

[Readings for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

“Blessed are you who are poor (in spirit) for yours is the kingdom of heaven....” Thus begins the greatest sermon ever composed. Both Matthew (5:1-11) and Luke wrote of Jesus’ inaugural message of blessings in his Sermon on the Mount. These blessings are commonly referred to as the Beatitudes, which stems from the Latin word *beati*, meaning “blessed.”

Unlike Matthew’s Beatitudes, which focus totally on those who are “blessed” and why they are blessed, Luke contrasts those blessed with those cursed. But obviously both gospels emphasize the same underlying reason implied by Jesus: we are blessed when we live justly and righteously, like God. In addition, Luke quotes Jesus preaching that we are doomed when we turn our backs on God’s love and mercy.

No matter what were Jesus’ exact words, the message of the Beatitudes is loud and clear for Christians and non-Christians alike. The Sermon on the Mount was one of Gandhi’s favorite texts and he reproached Christians “for their neglect of it.” The Beatitudes are the how-to-be-attitudes. Remember the Golden Rule (written across the full spectrum of religions)?! “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This is the essence of the Be-attitudes. That’s justice... period.

We live in a time with much revisioning of historical narratives by “alternative facts.” Most recently is the narrative that January 6, 2021 was a “legitimate discourse of ordinary citizens,” whose capitol break-in ultimately claimed the lives of seven persons. But Jesus said in so many ways (including these Beatitudes) that “you will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15–20.) This is the most reliable narrative and we must never forget it!

As Christians we are called *first* to heed the gospels and imagine WWJD (What would Jesus do?) Forget the “legitimate discourse” and the ever-changing, scripted narratives, fitting a particular political bias. We are called to be disciples of Jesus, not of this political party or of that one.

“ Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you,
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.
Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!
Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.”

“Blessed are you who are poor (in spirit) for
yours is the kingdom of God.”