

11/2/25
All Saints
For Group Meetings from October 26th – November 1st

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER

Share: How did last week's scripture (John 8:31-36) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: Luke 6:20-31

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What groups does Jesus call blessed in this text?
2. What commands does Jesus give in verses 27-31?
3. Why do you think Jesus pairs blessings with woes in this text?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. When have you seen or experienced God's blessing in a time of struggle or need?
2. Which of the commands in verses 27-31 is the most difficult for you?
3. Who has been an example in your life in regard to loving your enemy?

Memorize this verse: "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied." (Luke 6:21a) What do you find yourself hungering for most deeply?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 149. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

There are some elements of the Christian faith that are just shocking enough, just absurd enough, just unsettling enough, that I'm regularly surprised that we believe it at all. The text from Luke's gospel lifts up one of those elements. St. Luke's version of the Beatitudes contains language that is just familiar enough to us that we can easily read or listen to it without really paying attention. We tend to hear it through Matthew's better-known version, where the poor are poor in spirit, and those who hunger and thirst do so for the sake of righteousness. But not so in Luke. In Luke they're just poor and hungry and hated — vagrant beggars who can't sustain themselves, can't provide for themselves or their families, are hard to look at, and are a drain on the system. In short, they're losers. And yet Jesus calls them blessed. Why? Simply because God always reserves God's most acute attention for those in need, those left behind by the powers that be, those left out of the lavish bounty of the world's produce. Sometimes called God's preferential treatment of the poor (especially in Luke's gospel), at other places epitomized by recognizing that God is always on the side of the underdog. God's unfailing and unflagging concern for the losers of this world is etched across the pages of Scripture in letters deep and clear enough for anyone willing to read. And in case we're not sure, Jesus goes on not only to uplift the poor and hungry and those hated for his sake, but also to warn those who are rich.

This is a challenging, if not problematic verse for most of us who would not identify as poor. Is that part of the reason it's hard for us to relate with the folks Jesus lifts up? Have we worked hard enough to attain a measure of security that hearing Jesus affirm what we have tried to avoid is unthinkable? Do we fail to recognize in the face of poverty near and abroad the face of our Lord, beckoning us to do with less that others may have more? Or does the idea of that kind of vulnerability simply make us shrink back and fail to recognize our own vulnerability and need? No matter how hard we try, this passage makes one thing unavoidably clear: Jesus is for losers. And the kingdom of God he proclaims is populated by losers. And unless we identify as a loser, we're likely not going to find ourselves anywhere near it or want to for that matter. All this, you may be wondering, just a week after Reformation Sunday and the declaration that we are not justified by our works or status but rather by faith in Christ alone. What's happened? Nothing. Except that in the face of these passages and on All Saints in particular we are forced to contend with the fact that we, too, are losers. We put great effort into convincing ourselves and those around us otherwise. We dress well. We live in nice homes. We work hard to be upwardly mobile. But no matter how hard we try, we are still racked by insecurities, still find it hard to love ourselves or others, still destined at the end of all of our striving to return to dust. We, too, are losers, and unless we recognize and confess that — not as something to be ashamed of, mind you, but rather as one of the defining elements of our existence — we will have a hard time receiving the mercy and forgiveness, grace and life Jesus offers. For what is the promise of mercy to those who are not weak, forgiveness to those who have not sinned, grace to those who do not need it, or life to those not dead? It is at best meaningless and more likely downright offensive. Only, finally, can losers appreciate the blessing Jesus offers and confers.

I'll be honest, I've worked hard enough and come far enough that I don't much like this message. Until, I can't sleep at night for fear of the future, or struggle to make through the day with a pit in my stomach that comes from deep-seated insecurity, or look around at the world as it is and recognize with the pang of insight that it could and should be better. At those moments, my pretense falls away, and I am left aware of my need, one loser and beggar uncomfortably dependent on the compassion and understanding of those around me and utterly in need of God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. In those moments, I am finally grateful that Jesus seeks out the lost, eats with sinners, and blesses the losers of this world.

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen