

Gospel Mt 5:1-12 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew



Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

Reflection The soul as memory means that when I meet God face to face, I will remember who I am and how I lived, and God will remember me. It's also a comfort for us to think that we will be reunited with those we have loved who have died before us, because we remember each other. The feast of All Souls is not a feast of sadness, but one of great hope and confidence. It invites us to entrust our deceased to God, because we know that they are really God's people. We know that if we have loved them, God has loved them more. They are in God's care, and like a good shepherd God will lead them to peace. The saints are those who have truly lived their life for God by being like Jesus. This gospel reminds us how we can be blessed. These are ways we can live the beatitudes in our lives.

"Happy are the poor in spirit." This is the message of the kingdom; it is the call of repentance. To enter the kingdom one must humble themselves before God and acknowledge that they bring nothing of their own power, possessions or merit to gain entrance.

"Happy those who mourn ..." The Messiah would comfort those who mourn, but the comfort would come because the Messiah would save them from their sin, the cause of the mourning. Mourning is to be "in the faith."

"Happy the gentle..." Meekness and gentleness and goodness are part of the fruit of the Spirit--they are produced in the Christian by the Holy Spirit. The direction people should follow to cultivate a spirit of meekness would be to walk by the Spirit, or be controlled by the Spirit of God so that the qualities of Christ can be produced in and through them.

"Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right..." The closer one lives to the Lord, the more sensitive he or she becomes to the unrighteousness and injustice in the world. The truly spiritual person then will begin to long for righteousness.

"Happy the merciful..." People who know more of God's mercy will be merciful. It is important, then, that people have a good understanding of the grace of God in their own lives.

"Happy the pure in heart..." How does one gain a pure heart? It begins with conversion when God gives us a "new heart," and it continues through the spiritual growth as we follow Christ. Walking in the light, meaning learning to live by the word of God, will change the way we think so that our hearts will grow more and more pure.

"Happy the peacemakers..." Disciples of Jesus should be promoting peace. They do this by spreading the Gospel of peace to the world, people should be living for Christ in this world, living the way members of the kingdom should live, championing righteousness and justice, showing mercy, remaining meek and poor in spirit--all the things that the beatitudes praise.

"Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right" Those who are identified with God are happy to be with God.

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What kinds of things can I do at home to help my child be a better reader?

There are many opportunities at home to bring reading into your child's life. Here are some ways you can help your child become a better reader.

- 1. Read yourself.** Your actions really do speak louder than your words. When your children see you reading the newspaper or curling up with a book, they will want to follow your example.
- 2. Make sure your children read every day.** Reading - like scoring a goal and playing the piano - is a skill. Like other skills, it gets better with practice. Researchers have found that children who spend at least 30 minutes a day reading for fun - whether they read books, newspapers, or magazines - develop the skills to be better readers. Add to your children's enjoyment of reading by discussing each book they read. It helps them learn to express themselves. You'll enjoy the conversations, too.
- 3. Get the library habit.** Make sure everyone in your family has a library card. Schedule regular trips to the library. While you are there, check out a book yourself!
- 4. Read aloud to your children.**
 - Start reading to your children when they are young. It is never too early to begin reading to your children.
 - Don't stop reading to your children as they grow older (even when they are old enough to read to themselves). You will both enjoy the chance to do something together.
 - Set aside some time each day for reading aloud. Even 10 minutes a day can have a big impact. Bedtime is a natural reading aloud time. Other busy families read aloud at breakfast or just after dinner.
 - Read books you enjoy. Your children will know if you are pretending.
- 5. Use the newspaper to encourage reading:** Organise a 'scavenger hunt'. Give your child a list of things to find in today's newspaper. Some ideas include:
 - A map of Australia.
 - A picture of your child's favourite actor, sports star or celebrity.
 - The temperature in the city where a family member lives.
 - Three words that begin with "w".
 - A movie that is playing at a nearby theatre.
- 6. Give books as gifts.** Then find a special place for your children to keep their own library.
- 7. Make reading a privilege.** Say, "You can stay up 15 minutes later tonight if you read in bed." Or you might say, "Because you helped with the dishes, I have time to read you an extra story."
- 8. If you are not a good reader, you can still encourage your children.** As your children learn to read, ask them to read to you and talk about the books your children have read. Tell your children stories - hearing about your family history and your experiences will help your children develop an appreciation of language, storytelling and the past

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