

when we seek to bless others in God's name.

Amen!

How do you understand the word blessed?

When do you feel blessed?



We often understand the term **blessing** to refer to that which we are thankful for. You might **write a list of the things you are thankful for and give thanks to God for them.**

Matthew 5:1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is

the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for 1

righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is

the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. New International Version



This scripture passage is commonly entitled 'the Beatitudes'. The name comes from the Latin *beatus*, meaning 'happy' or 'blessed'. The Greek word used is *μακάριοι* which is translated as *blessed, happy* or *rich*. It denotes a state of inner happiness and wellbeing, and refers to God's gift or favour in our lives even when we don't earn or deserve it.

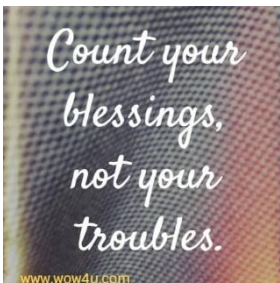
Sometimes we think of a blessing as being a reward, as if good fortune comes to those who do the right thing. We think that if we have enough faith, we will be healthy and prosper, and be blessed with abundance. However, being blessed is not a reward for a job well done, or for the accident of being born into a fortunate family. We do not need to prove ourselves in order to receive God's blessing and favour; it is not something we can earn or deserve. Blessing does not come about because we have it all together, or because of our achievements.

Rather, God's blessing comes in the midst of our struggles and disadvantage, as a gift from God, bringing God's love and grace, and a sense of inner peace and purpose that comes from being in relationship with God and seeking to live in the kingdom of God.

Jesus assures his followers that those who are poor, hungry, sad and rejected will find joy and a sense of wellbeing in the kingdom of God. This goes against the ways of our society, where wealth, belongings and happiness are what we aspire to achieve. Once again, we find God revealed unexpectedly in the ordinary struggles of our lives, turning our sadness and pain into joy and blessing.

Blessed
in the midst of God's love
blessed
in the midst of our world
blessed
in what we
feel... see... do
Blessed
even in the times we find it hard to see the blessing
Even then
we can know ourselves as the children of God
Especially then
we can
know... see... feel...
God's presence in our lives
Blessed
God's love in our lives
given by the One who came to save
Blessed are you
in the name of Christ

- Pastor Dan, <http://coslcgrace.blogspot.ca/>



*When upon life's billows
you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged,
thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings,
name them one by one,
And it will surprise you
what the Lord hath done.*



- Johnson Oatman (1897) Public Domain 3

Prayer

God, bless those who are in poor spirit,
who feel empty inside and who dread the day.
God, bless those who mourn and grieve,
who ache with loss for someone so much loved.
God, bless the people who are meek,
who do not grasp or shout or demand to be first in the queue.
God, bless the people who are hungry for justice
and who cannot wait for everyone to have their rights.
God, bless all who are merciful,
who have learned to forgive even those who hurt them hard.
God, bless all who are pure in heart,
in whom there is no vengefulness, but only love.
God, bless the peacemakers,
the ones who, by their words and deeds, can change the world.
God, bless the persecuted ones,
and keep them safe from those who would hurt them.
God, so rich in blessings for your children,
we rejoice in your promises
and in your boundless and transforming grace.
Amen.



~ Susan Durber

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk>

“Don’t just count your
blessings. Be the blessing
other people count on.”

- Anonymous

**As we receive God’s blessings of
love and grace, so we are called to
bless others with love and grace.
Consider how you might
intentionally do this over the
coming week.**

Closing

As you have been fed - go to feed the hungry.
As you have been set free - go to set free the imprisoned.
As you have been received - give.
As you have heard - proclaim.
And the blessing which you have received
from the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit
be always with you. Amen. ~ Rev. Daniel B. Randall, United Church of Christ

<http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/> 4