

Our thanks to Brent Showalter for preaching on Sunday. This devotional harkens back to the sermon on the persecution of the righteous on November 7. You can view the worship service at cooks creekchurch.org/sermons.

Monday-Thursday

Read Matthew 5:1-12

It is the mission and journey of our lives to embrace, embody, and practice the ways of Jesus. So much of the teaching of Jesus is captured in these Beatitudes and we have seen throughout our sermon series that these aren't just things that Jesus says but we have learned that Jesus is the prime example of these teachings.

They are difficult teachings but they can form the mission of your life and the blessings of your life if you choose to chase after the heart of Jesus. Last Sunday, we talked about how Jesus practiced his righteousness nonviolently. In a violent world, that seems risky if not foolhardy. But when we practice the ways of Jesus, the blessings of Jesus will be upon us.

This week, read the Beatitudes and this devotional each day and push forward in practicing the ways of Jesus that the Beatitudes embody.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. If you practice the nonviolent righteousness of Jesus, you will experience more times of mourning but you will experience more comforting from the Holy Spirit.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. If you practice the nonviolent righteousness of Jesus, you will become more meek as those who chiefly desire worldly power will seem to trample over you, but Jesus promises you the earth in return for practicing his righteousness.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. If you practice the righteousness of Jesus, you will see how wonderful it is and you will hunger and thirst for more, and Jesus will give it to you.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. If you practice the nonviolent righteousness of Jesus, you will certainly be a person of mercy and God will be merciful to you in all the ways you have gone astray from God's commands.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. If you practice the righteousness of Jesus, your heart will become purer as Jesus must become greater in you, and you will be blessed to see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. The nonviolent righteousness of Jesus is the best way the world has and will ever know to make peace and when you live in the ways of Jesus you will be called a child of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Practicing the ways of Jesus will lead to persecution in some way but the reward is that the kingdom of heaven opens up to you and Jesus gives you an inheritance like none other.

Given all that, I cannot think of a better way to live. I can think of ways that seem easier, but I can't think of ways that are better. Live the ways of Jesus by living into his nonviolent righteousness – in the little ways and in the big ways – and experience the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

Friday

For Sunday worship, please read and reflect on 1 Samuel 2:1–10 and Luke 21:1–4.