

Ultimate Blessing and Joy

Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:1-12

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds. — James 1:2

Today's Bible reading includes a section of Jesus' teaching that is often called "The Beatitudes." Beatitudes can be described as "ultimate blessings." These blessings refer to the glorious goodness of life with God in his kingdom and presence. And we can count on these blessings despite all the difficulties we may face in our lives, including persecution for being followers of Christ. All who claim God's promises in Christ can live in the hope of these promises. But the beatitude blessings are more than just promises for the future.

Notice how James talks about having joy in the midst of trials. Christian joy includes a profoundly deep sense of peace and comfort that sustains believers even in the midst of persecution, trials, and suffering. The blessedness of this joy is the same as the ultimate blessedness of the beatitudes.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God offers us a joyful, blessed spirit—not only in anticipation of the life to come but also in this life too.

A joyful spirit is not one that is happy all the time, no matter the circumstances. Rather, it has the firm foundation of peace and understanding that no matter what happens, God loves us, knows us, and will never leave us. This truly is the highest blessing.

Prayer

Blessed Lord, you offer us ultimate blessedness in your presence always, and for that we humbly thank you. May our spirit reflect the joy of the hope we have in you. In Christ we pray. Amen.

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