

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Beatitudes

Week 32

**Blessed are Those who Hunger and Thirst for Justice,
for They Shall be Satisfied**

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Reflection from Dorothy Day.
- ❖ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are good, and we praise You. Through Your Scripture, You lovingly tell us the story of our salvation and continue to speak to us today. Forgive us for the times that we haven't listened to You in the Scripture. In Your Scripture you tell us, "the Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) Thank You for coming to us so powerfully through Your Word. Help us to know that You long to speak to us through Your Word. Lord, teach us how to listen to Your voice speaking to us through Your Scriptures. Inspire us to meet You in Your Word daily. Jesus, we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Reflection: From Dorothy Day

People say,

“What can one person do?
What is the sense of our small effort?”

Dorothy Day says,

“...We can lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time,
we can be responsible for the one action of the present moment.”

“...It was human love that helped me to understand divine love. Human love at its best, unselfish, glowing, illuminating our days, gives us a glimpse of the love of God for man. Love is the best thing we can know in this life, but it must be sustained by an effort of the will. It must be still and quiet, dull and smoldering, for periods. It grows through suffering and patience and compassion. We must suffer for those we love, we must endure their trials and their suffering, we must even take upon ourselves the penalties due their sins. Thus, we learn to understand the love of God for His creatures. Thus, we understand the Crucifixion.”

~Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day, coming into her faith after years of atheism, found God in the streets among the destitute and homeless and then invited them into her own “houses of hospitality” for food, shelter, and care. She co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement and opened houses of hospitality for the poor across the country.

Reflection

Blessed are Those who Hunger and Thirst for Justice, for They Shall be Satisfied

Where last month's Beatitude, *Blessed are the Meek...*, was the least understood of all the Beatitudes, this one might be the most difficult one to live out.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for *justice*..." What is justice? According to the Oxford Dictionary, justice is "just behavior or treatment". But what exactly is "just behavior"? In today's world, justice is generally described using very vague, subjective concepts: righteousness, fairness, or the daily tit for tat negotiated around each party's special interests. Jesus, however, offers us a different understanding of justice, one that shifts the focus off of *what is just for us* to *what is just for the other*. Biblical justice is defined as God's way, made present in the world through genuine care for the community. This kind of justice has both spiritual and social components.

On a spiritual level, justice begins with a personal experience of God's care for us. Through our own hunger and thirst for God and the experience of our personal need for God, our deepest needs are met, and we experience being a beloved child of God. This understanding of beloved-ness gives us a sense of God's care and love for the other. Whoever hungers and thirsts for justice recognizes their absolute need to share in God's love.

We have to be careful, though. If we stop there and treat the word "justice" as only a synonym for faithfulness to God's will in every aspect of our life, we might give the word too general a meaning. We might forget that our faithfulness to God is primarily made known in justice towards the most vulnerable. This leads to the social aspect of this Beatitude.

God does not want us to lack for anything; He responds to our needs and asks only that we never store up more than we need. How many people suffer injustice, standing by powerlessly while others control and hoard the gifts that God provides? God asks us not to live in excess, so that others in need may have enough - we are called to seek just enough for ourselves in order to be able to offer more of ourselves for others.

True justice comes about in people's lives when they themselves are just in their relationship to God, expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor, the weak, and the most vulnerable.

Closing Prayer

A Step Along the Way
An Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise
that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom
always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

AMEN