

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

November 1, 2024

Happiness is . . . Loving, and Serving God

Based on: Rev 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12a

By Marianne Couture

All Saints' Day! The Gospel is all about saintly living. It's Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the most familiar and beloved of Jesus' major teachings. Jesus teaches the Beatitudes. The word "beatitudes" comes from the Latin word "beatus," meaning "blessed" or "happy."

In this wonderful sermon, Jesus teaches how we, as Christians, should live, how we should pray, how we should treat our enemies and friends, and how God continually loves and cares for us.

Jesus gives us an explanation of happiness. He says, "Happy are people who are forgiving, they shall know forgiveness. Happy are the poor, for they will have riches in heaven. Happy are those who do what God wants, for he will answer their prayers. Happy are the people who share their love and friendship, because it will be returned. Be happy if people are unkind to you because of me, for you will be rewarded in heaven."

Isn't that an upside down idea of happiness? In other words, Jesus says:

- ◆ Happiness is not: having a lot of money; having power over others, being famous; hanging on to or wanting things the world says are important; being popular; or being able to do anything we want whenever we want.
- ◆ Happiness is: having our hearts centered on loving and serving God and others; bringing help, peace and gentleness into the lives of others; being forgiving; and trusting God in times of sadness, disappointments, hurt and persecution.

To help us live a "blessed" life, God freely gives us a share in his life – grace.

Through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and reconciliation, we receive his grace and Jesus touches and blesses our lives to make good choices, to trust in his promises, to love as he loves and then someday to gain heaven with him forever.

The saints in heaven – including our departed family members and friends – imitated Jesus and are our role models for living the Beatitudes. Following their examples, we, too, can strive to become saints and someday celebrate with them in heaven.

"Life here on earth is just the beginning. Heaven's the prize we can all be winning!" (from "Blessings Every Day," Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2001).

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Illustration by Phil Young