VISION 2020

TODAY'S THEME

DAY 3 | To see OTHERS as God sees.

Now we take a deeper look at the way God sees others. To get a better idea, we're looking into The Beatitudes, a pretty familiar part of the Gospel where Jesus re-teaches the people what it means to be blessed by God. When we see as God sees, we look beyond our own assumptions and see others as blessed.

WORD

Matthew 5:1-12 [New Revised Standard Version]

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

*"Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*"Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.*

*"Blessed are the **meek**, for they will inherit the earth.*

*"Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*"Blessed are the **merciful**, for they will receive mercy.*

*"Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they will see God.*

*"Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called children of God.*

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

*"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of **evil against you** falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Remember! You can read this printed scripture from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.
Or you can watch the Vision Story video on the website.

WONDER

The Bible is the story of God at work in the world; it is full of truth, love and life. God invites us to enter the story with a sense of wonder. This wonder is marked by curiosity, rather than a need to know the right answer. So let's wonder together!

Wonder Questions after the Story
- I wonder how many people were in this big crowd? What do you think?
- I wonder what it means that Jesus stood on a mountainside with those he was talking to?
- I wonder which blessing you like the best?
- I wonder how God sees you?
- I wonder how God sees others?
- I wonder what it means to be blessed by God?
- I wonder how can we can practice seeing others as God sees them?

FAITH PRACTICE

Faith practices are actions and activities that help us grow in our faith and to feel God's presence in our lives.
Prayer Walk | A Prayer Walk is a simple way of taking our prayers out into the world. As you walk in your neighborhood, think about your neighbors and the strangers that pass by and pray as you go. Give thanks for the good things you know about them, ask for God's help for what troubles them. You can even take some chalk along to write a blessing or even draw some hope-filled pictures for your neighbors to enjoy.

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FAMILY DEVOTION

Gather around the dinner table for a family devotion. Each day's family devotion has the same flow, start the meal with a camp grace, then make space to wonder together with the questions provided, read scripture and close in prayer. If you're feeling bold, you can continue with the Digging Deeper section to learn more about the scripture.

CAMP GRACE
Today's Camp Grace is La Cucaracha! Remember you can use the one we suggest, or pick another from the Camp Grace list on our website. And don't forget about the sample videos led by Lutherhill's alumni summer staff.
LA CUCUARACHA | God is great, God is good, AND we thank God for our food
In the morning, noon, and night, Cause our God is out of sight. Amen.

WONDER TOGETHER
- I wonder what makes you the happiest?
- I wonder what makes you the saddest?
- I wonder how it feels when others are mean to you?
- I wonder if its easy to see the good in other people?
- I wonder what the word 'blessing' means to you?
- I wonder what it means to be blessed by God?

WORD | Matthew 5:1-12
Read from your family Bible, from the printed version on this handout, or watch the Vision Story together.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
God of blessings, you have made all people in your own image. Open our eyes to see the world as you see. Open our hearts to see others with your eyes. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

DIGGING DEEPER

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus makes his debut with the announcement of God's blessing. This part of the Gospel is known as The Beatitudes, which is another word for blessing and blessing means God's favor and protection. Blessings is actually one of Matthew's favorite words.

Blessing has to do with how Jesus understands the kingdom of heaven – both now and in the time to come. Blessing is not a program to fulfill, but an invitation to live into the promises of God that that define and shape all areas of life. God's blessing is as much a part of God's people as saltiness and illumination are part of salt and light.

Through Jesus, we learn what God hopes for in others (and us, too). Through this story, we learn who God favors and protects. Jesus pronounces blessing in nine distinct ways. From the mountainside, Jesus says, blessed are those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and who are persecuted. Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemaker. And finally, blessed are you when people utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Throughout the Bible, throughout history and in our world today, humans tend to confuse being blessed by God with good things happening. When our family is in good health, when we get a promotion, when we avoid an accident or get to take a great vacation. We are #blessed when things go our way. While we can certainly give thanks for these good things, Jesus takes the meaning of blessing in a different way. Jesus reminds us that in God's eyes, humans are blessed when they are exposed and vulnerable, when they stand up for what is right, when their intentions are pure.

This is good news for all people. When we redefine our idea of blessing, we can redefine how we see others. As we look to see God in others, we see God at work in the world.