

## Questions & Answers (Matthew 5:1-12)

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. 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.*

I wonder if any of you might have spent any time with young children lately? Or maybe for the adults listening, you might have young children yourself. If so, this is the sort of thing you might hear from them: Mummy, why is the sky blue? Why does it get dark at night? What are clouds made of? Where does God live? What happens when we pray? Mummy, why are there so many bad things in the world?

All of us ask questions, and even though the questions change as we get older; and sometimes get harder to answer, we still keep asking them. In our reading today, Jesus was giving answers to some of those hard questions that the people around him were asking: for the most part, they were poor, hungry and living in a country occupied by a foreign army. They had a lot of questions about the world so Jesus sits down, and says, “Listen! I know some of you are going through hard times right now, but God doesn’t **want** it to be this way and it **won’t** be this way forever. God will bring justice, mercy and peace...but in the meantime, you have some work to do too.”

Being a Christian is about having this sort of hope. We understand things aren’t perfect now, but we have (and faith) that one day, things will be better. But is it’s God’s responsibility to make things better in the world or is it ours? Well, there’s a really famous quote that some of you might have heard: “You either have to be part of the solution, or you’re going to be part of the problem.” So we *could* just sit back and wait for Gos to fix things, or we could stand together and *choose* to help *make* things better by using our own actions to bring the light of Christ into a sometimes dark world. So for example:

When you encounter someone who is mourning, can you sit with them, listen to their pain and help to bring some light into their situation? When you encounter someone who is in the middle of a dispute, is there a way that you can help to bring peace into that situation? If someone is experiencing a lack of justice or mercy in their lives, is there any way that you can stand in solidarity with them to help bring justice and mercy into their lived experience? These are just examples but all of them are calls for action: So keep on having faith in God and in the meantime, what can YOU do to help make the world a better place? *Rev’d Charlotte*