Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

 Today we hear the beatitudes in the well-known Sermon on the Mount, which is Jesus longest recorded sermon. Some scholars believe it was parts of several early sermons joined together over several days. Regardless, Jesus communicated what it meant to follow him. as he names those who are blessed by the reign of God. After preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness Jesus has quite a following and it would be able for his disciples to have pride and a sense of importance, along with being possessive. After all, being with a popular Jesus brought not only prestige but also the prospect of money and power. So, Jesus made clear his attitude toward the law. Your position or authority or wealth are not important in God’s kingdom. It is important in the kingdom he describes is faithful obedience from the heart.

 The location of this sermon is mindful of Moses who disclosed the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. The Sermon on the Mount is on a hillside in Capernaum. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount parallel one another. Moses and Jesus ministries have things in common. For both, Israel sufferers under an oppressor. Both had their lives threatened in their young days. Like Moses, Jesus had to be taken away to flee the threat of death. Jesus also emerges out of Egypt, like Moses, to follow God’s call and liberate the people. Finally, like Moses, Jesus wanders in the wilderness and needs to rely on God sustain him. This is important to trust God when telling others about God.

 The Ten Commandments are not strictly rules that the religious leaders believed they were as they strove to enforce even, when detrimental to the people. But like the Sermon on the Mount they are visions for communal wholeness rooted in God’s liberation of the oppressed. Notice, for instance, that the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 start, not with the call to worship God alone, but a recalling of God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house.The important part is whether we will echo those promises not just with the words we speak but with every step we take.

 In his sermon, Jesus discloses 8 blessings and a transformational message as he announces a world that is aligned with God’s concerns. When Jesus shared it was less about laying out boundaries for an obedient life and more of a guide to a blessed life which aligns with God’s creation and grace. The important part is whether we will echo those promises not just with the words we speak but with every step we take. Look at the beatitudes or blessings as 1.) a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers 2.) a contrast of eternal values versus worldly temporal values 3.) a contrast the shallow faith of the religious leaders of that day to having a real abiding faith and 4) the expectations of the Old Testament will be fulfilled in the new kingdom.

For example Isaiah 61:1,2 says 1“bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners,
**2**to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God,
    to comfort all who mourn,”

 This, of course, brings friction with the religious leaders of that time. If we wish to be like Jesus the Beatitudes challenge he way we live every day.

For example take Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted Our society promotes happiness at any cost and the Old Testament anticipates per Isaiah 61:1,2 1“bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners,
**2**to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God,
    to comfort all who mourn,”

This not only clashes with the world value of happiness at any cost where 2 Corinthians 1:4 says God’s reward is comfort “4 who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.” This relies on us as active participants as followers of Jesus to comfort others. We can all pretend that only good things happen but yet if we contemplate this we realize there will be times when we mourn and we console others in their grief knowing we are consoled by God. That is, bad things happen to good people, yet there are others that are there for us the same way we trust God is there for us - for eternity.

 So Jesus says is important is faithful obedience from the heart.as he starts out by defining the traits he was looking for in those who follow him, including you and I. If we live for God we must be ready to do and say what seems strange to the world. Jesus calls out those who lived out these traits because God has something special for them and us. Even though we can see each is almost a direct contradiction of how society looks at each of these. Jesus lets people know that a serious effort to emulate these traits in our daily lives will bring opposition. Jesus discloses a transformational message as he announces a kingdom that is aligned with God’s concerns. When Jesus shared it was less about laying out boundaries for an obedient life and more of a guide to a blessed life which aligns with God’s creation and grace. The important part is whether we will echo those promises not just with the words we speak but with every step we take. We struggle to connect these ancient promises of a world turned topsy-turvy within Jesus’ revolutionary call to turn to the poor, the mourning, the weak to be able to see and to experience the reality of God’s kingdom. What can we do as blessed followers of Jesus as we serve others is to constantly try to be like Jesus? Go and do! Amen.