Homily – November 1, 2026

So, I think all of us have grown up with the Beatitudes. We hear it often. I had a sixth grade Sunday school teacher that called it the “Be-happi-tudes”.

So, we all know the words of the Beatitudes. They start with “blessed.” What would you say blessed means when you hear that word? Being blessed is maybe a state of receiving favors, of receiving benefits, of receiving peace from God.

You know, in scripture, that blessing transcends the earthly and is indeed heavenly. It is rooted in the assurance that the one who created us in the womb, who knows us, who names and claims us, has bestowed goodness upon us. So I want you to remember that when we talk about the state of being blessed, it can only be a state that is blessed by the Creator.

And so that actually is a Hebrew word, which is Baruch. Baruch Adonai. We are blessed by the Creator. So what’s this Greek word that we hear today in Matthew 5, this “blessed,” this “Makarios”? And the Hebrew equivalent to it is ”ashrei”. And it actually means the good life.

So we’re not starting these verses with “blessed are you,” but instead we’re starting these verses with “you’re living the good life.” You’re living the good life if you’re mourning. You’re living the good life if you’re hungry. Maybe you’re living the good life if you’re a peacemaker, but we all know that’s hard work. So I don’t know if that’s a good life.

What is the good life? You know, we all have our own definition of that. The wisdom literature would tell us that it means how fortunate we are, how much we flourish, how much prosperity. But it’s not only that. It’s also protection and safety and stability. And all of that leads to fruitfulness.

So I’m going to read the Beatitudes again. I’m actually going to read the translation from Eugene Peterson’s *The Message*. But notice that I am going to change “blessed” to “you’re living the good life.”

You’re living the good life when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you, there is more of God and his blessing and his rule. You’re living the good life when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the one who is most dear to you. You’re living the good life when you’re content with just who you are, no more, no less. That’s the moment that you truly find yourself blessed by God and the proud owner of everything that can’t be bought.

You’re living the good life when you’ve got a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink and the best meal ever that we will partake in very soon. You’re living the good life when you get your inside world, your mind and your heart, put right. Then you truly are able to see the blessings that God provides for you each and every day.

Homily – November 1, 2026

You're living the good life when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you deeper into the blessings of God, into God's kingdom. Not only that, we're living the good life every time people put us down or throw us out or even speak lies that discredit us. What it means is that the truth is too close to them for comfort, and they become uncomfortable.

Be glad when that happens. Give a cheer. For though they don't like it, God likes it. God gets to bless it and applaud it. And know that we all are in good company when that happens. God's prophets and God's witnesses that have gone before us have all gotten into this kind of trouble, I can guarantee you.

So church, what do you think? Are we living the good life when these things happen? Why would Jesus even suggest that this is the good life: mourning, being persecuted, and the list goes on?

The key here is the Baruch, the blessing. You know, we can wish other people God's blessings, but we can't grant that blessing. It comes from God. It is a gift of God.

Certainly, we are living the good life when there is room for God. When we get out of God's way — and I don't know if any of you struggle with that, but believe me, your pastor struggles with that all the time — we are living the good life when we allow God's blessings to open our hearts to the work of God and the kingdom of heaven.

And to a God who flourishes us, who provides stability, security, and safety, so that we can indeed live out our future in God's hope.