

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 2020
Matthew 5

Holy Spirit, Light Divine/Shine upon this heart of mine
Chase the shades of night away/Turn the darkness into day.
Let me see my Savior's face/Let me all His beauties trace.
Show those glorious truths to me/Which are only known to Thee

Matthew 5:1–12 Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

2And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

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

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

5“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

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

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

9“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

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

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

In the Name of Jesus.

Jesus gets rolling BLESSING His disciples, y'all, me, the nations—His authority!—and the Spirit-Dove upon Him doesn't even CONSIDER CONTAINING Himself! It's always MORE and MORE and MORE and...

¹³“You are the salt of the earth,...

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ¹

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 5:13–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

²

And THAT is just the end of the chapter that began with blessed, blessed, blessed!

⁹ Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

THAT is a good PRAYER?! It’s the ONLY prayer!

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 5:38–6:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

3

9 And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. ² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.”⁴

¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” ⁵

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

THEN---AFFFTTTERRRRR the giving of His Body and His Blood for the forgiveness of their sins—He assures them of the continuing sinning. THEY—‘THEY?!’—WHOM ARE WE KINDDING?

WEEEEEEEE—MUST...FIRST REACTION...DENY IT!

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 6:25–7:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 9:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 9:9–13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹ Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³² But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” ³³ Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” ³⁴ Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” ³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same. ⁶

But now we have a Lawgiver, a King, with us to the end of the age, Whom....

Listen to your poor preacher! I got nothin’ else goin’!

This whole thing only WORKS—His Kingdom and authority and all—when people like you and me....TAKE PITY ON JESUS; GIVE HIM A BREAK; JUST GO ALONG WITH WHAT HE SAYS: that those upon whom the rain has fallen and who have heard what any LOSER—LIKE...YOUR....PAUL...YOUR...PASTOR...YOUR CHIEF OF SINNERS....

If I AM your certainty of God wrapped around your little finger; God hanging on every word that falls from your lips; God DEFINING HIMSELF BY whatever GOOD He works in us in this world—but FAR MORE—CERTAINLY!—God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit rulers, holds sway—HE DEFINES HIMSELF BY ALL THAT IS WRONG WITH US! THAT freely given means Jesus-for-sure!

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:26–35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in
 the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And
 behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” ⁷

Doctor Martin Luther stated that when the devil appeared to him to scare him into denying the Gospel, Luther HURLED his INKPOT at the devil! I was told once you could see the stain of the ink on the wall of one of his outlaw-hideouts. (He was a heretic, you know. Cast out of the ONE, HOLY, ROMAN, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH! [Ouch!] AND an outlaw in the eyes of the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE [Who cares?])

There’s no ink on the wall. Ink goes on paper, my dear ones. The inkpot Luther hurled was what he wrote for the Gospel against the tyranny of the Law and the devil and Moses and the pope and self-esteem and religion and anxiety and his own sinful insides....

The devil appeared to your wretched minister this week. Took a while to reach and grab Luther’s ink. Holy Satan just about had me all the way down his throat. By using—his worstest trick!—quotin’ the Bahbulll!

From the Micah 6 reading today:

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

What I ignantly fergot was that the devil is the prince and GOD, the POWER of this world. Sooo...I’m SUPPOSED to remember that now OCEANS of ink have flooded this world, in a pitiful attempt to drown out Luther’s ink.

Everyone I read this week said—the most artistic of them said:

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 28:16–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

‘These verses, from Micah, are the finest religion ever stated! A moral life lived in loving service to the God of Abraham, lived out through a life devoted to service of your neighbor!’

Don’ that just make ya’ TINGLE?!

OOOOHHHH! To BE...THAT...RELIGIOUS!

Be careful with what I say next. It MAY benefit y’all to RUMINATE on those holy words from the prophet. ‘Do justice! Love mercy! Walk humbly with your God!’

But if those words do their job, here’s what’s gonna happen: roller coaster.

Sounds great! But IF the Good God has left any SHRED of conscience in us—and we have not yet seared it all dull by our sinning, daily and much; or by going to CHURCH so often!—

The bigger they are, the harder they fall. TRY old Micah’s recipe there.

And then, slather yourself with Doctor Martin Luther’s INK!

‘Guilt is the STENCH of the devil!’

When YOU analyze YOU—OTHERS will do it for you, dontcha know?!

The down-turned eyes are a whiff.

Scanning eyes—‘what do I do NOW?!’—odor getting stronger!

There are smells so bad they can physically and psychically
SCARE us!

And then you know:

That's some HIGH religion—right-fancy goals set for all men:

Do justice: keep the Law! SOUNDSS...E-Z! At hand!

Love God's Grave: Live that out too! More for ME!

Walk humbly with your God: even New Testament stuff, bearing
your cross and all! (The liar is no more victorious than when he
turns the Gospel into a Law!)

But there is ONE form of religion, of God, of certainty, of
conscience FREE—that leaves Micah's formula in the dust:

Christ.

Christ YOUR KING, crowned with thorns.

Jesus YOUR power, who 'cannot save Himself!'

Mary's Boy; He taught that Moses' double threat of blessing AND
curse is holy and good and something not even the best of the
BEST can attain: 'Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the
best Jews there ever been, don't fool yourselves that God will turn
down hell's heat for you!'

But before He made clear 'God is agin' sin!'

He said this word—NINE times over, because
HE...WILL...NOT...COMPETE...WITH...MOSES!

Blessed! Happy! God-enveloped! Forgiven! Heard! Cleansed!
Washed! Bodied-and-Blooded! MINE!

The INK of the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther has cast
THIS into the ocean of ink now flooding this world—sad, pathetic,
same-old, same-old, tired and dying GUILT—

If you wanna think of doing your LUTHERAN religion as
something YOU...CAN DOO!

Then DOOOO this!

Try to LOWER yourself to the place where God is serving you.
And good luck with that!

Just let Jesus be. Tell God above that this Jesus fellow THINKS
that because the rain fell on US, and the Name of the Blessed Holy
Trinity was spoken over us—that SOMEHOW God defines
Himself by us! As IF!

And go along with what HE SAYS—though this world's flood
roars in laughter! Bread is His Body; Wine is His Blood; and
despite ALL EVIDENCE, WE...are not guilty!

ACT, with Jesus, as if your poor pastor unlocks heaven—as with a
key!—when JUST HE boasts, 'I forgive you—don't worry now
about whether or not some unseen God forgives you. I'm your
final word!'

Then, the Ink of the Catechism says: You live in a world of rules
and hypocrisy, of laws that no one wants to keep, of guilt. Until

the End, practice the law, embrace forgiving mercy so tight that everyone around you gets splashed with it; and be fearful that God can turn away at any moment.

In a word: the Law is the Law is the Law. Until the End, Moses speaks.

But then, rejoice! HE is with us, to the End! And all that HE asks of us, Christ, is that we keep showing up sick enough so that He has someone to heal; that we do enough sins—SOMETIME in our lives!—so that He can forgive SOMEBODY!

Poor in spirit; meek; peaceful; hungering for God; oppressed; reviled. That's you!

And blessed in the Name of Jesus. Amen.