

SERMON: "HAVE A BLESSED DAY"

TEXT: OLD TESTAMENT MICAH 6:1-8
NEW TESTAMENT MATTHEW 5:1-12

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Dr. Dave Kivett

INTRODUCTION

"Have a good day" or "Have a good one"

Brief conversations often end with phrases like these

Like say, for example, you're at the dollar store buying some Mike and Ikes

One might say something like that, hear something like that

A twist on that I also hear (could be the places and people I see)

is to hear someone change that up just a bit and say, "Have a blest day."

Have you heard that one too ... or is that more of a Southern thang?

Wherever you may have heard that before (or not) I'm using it in a sermon now

Interesting turn of phrase. Nice thought. "Have a blessed day."

But what does that mean? How is it different than "Have a good day."

What does a 'blest day' include and involve? What does it look like?

Or to back up just a bit for the bigger picture, what does blessed look like?

Here's my attempt to answer that question ... What does blessed look like?

This will be a slightly different sermon because I want you to actually picture it

I learned during the pandemic shutdown that one of our members, Kate Hall

who is an excellent artist (love her tea towels) draws while she listens

to the sermon. One of those drawings hangs in my study.

It's how she listens. I loved hearing that. What a great way to listen ... to draw

And you don't have to be an artist to listen like that. You can picture it in your mind

You can imagine. You can dream. You can hear the sermon by seeing it.

That is what I hope you do today with these words and images

That is my hope for any sermon, for any time spent in scripture – to see it.

I'm going to share a few images now and ask for you to do the same later

I want to see your images. [First image – my email](#)

Please send me your versions of what blest looks like

One reason I ask for your images is that finding images online proved frustrating.

Here is what I found when I typed in "Have a blessed day"

[Second image – coffee mug](#)

Puppies ... Cute isn't it? Too cute, cheesy even

That said 'blessed' does make me think of things that make me happy,

Things that make me feel comfortable, thankful

Here are two of the first images that came to my mind

[Third image – nap with animals](#)

BLESSED LOOKS LIKE ...

Thought I'd continue the puppy theme, just larger, much larger
And, of course, I lead with one of my favorite pictures of my beautiful wife
So blessed to have her in my life. A picture of us on our back patio
[Fourth email - socks](#)

I could add many more family pictures here – our kids, our grandson Leo
I am so very blessed. Like you when I think of “blessed”
I think of the people I love most – my family.

Thinking beyond the family photo album,
internet searches offer pretty generic pictures of ‘blessed’
I found lots of images with just the word “blessed” spelled out
on those signs people have around the house. Or on a t-shirt.
[Fifth image – t-shirt](#)

And of course, I found plenty of this one, the sunshine and arms open wide
[Sixth image – arms open wide](#)

Frustrated by the offerings on the internet, let's look at another source
A better source. We turn to the beginning of the sermon on the mount.
This is the church built on the hillside, on that mount by the Sea of Galilee
[Seventh image – Mount of Beatitudes](#)

Jesus offers us some imagery of ‘blessed’ in what we call ‘The Beatitudes’
Named so because the Latin word for blessed is ‘beatus’
That is the word used to begin each of the first nine sentences

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn
Blessed are the meek
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart
Blessed are the peacemakers
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil things against you falsely on my account

Jesus' comments on being blest are more descriptive than prescriptive
‘Blessed are’ more so than ‘you will be blessed if’
This is what Jesus' pictures of ‘blessed’ look like

Jesus talks about the kingdom of God ... a lot, more than any other subject
Blessed, to Jesus, means being ‘in line with’ God's will, with the kingdom
Jesus, with his descriptions of ‘blessed’ is telling us
this is what the kingdom looks like, these are pictures of a ‘blessed day’

JESUS' PICTURES

Let me go through these briefly and ask you to picture what 'blessed' looks like
What particular images come to mind for each of the beatitudes.

Some of these, most of them, will take some work to see, to picture

I encourage you to do that work following Jesus' words, his definition of 'blessed.'

It's a bit different from an internet search with coffee mugs and puppies.

Jesus doesn't begin where Google or Bing does.

He begins his definition of blessed with 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

The internet images for 'poor in spirit' are relatively limited.

This is the one I think works best.

[Eighth image – the poor in spirit](#)

Tom Long in his commentary does a good job of describing the poor in spirit

In the first beatitude, the blessed are "the poor in spirit." Which could be translated as 'spiritual beggars.' This beatitude indicates that those who have come to the end of their own resources, who know that they cannot sustain hope and purpose out of their own strength, and who have thrown themselves on the mercy of God will not be abandoned. They have already been given, through the continuing presence of Christ, the kingdom of heaven.

That picture fits well with my favorite prayer book, the one we will use for the meditation at the Ash Wednesday service in February.

I bought for its refreshingly honest title, [Are You Listening God?](#)

(I Need You) Prayers for the Wounded & the Skeptical, for Wobbly Believers & the Spiritually Fragile.

Can you picture that? Skeptical and spiritually fragile

Jesus continues - Blessed are those who mourn.

This picture is from California just last week.

We've seen too many images like these, far too many.

[Ninth image – those who mourn](#)

We know what it is to mourn. We see it in pictures. We see in the mirror.

Jesus moves on - Blessed are the meek.

This was one of my more interesting searches

Apparently there is a rapper named 'Meek Mill.' Lots of pictures of that guy.

[Tenth image – Meek Mill](#)

I typed in "blessed are the meek." Got lots of cute little lambs

The one person who came up under that search ... Gandhi

I see that. I see him and others who were committed to non-violent protest

[Eleventh image - Gandhi](#)

SUMMARY - INTERRELATED

The Gandhi image ties well into the next beatitude and all those that follow

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart
Blessed are the peacemakers
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil things against you falsely on my account

See how interrelated these pictures of blessed all are.

Hungering for righteousness, working for it. Showing mercy. Making peace.
Non-violent protest. Getting in some 'good trouble' as John Lewis said and did.
Any images come to mind? Not just Gandhi. Not just 50 plus years ago

Images of people who have suffered, who have sacrificed.

People who have been persecuted for righteousness sake
People who have suffered and sacrificed for someone else's sake.
Any images come to mind?

See how interrelated these pictures of blessed all are.

They fit together in a life lived for others ... in being a blessing
Seems like that would be a good definition of a blessed day
Not so just in blessing being something that happens to you
But also in something that happens through you ... blessed to be a blessing

Now before I close with a few images from my sabbatical trip to Washington DC
a clarifying question about what this kind of blessing looks like

I ask this because I'm going to show you some pictures of protests and sacrifice

A march for women's rights in Iran,

[Twelfth image - march](#)

The spot on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial
from which Dr King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech

[Thirteenth image - MLK](#)

And a portion of the Vietnam Memorial

[Fourteenth image - Vietnam](#)

The question is this, related to hungering for righteousness,
showing mercy, making peace, being persecuted for righteousness sake

Who are you protesting for? Who are you working for?

Who are you struggling and willing to sacrifice for?

Who might be 'blessed' by your efforts to have a blest day?

As you consider how you'd answer that question

I'll end with an image of a German man from almost 90 years ago
and his famous quote. his belated answer to that question.

[Fifteenth image – Niemoller Quote](#)