

Wednesday, August 12, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be
satisfied. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are those who
are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

Matthew 5: 3ff

I think it is safe to say that we are in "waiting mode" these days. Things are not the way they used to be, and we are hoping things will not stay the way they are. We are waiting for something to change. We can imagine what the change will look like. We would like things to go back to the way they were before the pandemic – not that things were perfect then either.

Who would have ever thought that a time would come when we would just want to be able to go out in public without a face covering, or get together with friends without worrying about what we might catch from them, or go to church without having to "make a reservation" and then when you get there having to get your temperature taken before you go in! We, or maybe I should say "I," took it all for granted. Maybe we have lowered our expectations a little when it comes to what we expect life to be like. But we are waiting for things to change. I guess we're waiting for a vaccine.

Waiting for a new set of circumstances is pretty much what the Christian life is all about. The reading at the top of this page is a portion of the "Beatitudes" that Jesus proclaimed during what is known as His "Sermon on the Mount." In the Beatitudes Jesus is telling those who believe in Him to hold on. He's telling them it's okay to be waiting for things to change. He tells the "poor in spirit" that the day will come when they will be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven. He tells those who mourn that the time will come when they will be comforted ... forever.

We have gotten used to life in this world. It's not as big of a shock to us as perhaps it should be when we read or watch the news and hear of horrible things that have happened, or how people treat one another. When it comes right down to it, isn't that really the biggest news these days – the way people treat one another? At least for me, that's the kind of news that most often causes me to shake my head. This should be of no surprise to us, though, because the Bible tells us that in the Last Days "the love of most will grow cold."

So, as Christians, we are waiting for things to change. The Bible does not tell us that things will get better in THIS world – in other words, this is not the world to focus on. That's not what He died on the cross to accomplish. Jesus died on the cross so that whoever believes in Him as Savior and Lord will be welcomed into a new place – the "home of righteousness," as the Bible puts it. In the meantime, we are waiting; but we are not waiting in despair. We are waiting with joy and anticipation! According to Jesus, those who are waiting for Him are "blessed." We are blessed because waiting for something Jesus has promised is just about as good as the fulfillment of that promise.

God's peace to you as you wait!
Pastor Jim