**June 2nd 2024 First Sunday after Trinity**

**Text: Matthew 5:1-6** 0724

**Theme: Faith’s Inheritance.**

May the knowledge of our inheritance, both here in time and hereafter in eternity, grant peace and strength unto your souls in Christ Jesus. Amen. Dear blessed Christians: Paul told the Roman congregation: *“If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Rom. 8:25)* The earthly life of a Christian often feels hopeless and without end. We wait, we patiently wait for all those promises to come to fruition. We wait and endure, we endure the persecution and tyranny of our enemies, looking for something better in eternity. We wait and mourn, we wait and cry, we wait and are tempted. It seems our lives are filled with nothing but waiting for God to fulfill all the things He has promised unto those who believe. And in a sense this is true. Waiting and patience are part of the Christian life, a necessary part, for faith is just that, faith in something unseen. We believe it because we cannot see it, we wait for it because it is not apparent now. We are exhorted in Scripture to continue in patience, doing good; we are told to look not at the things of this life, but of that life which is to come; we are even told that we shall reap if we faint not, meaning that we shall reap salvation if we continue in the faith. Now all of these are great and precious promises. They are needed reminders and exhortations. We would surely fall if not for these constant reminders by our gracious God. We even cling to them knowing that in those promises we have hope no matter what may come upon us in this life.

Yet it is also necessary and good for the strengthening of our faith, our hope, and our comfort, that we receive firm and concrete things even now that we may see, feel, and hear. All of the blessings and promises which are given unto us, and that are considered to be still in the future, are ours even now. We taste of them here in this life. It is not a full pouring out of them, they are not manifested as they will be on the last day, but they are real and tangible even now. The writer to the Hebrews, speaking of those who fall away, describes their state of faith, however brief it may have been, and says: *“those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.” (Heb. 6:4-5)* You see within the life of a Christian, there are even now foretastes of that which will be ours in full measure in eternity. The waiting of a person of faith, is a waiting for the full manifestation of these things, but that does not mean that we are destitute of them now. Nay, we have them now, they are our inheritance, given as gift unto those that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now they are not a merited reward, or any such thing as will become evident, but as Paul says, we are children, and therefore heirs of God and heirs with Christ. It will be our purpose then for today to see some of the things which are faith’s inheritance. We will do so according to our text for today which is found in the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at verse one.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O gracious and merciful Lord Jesus, we humbly come before Thee asking for forgiveness and salvation for the sake of Thine own bitter suffering and death. Give unto us, now and always, humble, submissive spirits, enduring trespass against us, humbly hearing and doing Thy Word. Help us to mourn our sin and shame, never defending it, never thinking it is just and right, but ever confessing and repenting of it in true and honest hearts. Give unto us hearts which hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we may spend night and day in Thy commands and promises, learning that we are sinful and wicked, deserving only of Thy wrath, and yet receiving only Thy grace, forgiveness and salvation. Give unto us, both now and forever, the kingdom of heaven, wherein we praise and bless Thy holy name, and we dwell with Thee, as Thy children, forever. Comfort us in our sin, our affliction, our sadness that we may never despair, but ever hold fast the hope of Thy promises. Though we are meek, give unto us the earth, and help us to use it to sow Thy precious Gospel all our days, that Thy kingdom may be full. And finally fill our hungry souls, satisfy our thirsty hearts with Thy Word and sacraments, that we may joyfully live our lives, and have a peaceful, happy death, knowing that we have all Thy promises forevermore. Amen.

Beloved, hear the Word of the Spirit, learning first that faith’s inheritance is:

1. **The kingdom of heaven.** We read verses one through three of our text: **Read verses here.** The text we have before us is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. It is also the many blessings which Christ pronounces upon all believers. They are often called the beatitudes. The word beatitude means: blessed, but the word has a greater meaning than just blessed, it literally means: the blessings found in heaven. Thus all these blessings are things that will be found in abundance in heaven. But even more joyful is the knowledge found in each and every verb of our text. Often it is not my practice to dwell, in sermons, on the vocabulary and grammer of any given text, but here it is quite important, for the original meaning in Greek of this text, is not plainly evident in the English translation. Though it is translated properly, our English language does not lend itself to the true meaning. On the surface it would appear that, again, these are blessings and promises which await in the future, and so the English presents it to us. But when looking at these verbs in the Greek, a whole new and different meaning becomes apparent. These verbs are future verbs, but they are also in the passive voice. A future passive verb in Greek indicates an action that has begun in the present and continues through the future indefinitely. Thus we currently have these things, and will continue to receive them through eternity.

The first of these is the promise of the kingdom of heaven to those who are poor in spirit. The poor in spirit are not those who have no faith, and are poor in faith, but those who are confess and admit that they are wicked, vile, rebellious sinners. That they in no way deserve any good thing from God. Jesus often said that He came to call sinners to repentance, and those that are sick. Thus we hear: *“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6)* and again: *“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Ps. 34:18) “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” (Prov. 16:18-19)* These passages along with our text show who they are that inherit the kingdom of heaven. All those that humbly confess and acknowledge who and what they are, ask mercy from God according to His long-suffering nature, and believe that He is gracious for the sake of Jesus Christ. These receive the kingdom of heaven. It is ours even now, even now we taste the kingdom of heaven. How is this? What is heaven but to dwell with God forever? To be with Him, to have Him dwell within us? We hear again: *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:11)* Already now we dwell with God and He with us. We currently inherit the kingdom of heaven, because He dwells within and manifests by showing us His mercy and Grace revealed in the Gospel. What glorious knowledge for us, to strengthen our peace and hope in that which is ours now in faith and shall be ours forevermore.

Secondly then faith’s inheritance is:

1. **Comfort.** We read verse four of our text: **Read verse here.** The same grammatical construction that was seen in verse three is here also, and throughout our text. Jesus here does not speak of those that mourn because of the death of loved ones, but those that mourn over their sin and shame. While God certainly does comfort those that mourn for departed loved ones, the context here shows that He speaks of part of faith’s inheritance, and as such points not to the mourning of our bodies, but of our souls, mourning, grieving over our wickedness and shame which in the previous verse we humbly confess and acknowledge. These first two things are things that will necessarily be found within every Christian. Humility and grief over sin are found in Christians. And all those Christians that thus mourn over their sin are and will be comforted in the knowledge of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. An example of this is reported by Luke about the sinful woman who came to Jesus while He dined with a Pharisee. This woman comes and stoops down at Jesus feet weeping, and she uses the tears which fall from her eyes to wash His feet and to dry them with the hair of her head. Humility and mourning seen in this woman. She was humble because of her many sins, but receives comfort even now in this life when Jesus says to her: *“Thy sins are forgiven…thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” (Luke 7:48, 50)* What greater comfort can be given to a grieving heart than the knowledge that it is forgiven and saved in spite of itself? Not deserving love, she receives love here in time, and will continue to receive it indefinitely. How wonderful is God’s inheritance given unto Christian men and women, who walk humbly and mourn over their sin and shame. They are indeed comforted.

Thus believers, both now and forevermore, inherit the kingdom of heaven, receive comfort for our mourning, and thirdly faith inherits:

1. **The Earth.** We read verse five of our text: **Read verse here.** Meekness is today a word that is often not used. When it is used, it is seen as a synonym for shy, or bashful. But such is not the meaning here. In our text to be meek follows directly upon the previous two descriptions of people of faith. Christians are meek because they submit to the rule of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they endure injury from other men and do not repay it. They are soft, gentle, not easily provoked to anger or irritation. All of these are used to describe Christians in different places and all are included under the word meek. Thus as Paul says the meek Christians: *“suffereth long, and is kind…envieth not…vaunteth not itself…is not puffed up…is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil…beareth all things…endureth all things.” (1 Cor. 13:4-7)* A Christian is, again, necessarily meek, for his Spirit, knowing what kindness, longsuffering, and bearing his Savior performed on his behalf will reflect that same nature by his faith. Such is the nature of every true Christian. Now there are times when we are not these things because of the weakness of our flesh, but here our humility and grief are seen in repentance, and we are urged by the Gospel to go forward in meekness.

Now those who are thus Jesus says, will inherit the earth. This promise, this inheritance is something which is difficult to conceive of as happening through eternity. For on the last day the earth will melt with a fervent heat, and the universe shall pass away; how then can this continue forevermore? A clue is given to us by the apostle Paul: *“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” (Rom. 4:13)* You see Abraham was promised to be the heir of the world through faith. Thus what is inherited is not the globe on which we reside, but the world of people. Those that believe by the Gospel are the heirs of all things, even as Christ. And as Christ rules over all nations by His power and might, so too all Christians rule. This is true even now, for Christ moves all things to the benefit of His Christians. Paul said again: *“All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” (1 Cor. 3:21-23)* Thus even now we rule all peoples and nations by virtue of Christ’s rule over them, and in eternity, the same shall be true, for we shall rule over them that are damned for eternity.

Thus faith inherits the kingdom of heaven, comfort, and the earth, and fourthly faith inherits:

1. **Bread for the soul.** We read verse six of our text: **read verse here.** Here our Lord culminates the first portion of the beatitudes with the truth of all that a Christian is. Here is where a poor spirit is received, where mourning over sin is found, and where meekness is given: in the Scriptures. Christians, in so far as they are Christians, and according to their faith, hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ found nowhere else than in His Word, as the words of the Psalmist declare: *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” (Ps. 42:1-2)* Our faith longs to hear the voice of God, and it yearns to listen to His Word. And faith shall inherit a full measure of His Word. We are filled here in time with His Word and sacraments, and forever shall sit before His throne hearing His voice and worshipping Him in righteousness and truth.

Thus in the words of our Savior Himself, we are blessed beyond measure here during our lives, and forevermore in the courts of heaven. May this truth offer peace and hope unto you all your days, abundant joy in His blessing, and eternal joy forevermore. Amen.