

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

February 16, 2025

Jesus Offers 'upside down' Idea of Happiness

Based on: Jer 17:5-8; 1 Cor 15:12, 16-20; Lk 6:17, 20-26

By Marianne Couture

Happiness is. . . Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, as found in St. Matthew's Gospel (chapters 5-7), is the most familiar of Jesus' sermons. In this Sunday's Gospel, St. Luke gives a much shorter version in his Sermon on the Plain (a stretch of level ground).

After spending the night in prayer, Jesus, with his disciples, came down from the mountain. A large crowd of people gathered to hear Jesus and hopefully to be healed of their sicknesses. The word "beatitudes" comes from the Latin word *beatus*, which means "blessed" or "happy."

Jesus tells us we are blessed not only when things are good but also when things are not so good. God is with us always.

Jesus addresses his disciples in the crowd, not the crowd itself. The challenging ideals Jesus presents are meant for those people already committed to following him. He gives a whole new explanation of happiness. Jesus says, "God will bless you people who are poor; his kingdom belongs to you. God will bless you hungry people; you will have plenty to eat. God will bless you people who are crying; you will laugh. God will bless you when others hate you or say cruel things about you because you are a follower of Jesus. When these things happen to you, be happy and jump for joy. You will have a great reward in heaven."

Wow! Isn't that an upside-down idea of happiness?

In other words, Jesus says:

- Happiness is not having a lot of things or everything we want. Because once we have them, we're never completely satisfied and we want something else.
- Happiness is knowing God loves us so much he gave us Jesus, his Son. Happiness is knowing that when we share God's love with others, Jesus will be pleased. And most of all happiness is receiving Jesus in holy Communion, the special gift of himself to us.

To help us live a "blessed" life, God freely gives us a share in his life - grace. Through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and penance (reconciliation), we receive his grace and Jesus touches and blesses our lives to make good choices, to willingly endure hardships for the sake of staying in close relationship with him, to trust in his promises, to love as he loves, and then someday to be with him in heaven forever.

Jump for joy! Jesus truly loves us!

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