

MATTHEW 5:1-16, 38-48; 6:9-13; 7:1-5, 24-27

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. . . .

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, **Do not violently resist an evildoer.** But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴**But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. . . .



⁹“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread (our bread for tomorrow)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. . .

⁷ “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ² For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. . . .

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

JESUS' THIRD WAY

- Seize the moral initiative
- Find a creative alternative to violence
- Assert your own humanity and dignity as a person
- Meet force with humor
- Break the cycle of humiliation
- Refuse to submit or to accept the inferior position
- Expose the injustice of the system
- Take control of the power dynamic
- Shame the oppressor into repentance
- Stand your ground
- Make the Powers make decisions for which they are not prepared
- Recognize your own power
- Be willing to suffer rather than retaliate
- Force the oppressor to see you in a new light
- Deprive the oppressor of a situation where a show of force is effective
- Be willing to undergo the penalty of breaking unjust laws
- Die to fear of the old order and its rules

FLIGHT Submission, Passivity, Withdrawal, Surrender

FIGHT Armed revolt, Violent rebellion, Direct retaliation, Revenge

file:///C:/Users/annem/OneDrive/Documents/2017%20Documents/ELCH/2019%20Bible%20study%20texts/Wink%20Jesus%20Third%20Way.pdf

PRAYER

Dear God, help me live according to Jesus' Beatitudes, the core beginning teachings of his Sermon on the Mount. Give me the grace to let go of money, possessions, pride, and privilege, to become vulnerable and open to you, to accept my poverty of spirit and dependence on you, and set off on your way of peace, love, justice, and nonviolence. That way, I will always need you and live in your reign of peace and love from now on.

Bless me as I grow in compassion for others, that I might feel new empathy and love for everyone, especially the poor, oppressed, and mournful. As millions suffer and die each year from war, poverty, and unjust disease, let me mourn for them. Let me mourn for all the creatures we destroy, and for the ways we destroy the environment. Then I will feel your consolation.

Bless me that I might not be violent, arrogant, proud, or part of the domination system. Instead, help me to be meek, gentle, nonviolent, and humble, like your saints, that I may become one with creation and inherit the earth as my true home, the promised land of peace.

Bless me that I hunger and thirst for justice every day of my life, that I might resist global systemic injustice which forces billions of sisters and brothers into extreme poverty, hunger, illness, imprisonment, and war. Give me the satisfaction of a life spent carrying on your struggle for justice for the world's poor and oppressed.

Bless me that I might show mercy, especially toward those the culture deems unworthy of mercy. Help me never to withhold mercy, but to grant clemency to everyone, to let everyone off the hook, and to show compassion and respect toward everyone. That way, I know you will show mercy to me.

Bless me with purity of heart, with the gift of inner peace and holiness so everything that comes from within me might be peaceful, loving, and holy. Purify my heart, disarm my heart, fill my heart with your spirit. Then I will see you everywhere, especially in every human being.

Bless me to be your peacemaker. Help me to renounce violence and war, to non-cooperate with the culture of war, to resist war, and serve your global grassroots movements of nonviolence to abolish war, injustice, and destruction. Then I will truly be your child.

Bless me when I am rejected and persecuted for working for justice and peace, that I might not retaliate but respond with love and compassion, and so always live in your kingdom, rejoicing like the prophets of justice and peace through the ages.



Thank you for the Beatitudes. Give me the grace to live my life according to your Beatitudes. Help me to be a Beatitude person, and teach their blessings far and wide, so that more and more people will choose to live according to your Beatitude wisdom. Help all of us to become Beatitude people. Amen.

John Dear, *Radical Prayers on Peace, Love, and Nonviolence*, Pace e Bene Press, 2017.

THROUGH NONVIOLENCE

"Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality."

—James Lawson. www.paceebene.org

THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is error, truth;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

It is in self-forgetting that we find;

And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life. Amen.



COMMON PRAYER: A LITURGY FOR ORDINARY RADICALS:

Twentieth-century priest and spiritual writer Henri Nouwen said, "That is our vocation: to convert the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced."

Dear Lord, remind us that no one is above reproach, and no one is beyond redemption. Help us to look into the eyes of people we find hard to like and see your image. Assure us this day that your mercy triumphs over judgment. Amen.