

Blessed

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Date: 31 January 2021

Preacher: Pastor Sherry Mahar

[0 : 00] ält Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 44] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[8 : 13] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. And I I will not be shaken.

I will my life upon you I and I will I I will I will I will put my I will put my I will put my I will put my trust in you alone.

not be not be not be not be I will I will I will I will I will I will you show me show me I will I will you show me I will you I will be you me good morning good morning

[11 : 45] I will be your good morning good morning good morning good morning It's good to see you on this nice enough day last Sunday in January late is a day last day in January how could it possibly be February already tomorrow what are you looking forward to most in February?

in February? Shots. Woo-hoo. I've been very, very blessed to have received both of the vaccines and it truly is a gift and a privilege and I hope that people when it becomes available seek out their heart and their body and make those decisions but that's a great thing. Anything else?

Are we still looking forward to the Super Bowl? No. Darn. So, I don't know, you know, I think as you've seen me bring a turkey up here, you've seen me bring a ham up here, I brought my checkbook and you could think all kinds of things about what that might mean but the reality is is that I brought it because I needed to write out a check to the church. This check is made out for \$30 and it's to help support the youth retreat.

So, if this pays for the cost of one youth to go, then great. If it's not needed to support a scholarship for a youth, then it'll be used for T-shirts or expenses or other kinds of things. And I'm going to put it in an envelope and put it in that box back there and that's my challenge to those of you who can.

I remember what it's to do. I remember what it was like to send two and then ultimately three kids to youth events and so always appreciated the multiple kid discount.

[13 : 52] God is always grateful for whatever we bring. God is grateful for us showing up whether we're here in person or online.

God is grateful for these kinds of gifts or the friendship kind of gifts or the we saw in the blessings, someone bringing homemade soup to someone kind of gifts.

God is grateful. I think that what God hopes is that whatever we give, whatever we offer comes from a grateful heart.

God is grateful for you. God, I trust that there are things in your life that you're grateful for. And in this moment as we think about this time of offering, I promise you that you'll be grateful for this particular gift of giftedness.

God is grateful for you. God is grateful for you.

[15 : 15] God is grateful for you. God is balm ■■■■■ depend defense for you.

God is gifts and grateful for you. God is merciful to you. God is Além sun set Candidate before you. God is calcul■■■ suntan Jai Euicho Before even time began My life was in His hands And He knows my name And He knows my every thought And He sees each tear that falls And hears me when I call I have a Father

And He calls me His own He'll never leave me No matter where I go Anywhere I go He is by my side Every step I know Love will be my guide In this my Father's world Oh let me not forget But though the wrong seems oh so strong

God is the ruler yet In this my Father's world Love through our griefs to bear Jesus is King Let the heavens ring God reigns God reigns In His grace He knows your name He knows your name He knows the depths of your heart He sees each tear that falls And He hears you when you call

He hears you when you call He hears you when you call Yes He hears us when we call He hears you when you call Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh

[19 : 47] Oh of all of your work.

Please accept our gifts back to you as we continue to sow generously to you and into the lives of others. Let it be pleasing in your sight. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen. Please take your seats. It is indeed a joy to come to God in conversation this morning. Amen. The ability to be able to open our hearts and share that which is on them, to lay our burdens down and to lift our joys together.

We know that it moves God when God's people come together in conversation, which we are about to do now. We know that there are a lot of concerns on people's hearts, many who need help because they need healing, those who are grieving and those with other challenges.

But let's not forget, God continues to bless and we have reasons for joy. So as we come together today, let's keep all of that in mind as we go to our Lord in prayer.

[21 : 21] Gracious and loving God, we do thank you that you do know our names. We thank you that you know that every single one of the hairs on our head is numbered, that you hold the very lives in your hand.

As we come today, we must give you thanks and praise for all the ways you continue to sow blessing and joy into our lives, blessing that brings true joy, blessing that lifts our spirits and lifts our hearts, blessing that shows the depth of connection, blessing that shows you are with us.

Lord God, we also know that you move and work in our lives in so many different ways, including the ways you can touch those who are hurting. So however people are hurting today, whether they need your healing touch, Lord, we continue to lay all those who are suffering from this dread disease among us.

Help us to do our part to overcome this pandemic, but Lord, work in the ways that only you can work. For those who are providing care, both the professionals as well as those who are loved ones offering support either at home or in other ways.

Lord, strengthen their hearts and souls that they will continue to be what those who are sick need them to be. For those who are suffering outside of this pandemic, but are grappling with other conditions and concerns.

[22 : 55] Lord, we see them as well as we know you see them too. So as our focus may be in one place, Lord, let us never forget the ways in which others are suffering as well.

Lord, we also come on behalf of those who are hurting because of need in their lives. Whether that need be physical, for hunger, for shelter, or for some other aspect of life.

Whether that need is for comfort because of grief or because of another situation. Lord, whether that need is for a relationship that needs to be healed or made right.

Or some other aspect of their mental health and clarity. However that need persists in life, we know that you and you alone are our great provider.

So we lean on you, we lean into you, trusting that you will provide and come through. Whether you work supernaturally or whether you come through your people. Help us to reach those who are suffering today.

[23 : 56] And Lord, for those who need to hear the story, those who need the good news, those who don't understand you are at work in their lives, whether they know it or not.

Give us the strength, give us the courage to tell your story. Give us the strength, give us the courage to share your love. Even when it's challenging, even when it's hard.

because we know that you are the one who can change things. You are the one who transforms lives and hearts.

Let us be indeed the body of Christ, the body of Christ that moves and works in this world for all those who need it. All this we lift to you this morning in his most precious name.

Amen. Amen. Micah 6, verse 8.

[25 : 28] He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Matthew, chapter 4, verse 23, through chapter 5, verse 12, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

News about him spread all over Syria and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases. Those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across the Jordan followed him. Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.

His disciples came to him and he began to teach them. He said, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

[26 : 41] Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. This is the word of the Lord.

In this passage, Jesus is singing a new song with an invitation to a new dance, saying something completely new to the people who are hearing it.

[27 : 54] A new dance, a new movement of God, the kingdom of God released. And the people are gathering, they've been listening, and they've been following, because Jesus is saying, the kingdom of God is here.

The kingdom of God is available to you. That is something that is inside out, upside down, totally new, mind blown. The thought was instead that people who had access to God did it through some sort of confined regulations.

That people who are blessed are only blessed because of certain external circumstances that proves their worthiness in some way. And we can really think of it the same way today.

We often do. I mean, when we think about hashtag blessed, we end up listing all of the things in our lives. You know, my family, my friends, I got a house, I got a job, I got money, I got all this stuff, this stuff, this stuff.

And we can internalize that and begin thinking, well, if I don't have those things, does that mean that I'm not blessed?

[29 : 12] Jesus is saying, no, blessed are you who are in these circumstances that are not usually considered blessed.

Upside down, inside out, blessed are you. And the term blessed, well, some people will say, well, you can translate that as happy. I don't buy it.

No, happy, maybe back then you could translate it as happy, but the term happiness and happy in today's culture has been devalued. Today, it basically means feeling good.

So, blessed and feeling good. No, no, no. If I could receive a chocolate chip cookie and feel good and be happy, but that's not blessed.

Blessed is so much more. Blessed is divine favor. Encountering God, the kingdom of God, manifesting in our hearts and in our lives.

[30 : 14] And those following Jesus, they heard about the kingdom and they witnessed and even experienced God moving through Jesus. People being healed, people being delivered, people coming out of their brokenness with the movement of God.

And they thought, Jesus knows God and we want to be part of that too. And so, this crowd is not likely the religious leaders. They're probably people who would never have considered them blessed in any way.

Blessed are you, Jesus said to them. These are people who are seeking and suffering, wanting, even longing to be included in God's movement.

and Jesus said to all of you who are following me, you are welcome to experience the movement of God. You are welcome into the divine dance.

Jesus is saying that to them and Jesus is saying it to us. Come, join me in the dance. And we're all dancers in this world.

[31 : 22] The question is, what dance are we dancing? Which songs are penetrating our hearts and minds that are causing us to move?

Causing us to dance in this world? The dance of the enemy, the dance of this world is a dance of hate, fear, envy, greed, and rage. A song is sung singing, blessed are the famous, blessed are the powerful, blessed are the wealthy, blessed are the beautiful.

It's a dance to a beat that drives us to pity ourselves and to envy others and to stay broken and separated with God and with others. But the dance of Jesus said, blessed are those who dance with me.

Blessed are the ones who hear my song, my song of redemption and restoration. Blessed are the ones who feel my rhythm, the beat of love and mercy.

Blessed are those who allow me to lead in the dance in holiness, kindness, and justice. Blessed are those who follow me humbly in my dance.

[32 : 34] Those are the ones who are blessed. Those are the ones who are divinely favored. With all of these proclamations of blessings, Jesus is saying that God is moving, breaking into the brokenness, singing a new song, inviting us all into the dance.

Blessed are the poor in spirit who move in the dance of humility before God, bowing low before the king. Blessed are those who resist the world song of independence that sings out that the world revolves around you and what you want and that there is no need to bow down or follow or give leadership to anyone, including and maybe even especially God Almighty.

Blessed are those who recognize their need for God and choose to be dependent, offering up all of ourselves in every moment saying, Jesus, take the lead.

A slow waltz, a fast jig, a sideways shuffle in my life and in this world I am following your lead. You, Lord, are the choreographer of my life.

Lead me in your dance. When I was a little girl, very little, my dad and I used to do a dance together called the jitterbug.

[34 : 01] Anybody ever hear of the jitterbug? The jitterbug is, for those who don't know, it's a fun dance. It's a partnering dance and my dad would lead and we'd do the motions and we're singing and he would move me this way and I'd move this way and we'd spin and we'd dance and we're dancing all around and my dad would take me in this jitterbug dance and he would put me up and he'd swing me this way and swing me that way and he'd throw me up in the air.

Again, I was little. I was little but it was so much fun. My daddy taking me and spinning me all around, partnering with him in this dance.

No matter what, I knew that my daddy loved me in that dance and always and I knew that I could trust my daddy even when I'm getting thrown up in the air.

I could trust him to catch me and I trusted him to lead me in that dance and we all have a heavenly daddy who loves us, who we can trust.

When we are poor in spirit, we offer ourselves in the dance, trusting in God's leading, trusting that God is going to catch us even as we're spun around and thrown in the air in that humility, we are richly blessed, experiencing the kingdom of heaven.

[35 : 21] Blessed are those who mourn, who dance in the dirge that plays sorrowfully because of the sin in our life and the sin in the world, who resist dancing to the world song that sings, there is no such thing as sin.

The remorse and regret are counterproductive that calls for a dance of defensiveness and to never admit to any wrongdoing. Blessed are those who mourn the sinful and sad state of our world, a world in broken relationship with God and with one another.

Blessed are those who enter instead into a dance of repentance, confessing sin and turning from it for they will be comforted by God and dance in his grace.

Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth. This is not a wimpy, pushover, walk all over you dance. Blessed are those who step into the dance of Jesus' strength and confidence, who are then able to move in the dance of power under control and restraint, who can offer a non-anxious presence in the face of adversity.

Blessed are those whose dance can turn the other cheek, not because they couldn't strike back, but because they choose not to.

[36 : 54] Blessed are those who resist the songs of the enemy with violence of thought, violence of speech, violence of action against others and sometimes even against ourselves, who resist the world's tune of anger and revenge, but instead choose to dance by following the leading of our master, Jesus, who is controlled, that we are controlled in our will by the gentle and loving nature of our Savior who gave himself up for us on a cross for sinners like us.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are those who step into the dance of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, God's justice within themselves and with others, the dance of right relationship with God and with others.

Blessed are those who long to dance closely with God. Blessed are those whose heart is broken by what breaks God's heart, who is moved by what moves God and whose dance is fueled by knowing God's heart.

Blessed are those who resist the song of the world that sings that there is no real truth. There is no real truth that sings that we are complete without God and invites us into a dance of self-sufficiency and freedom from holy expectations.

Blessed are those who instead dance to whatever pleases God. Blessed are those whose dance reflects Jesus. Blessed are those who are merciful for they will be shown mercy.

[38 : 53] Blessed are those who respond to Jesus' song of redemption, recognizing their own need for mercy and stepping into Jesus' dance of forgiveness, his dance of grace, that dance to the Lord's prayer that sings forgive us as we forgive others.

Blessed are those who resist the world's songs of pain and do not dance in resentment and bitterness but instead dance toward pain and brokenness in whatever way that God leads and seek to be in restored relationship in whatever way God would have it.

Blessed are those who dance in the love of mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Blessed are those who dance the same godly dance even when no one is looking and even if no one else would ever know.

The ones whose hearts are changed toward holiness, whose values are determined by God alone having holy integrity and holy character. Blessed are those who are after God's own heart who resist dancing to the song of the world that says do what is easiest, do what is most desirable, do what's most popular even if it's wrong.

The dance of the world that says do whatever you want and you can do it as long as you don't get caught. But blessed are those who instead follow God's song, move in the dance of the pure, the pure in heart and the pure in life, cleansing the vision of our soul and we will see God moving in our lives and moving in the world.

[40 : 46] Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God, children of God who reflect the image of their heavenly daddy and in their dance of peacemaking they dance with God who dance for real and lasting peace which comes through grace and truth of God.

Blessed are those who dance in God's truth, who dance to God's righteousness, having right relationship with God through Christ and moving toward right relationships in the world.

Blessed are those who dance to God's tune of reconciliation and healing of understanding and acceptance.

Blessed are those who resist dancing to the world's song of dissonance that causes a dance of separation, a dance of division, a dance of conflict, a dance that celebrates condemnation and hatred, a dance of clenched fists, of closed minds and hardened hearts.

Instead, blessed are those who are dancing in the harmony of God with hands reaching out, inviting others in a circle dance of peace, a circle that grows wider and wider in unity and grace, love through Christ and showing them the steps of the dance of Jesus.

[42 : 22] God's circle dance of peace centers on Jesus. It is not one that bows down to the world, that spins around sin trying to say that what's wrong is right.

It's not an acceptance of sin, but it is an acceptance of people. For everyone has fallen short of the glory of God and are offered grace.

Even those who are believers who seek to dance only in God's truth can become in conflict with one another. Blessed are the peacemakers.

And we may find ourselves dancing with those who have two left feet or with those who have not yet learned all the steps of the dance. And in the process of growing in the dance, there may be some stepping on toes and all of this threatens peace.

And yet, as peacemakers, we allow them to even stand on our toes as we teach others to dance. God's circle dance is a dance of truth, humility, and mercy that makes peace.

[43 : 31] The dance of the blessed to be a blessing in the world. And everything leading up to this, humility from being poor in spirit, mourning sin within ourselves and within the world, the meekness that offers peace instead of conflict, being filled with the righteousness of God and God's truth, having experienced God's mercy so we can offer mercy to others, and being pure in heart, a character built on the holiness of God.

With that as our foundation, we extend outward, being peacemakers. But the world sings a song of attack. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Blessed are those who dance to God's song, to God's will and not our own, that dance to a tune that celebrates godliness instead of worldliness.

The world song plays a beat that seeks to beat us down because the world does not know God and certainly does not love God. The song of God plays and the world can be deaf and defiant.

[45 : 04] The dance of God moves among God's people and the world can attack and condemn. Blessed are those who resist the world's song to sway away from God's truth, who instead dance firmly on the rock of Christ even when the world tries to beat them down with the drumming of persecution and lies.

Blessed are those who instead of swaying under that beat lift up higher and higher God's word, God's truth, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Kingdom people participating in kingdom living, experiencing the kingdom within, led by God, partnering in God's holy dance to spread the message of the kingdom of God to the world, inviting them all into the dance with the spark of the Holy Spirit, like an electric slide sliding alongside someone and inviting them into the dance with Jesus, a grace-filled dance following the leading of the Holy Spirit that says to dance in this way, speak to that one, minister over there, lift up that one, reach out in this place, hold that one closely, share with this one, rejoice with that one, mourn with that one, give here, offer yourself there, speak now, be quiet now.

We are blessed to be a blessing in this world, one moment, one heart, one life at a time, touched by the song of redemption and restoration that causes us to dance.

And Jesus, as the Lord of our dance, sings, dance then wherever you may be, I am the Lord of the dance, said he, and I'll lead you all wherever you may be, and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

[47 : 18] in the Spirit, amen. Amen. Amen. As we are about to begin, I invite you to take the cup that you were given.

When it comes to dancing, I have two left feet. When it comes to many things, I find myself just an ordinary human person.

But one of the things that I remember, and I invite you to remember too, is either the very first time you received the gift of the sacrament of Holy Communion, or maybe the first time you realized what it meant.

Which means that no matter your clumsiness, no matter your missteps, no matter if you can twirl around the floor like a magician, what this means is that God said, I love you so, so much that I give my son so that you may live.

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

[49 : 10] Let us give the thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and a good and a joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth or you had formed the earth from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the very breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

[50 : 28] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ, in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation.

In his baptism and in table fellowship, he took his place with sinners. And your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and announce that the time had come and you would save your people.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread. He gave thanks to you and broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And so, in remembrance of these mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith, Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

[52 : 36] Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and the blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen. Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Let us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[53 : 50] For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. I invite you to take off your masks, and open the side of your cup that has the cracker.

The body of Christ broken for you. And the blood of Christ shed for you.

May we feel the love, and may God be glorified. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Moving today, a little dancing.

We're going to lead together. What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms.

[55 : 39] Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms. What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms.

I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms.

Leaning, leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

So think of worship as a giant dance party. Imagine that we are being filled with the songs of redemption, the songs of restoration.

And we are learning how to move. And our spirits are moving in that dance. And we dance together in that celebration. And then as people filled with the movement of God, we go out in the world.

[56 : 58] And maybe we even do a flash mob as people watch and celebrate and see our dance moves. We may not be graceful in our dancing, but we are grace filled in our dancing.

Amen. So let's go out and dance the dance of God being filled with his grace in the dance. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.