

25th November 2025

Blessed

“Blessed are you ...”

Bible, *Matthew 5:11*

There are passages in the Bible with which I am very familiar. I learned chunks of the Bible when I was in Primary School and can still repeat whole sections word-perfect – in the Authorised Version too. There are several passages I’ve preached on regularly over the years, and which I know equally well – in a variety of translations: The Ten Commandments, Psalm 23, 1 Corinthians 13, Romans 8, The Sermon on the Mount, to name a few.

The trouble with familiarity, however, is that it breeds contempt. And if contempt isn’t exactly a word which I should associate with Scripture, familiarity certainly breeds apathy or complacency. “I know that well”; “I’ve been over that so many times”; “Been there, done that, got the t-shirt”, kind of thing. Such was the case for me with the passage from Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” from Matthew chapter 5, known as “The Beatitudes” – The “Blessed are those ...” list: well-known words; familiar themes; fertile ground for a preacher. Apathy, complacency? Oh, yes!

But hearing those familiar words again recently, a new thought struck me – that we are blessed in our “doing” *and* in our “not doing”. Let me explain. The merciful – those who exhibit mercy – are blessed. The peacemakers – those who work for peace – are blessed. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – who live with a passion for justice – are blessed. I get that. You do stuff, make a commitment, to *show* mercy, to *work* for peace, to *labour* for justice. These are all *active* verbs, *doing* words. God will bless us in our actions, the service we offer in His name.

But, alongside that, there is our “not doing”. We don’t choose to be bereaved – we just are. Feeling humble isn’t an activity – it’s a state of being. Being pure in heart isn’t a task – it’s an inner exploration. These are all *inactive* concepts. So, the remarkable lesson from this familiar Bible passage is this: we are blessed in our doing, *and* we are blessed in our being. The outward journey of service and action, and the inward journey of attitude and faith, are equally blessed. Oh, goodness! I just *love* that!

God blesses *all* aspects of our living, if we do the right things *and* if we have the right attitude. And I shouldn’t be complacent at all about that!

A prayer for today

God, thank you for the blessings you give – too great to measure, too many to count.

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