Good morning, Pine Ridge Family!

*“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12 [KJV]*

What does it mean to be blessed? In Matthew 5:3-12, we have the Beatitudes. The name comes from the Latin translation of blessed. English translators struggle with our translation and often are forced to use the less than accurate English word “happy.” Even John MacArthur uses “happy,” but explains it like this, “to be blessed in not a superficial feeling of well-being based on circumstance, but a deep supernatural experience of contentedness based on the fact that one’s life is right with God.” Blessed is what God is and to be blessed by God is similar to the common term we have for believers “saved.” The people who have the characteristics of the ideas expressed in this passage are people of God.

So what are the characteristics of the blessed? They are “poor in spirit.” This probably doesn’t mean what you think it means. The term does not mean the downtrodden or morose. It means the lack of pride. The prideful believe that they do not need God and do not seek Him. Any hope of salvation dies before it starts. It is only those who lack pride who seek him.

Next is “those who mourn.” These are people who mourn – over their sin. Jesus is talking to people who have just come from John the Baptist’s sermon on repenting of their sin because the Messiah is coming. They accepted that they had to be right to even face this Christ.

“Humble or gentle or meek!” Whichever way you chose to translate this, it again strikes out at pride. The key to this verse is the reward – the earth! The proud believe that they deserve all they can get and more. The humble knows that they don’t deserve anything – but the Lord promises them everything.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Here is one we have no problem understanding; our problem is fulfilling it. The important point here is that God loves to satisfy those who come to Him.

 “Mercy!” This strikes at our self-righteousness. We deserve justice – at least we think we do. We will devote much of our energies to gaining justice for our wrongs. God provides justification and restoration and then selects us for it in His mercy. The One most offended by our sin sets it aside out of mercy.

Tomorrow, the rest of this passage.

In Christ, our Lord…

Pastor EA