**Matthew 5:1-12**

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he opened his mouth 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 shall be comforted. **5** “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. **6** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. **7** “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. **8** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. **9** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. **10**  “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11**  “Blessed are you when others 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 so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**“Chosen Blessedness”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Immigration is a hot topic in the 21st century. 9/11 and terrorism has put a stain on much of what it means. We are land founded on immigrants, but that memory fades when families become residents. One story hit home a few years back. A person told me that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement also known as, “ICE” made a visit to Worthington. They said there was an eerie feeling with how that place instantly turned into a ghost town. No cars on the streets, nobody working at the hog factory, and Walmart had no shoppers. Immigration is more than moving, but a life without much security. Security comes only by way of fees, taking tests, and filling out applications for citizenship.

Changes coming now to policy in our country has moved our Synod president to write a letter to those, especially in Hispanic ministry. In it he states,

“We are already making our voice heard, both in Washington, D.C., and on the Synod’s Council of Presidents, in support of a thoughtful, prayerful and compassionate response to our broken immigration system, advocating for a response that does not act harshly and disrespectfully toward the undocumented and rejecting the callous separation and detention of families.”

The church faces fears by assisting in lawful ways to extend the light of Christ. Thankfully, One authority does not demand a test, fee, or application. **Entering into Christ’s kingdom comes with the greeting, “Blessed are you.”**

1. **The kingdoms of this world have their way for blessings.**
2. The basis for these blessings comes with boasting before God.

* Pride filled lives of glory sees no need for grace.
* The darkness of this world is denied or even celebrated.
* There is room only for demands of my will.
* Satisfaction comes by a righteousness of what this merits.

1. The nature of these blessings results in conflict with others.

* Relationships become mechanical, a means for manipulation, and at last meaningless.
* Hearts being filled of dishonesty and lies against our neighbors.
* Lives run with hostility, resentment, and lack of forgiveness.

1. The outcome of these blessings fail to save sinners.

* Sin infects life and it what makes the nations rage against one another.
* Death continues to sweep a judgment of the law over life that none escapes.
* The Devil gladly offers a delusion that denies Christ and the power of His cross.

1. **Christ has His way for making those blessed who enter His kingdom.**
2. The basis for these blessings comes by His sacrifice before God.

* He is the Savior “poor in spirit” who fulfills the plan of salvation for the sake of sinners.
* He is the Lord who mourns over the death of Lazarus, unbelieving Jerusalem, and any living in darkness.
* He is the Servant in meekness freely handing Himself over to His enemies.
* He is the Lamb that will not be satisfied until His righteousness bears the sin of the world.

1. The nature of these blessings puts Him in service to others.

* His mercy goes out to any with a relationship from God based on forgiveness.
* His purity of heart is the heart of God for Jesus says, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).
* His reconciling work proves by His resurrection that He is the Son of God and the peacemaker.

1. The outcome of these blessings does save sinners for all truth and love pours out from Christ.

* Sin has been washed away by baptism into His Name and this is the promise sent out to all those in troubled nations that rage.
* Death does not have the last say for Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24)
* The Devil loses his power of delusion before Christ crucified, “For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

1. **So the blessedness of Christ is the life that fills His Church.**
2. The basis for these blessings is forgiveness that comes from God.

* The poor in spirit claim no worthiness, but yours is the kingdom heaven for Christ won it already for you.
* Those mourning over the darkness, Christ shines saying, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:10)
* Meekness inherits what the strength of works and control cannot keep for by faith Christ has kept it safe in heaven for you.
* The hungering and thirsting for righteousness have satisfaction for God fills them by how He works in His Word and Sacrament.

1. The nature of these blessings is love toward our neighbor.

* It is an attitude of mercy not manipulation with people because God has a relationship of mercy toward us.
* Purity in heart through faith in Jesus knows God works good out of evil and remains grateful at all times.
* Peacemaking is the position God puts His baptized to the world reconciling offenses and striving to live with any without sacrificing the truth.

1. The outcome of these blessings is to rejoice and be glad.

* Suffering persecution for the Gospel reminds us that we belong to Christ and none other.
* It means the church is not saved by works, but what sustains God’s people is the life of Jesus at work among us.
* Satan has each of us in his sights, but you are never alone Christ in His joy says, “Take up your cross and follow me.”

Immigration is a messy matter carrying the baggage today of much fear. Laws must be enforced by countries for the sake of protection. Yet, in the sight of God these people are no less our neighbors. The big question remains, “What happens to those who especially having been baptized Christian must now return to homelands where certain death waits for them?” Regardless, what unravels from good outcomes, failures, or just carelessness among the kingdoms of men. Entering into Christ’s kingdom comes with a greeting at all times and places for His people to hear, “Blessed are you.” Amen. Now the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.