

## 8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A

*Isaiah 49: 14-15 + Psalm 62: 2-9 + 1 Cor. 4: 1-5 + Matthew 6: 24-34*

Holy Spirit Church: February 26, 2017

Do you remember the 1<sup>st</sup> Beatitude, the one which all the others build upon?

*“Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.”*

Those who are truly poor in spirit, those who know who they really are before God, trust that God will provide what they need.

Those who understand their absolute poverty, that everything they have and are comes from the God who has given them life, are able to trust that today their Heavenly Father will give them their daily bread.

Those who embrace the truth of the 1<sup>st</sup> Beatitude see their proper place in God’s world, that they are not God and not meant to provide for themselves on their own power, but that they are creatures who depend upon the Creator for everything, even their very next breath.

Do you remember 4<sup>th</sup> Beatitude?

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.”*

Those who take this attitude toward life believe that putting one’s life at the service of God and God’s kingdom means that everything else will be provided.

These blessed ones seek God’s kingdom first, they long to live by the righteousness of God, which means living in right relationship to God, to others, and to God’s creation. How?

By putting into practice the teachings of the Righteous One, the Son of God, and joining their lives to His.

Do you remember the 6<sup>th</sup> Beatitude?

*“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”*

*“Pure of heart”* is another way of saying those whose hearts are undivided, who love God with everything they have and are, and this love spills over to love of neighbor as oneself. Those who are clean of heart focus their energy on serving God in everything, seeking God’s Kingdom first in all they do, trusting that the hand of God will feed them and grant their heart’s desire.

Today's Gospel selection on trusting in God from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" begins with the statement that we cannot serve both God and Mammon. When we serve God, trust grows; when we serve Mammon, worry flourishes.

Remember that "Mammon" stands for money and all the material things money can buy. Money and material things are not evil, but the love of money & material things is the root of all evil.

The love of money, the attachment to material things, the passion for material security—this is what leads to divided hearts, restless hearts, hearts that dry up and wither because Mammon cannot deliver the divine love the human hearts seeks.

After all, life is more than meeting simply our material needs, for we are not just body, but body and soul---we are enfleshed spirits in this world.

Our deepest hungers, our greatest thirsts, the grandest desires we have touch on the life of the soul and our relationship with the divine.

The question which we all eventually have to answer is:

*"Who do I serve?"*

We all serve someone or something, we all place our energies and talents and loving at the service of something or someone we think is greater than our small selves.

Will we serve the living God, the one who provides food for the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field and who longs to provide for us, we of little faith?

Or will we serve those things which are not god, but who we make into idols who have eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear and are heartless in their demands?

In order to catch glimpses of God here and to see God fully in the life to come, we cannot be serving anyone or anything other than God.

In order to be satisfied, we put our lives at the service of God's Kingdom, no other kingdom.

By doing so, we live out of right relationships-- with God, others, and God's creation.

Those who are poor in spirit, who are already being given a taste of what the Kingdom of heaven is like, give themselves in service to One Master and One Lord and One King—the King of Kings himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As they do, everything else falls into its proper place in their lives.

As they seek first the Kingdom of God, Mammon serves them and God's kingdom.

After all, the Triune God in whose service we find the fullness of life, is the One who first seeks us out like a Father looking for his lost child, who as the Savior saves us from death and brings us new life, and who as the Spirit blows us to where we need to go.

We seek first the Kingdom of God because God in Christ through the power of their Spirit has first of all come seeking us out, to find us, and lead us into the Kingdom where kindness and truth kiss, and justice and peace embrace.

This is the God who, like the best of all mothers, feeds us and clothes us and never forgets us.

This is the God, who carries us in her womb before we are even conceived, who nourishes us even before we know we are being fed, who embraces us in love even before we are aware of such a life-giving embrace. Even though God's children turn away and go looking for love elsewhere, God will never forsake nor forget God's own.

In order to receive the truth of God's love, we have to reject the lies of the Evil One. Especially when we are going through hard times, the Evil One whispers in our ears lie after lie, tempting us to close our hearts in the belief that God has abandoned us.

The Father of Lies whispers: *"God has forgotten you."*

The truth: ***"Even if a mother forgets the child of her womb, I will never forget you."***

The lie we listen to *"You are all alone."*

The truth: ***The Lord has never left your side, even in the darkest times.***

Because the Son of God has entered into the darkness of suffering on every level, not just physical but emotional and spiritual suffering, we are never alone—He is with us. With Jesus come the Mother of God and all the saints of God and all our dearly beloved departed,

So, we are not only never alone, we are surrounded and supported by love at every instant.

The God whose love is like a mother's love, but even greater and grander, feeds us her children at this table, nourishing us with heavenly delights under the guise of earthly food and drink.

Thus, our deepest desire---union with God---is satisfied at this table where we are fed with the very life of God.

Union with God's Son leads us into a Communion of Love existing between Father and Son and Spirit, which is the very heartbeat of the universe.

Joined to Him, we are filled with His Spirit and strengthened to trust that the Father will provide what we need, this day and always.

*Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi*