

The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3 “You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more [room for] God...

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

4 “You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Then you can [know the true embrace] of [the Holy... the More of life].

5 “Blessed are the meek (and humble), for they will inherit the earth.

5 “You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. That’s the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

6 “You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

7 “You’re blessed when you care. At the moment of being ‘care_full,’ you find yourselves cared for.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

8 “You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

9 “You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

10 “You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom.

11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

11_12 “Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

We saw a great video created by Maddie Boevers and Maddy Lawrence. They asked several Christ Church folks -

Tell about a person who influenced your faith.
What did they do that influenced you?
Do you remember something they said?
Is there something that you do today because of their example?

We have seen this special video.... and I'm sure each of us have people who come to mind who have influenced our faith.

All Saints' Day is a time to remember Christians of every time and place, honoring those who lived faithfully and shared their faith with us. As United Methodists, we call people "saints" because they exemplify the Christian life. In this sense, every Christian can be considered a saint.

So what characteristics do you consider as saintly?

Loving

Humility

Prayer warriors

People of their times

Not perfect

Risk takers....taking a stand for others

Generous and giving

Inner Strength

And I realized as we share these traits, several people come to mind for me who have influenced my faith. But I often think of my mother's father, Clyde Totten. I wouldn't have said this as a child, but I have come to realize the powerful witness he represents in his very quiet way. He was steadfast and loyal. He was faithful. He was curious about many things, but I never heard him say a judgmental word about anyone. As a child, I didn't know him well, because he was a very quiet man, with a rare smile. But he took care of my grandmother through many years of her mental illness. He endured and he advocated her. At her memorial service he spoke of Mary (my grandmother) in ways that I could not even believe. He knew the vivacious, creative Mary he had met and fallen in love with and always held on to her even when her mental illness clouded any recognition of that woman. Of course, he was not perfect. He was a saint. My mother relayed to me that one time she spoke with concern with her dad, wondering if she was going to turn out like her mother. And he said, "No, you are Tricia. You are not Mary." That simple reassurance was what she needed and

she remembers that to this day.

We have named these traits that we feel are saintly.... and each one of us in this room is a saint in training. We all are kind sometimes, and loving toward others, and caring folks. Some of us are very brave and bold in our ability to stand up for others.

John Wesley didn't believe we should worship "saints" but we should indeed strive to live a life of kindness, compassion, and love as Jesus teaches us again and again.... we should aspire to that kind of witness.

There are many stories of saints. If our eyes are open, we can see them every day. I just read a sweet story that illustrates sainthood in several ways

A Florida man John Joyce has been retired since 1990. He's 83 years old and one of the things he likes to do is mow lawns. Robert and Nikki Norton began having John mow their lawn once a week for the past few years.

Norton and his wife, Nikki, have paid Joyce to mow their lawn near Gulfport for a while. Joyce showed up on time, every time. Until one week, he disappeared.

"About three months later, John knocked on my door and said, 'Mr. Robert, it looks like you found someone else to mow your lawn,' " recalled Norton.

John had been sick and in the hospital. As soon as he recovered, his 1995 F_150 pickup truck broke down. Still, he wanted to work on the Norton's lawn.

But John Joyce is pretty old school.

He had taken his truck to the shop to have the engine repaired and the mechanic messed it up even worse. John started walking 2.5 miles from his house to the Nortons to cut their grass.

When the Norton's found out that Mr. Joyce was walking, they set up a GoFundMe page. They raised over \$13,000, enough to do something

pretty sweet for a hard_working man.

Robert and Nikki Norton cashed in the money raised by a Go Fund Me page that they set up for John and bought a 2004 Nissan SE King cab V8 truck for the man who had been mowing their grass for years.

The Go Fund Me page raised a total of \$13,080. That money was able to cover the cost of the truck, insurance, gas and some new lawn equipment.

Mr. Joyce is quoted as saying that he feels like a millionaire.

Eugene Peterson interprets some of the beatitudes in ways that shed light on a different.... and even clearer meaning.

(Re read with some from NRSV, too)

Today we remember the saints in our lives living and those who have died. We are grateful for their witness, their presence in our lives. And we are also saints in training. We are called to strive to be kind and loving, to be generous and giving. We are called to live our lives as best as we can after the example of Jesus.

Blessings upon us all!