

The Beatitudes: A Guided Devotional

BY KRISTEN IVY

Matthew 5:3-10

Blessed are the poor
in spirit
for theirs is the kingdom
of heaven.

AND I SAY

“But I’m angry. I want things to be different. I’m ready to fight.”

I might also say . . .

AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“Your rage will destroy you. You risk becoming hardened against people I created and died for. I make the sun rise for the just and unjust alike and I’ve asked you to be complete in your love as I am complete in mine.”

Blessed are those who
mourn
for they will be comforted.

AND I SAY:

“God, I mourn so deeply sometimes I don’t believe there can be any comfort. I even hope that comfort won’t come until the whole Earth mourns to the depth of the pain among us. And I think no level of future comfort could be worth this pain and this hurt.”

I might also say . . .

AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“No, not worth it. Nothing is worth it. But I’m here with you, and I feel the collective pain of every story more deeply than you have eyes to see and heart to feel.”

Blessed are the meek
for they will inherit the
earth.

AND I SAY

“How soon? How soon will you topple the power structures we have created? Can it be this year? Can it be now?”

I might also say . . .

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AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“I’m starting with the power structures of your heart.”

Blessed are those who
hunger and thirst for
righteousness
for they will be filled.

AND I SAY:

“What is righteousness? I have already produced more pain and hurt in this world than I can keep track of—and I do keep track of it. I know the faces of people I’ve hurt and I replay the tape in my mind. And those are only the ones I’m aware of, there must be countless others.”

I might also say . . .

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AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“I did not forgive you so you would carry shame around like chains. But the only way to fill your need for right relationships is to love. No food, no purchase, no lifestyle or any other thing in this life can satisfy your need for right relationships because this is how I made you.”

Blessed are the merciful
for they will be shown
mercy.

AND I SAY

“But what about the people who hurt me? I need to protect myself and others from their words and their actions. And what about the people who I see hurting others? They set me on fire.”

I might also say . . .

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AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“Speak up. Act with courage. Make things right for yourself and others. But that fire of hate inside you will consume you faster than any other thing. Let that go. You cannot love and make the world more loving while you still hold onto hate.”

Blessed are the pure in heart
for they will see God.

AND I SAY:

“But I’m not pure. How can my heart be pure? How will I ever see God?”

I might also say . . .

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AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“Remember when you walked outside to breath deep? Remember when you watched the birds in the trees with such wonder? Remember when you held someone who was hurting, when you called someone who was lonely, when you listened to someone who needed to be heard. Your heart has been purest in those moments when you saw me and didn’t even know because you were not thinking or trying you were just following Me.”

Blessed are the peacemakers
for they will be called the
children of God.

AND I SAY

“But I’m tired.”

I might also say . . .

AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“Yes, you are tired of being misunderstood and unheard. You are tired because the work is never done, and sometimes it feels as if there isn’t even progress. Rest. Refuel. I gave you Sabbath. But then keep going. What have I been saying? There is no estranged family member in the Kingdom of God. The only children allowed in are those who ache for their siblings return as passionately as I do.”

Blessed are those who are
persecuted because of
righteousness
for theirs is the kingdom of
Heaven.

AND I SAY:

“I feel like maybe You’ve already said this.”

I might also say . . .

AND JESUS RESPONDS:

“Maybe now you are beginning to listen.”