**Blessed**

**And Jacob was left alone;**

**and there a man who wrestled with him until daybreak.**

**And when the man saw that he did not prevail against him,**

**he touched the hollow of his thigh;**

**and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint,**

**as he wrestled with him. And the man said to him,**

**Let me go, for day is breaking. And Jacob said,**

**I will not let you go unless you bless me.**

***(Genesis 32:24-27)***

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. *(Psalm 103:2)***

**Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. *(Psalm 118:26)***

**But I say unto you,**

**Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,**

**do good to them that hate you,**

**and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.**

***(St. Matthew 5:44)***

**It's not a matter of asking God to come and bless my small space, my moment of life; it is a matter of seeing that this life, already, is in the embrace of a great power. *(Paula D'Arcy)***

**“Barack” means “the blessed one” in Swahili. *(Kenneth T. Walsh, in U.S. News & World Report)***

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**The sermon proper (St. Matthew 5) is introduced by an eight-verse prose poem that has been called “The Beatitudes,” which is a general summation of the whole religion of Jesus. He does not commence by saying, “You must do this” or “Thou shalt not do that.” This was the style of the “law and the prophets” which underlined conformity of the practices such as keeping the Sabbath and observing the Passover. *(Eric Butterworth, in Discover The Power Within You, p. 57)***

**The Beatitudes (BE attitudes) begin with the word “blessed.” It is an important word. To bless is “confer prosperity upon, to enrich.” Thus “blessed” makes a wonderful promise, telling you what will happen to you if you condition your mind to the full acceptance of these attitudes. In each case through the eight BE attitudes, the “blessed” is a one-word definition of all the good that will come to you if you understand and live by those amazing attitudes of BEING.  *(Eric Butterworth, in Discover The Power Within You, p. 58)***

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**Blessed are the Beauticians -- they bring out the beauty in others! *(Dr. Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living magazine)***

**Devout families in Poland traditionally have taken their Easter morning breakfast ham and eggs to church to be blessed. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**My four-year-old daughter was scandalized by the title of the Bible story I was about to read to her. She couldn't understand how parents could be so negligent. She couldn't understand how children could be so shameless. In response to her indignation, I explained to her that the title was “Jesus blesses the little children,” not “Jesus dresses the little children.” *(Eunice Graham, in Portals of Prayer)***

**Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of that fact. *(George Eliot)***

**Blessed is he that expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed. *(Benjamin Franklin)***

**Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting. *(Elizabeth Asquith Bibesco, British author-poet)***

**Why do we say “God bless you” when somebody sneezes? Well, in the Middle Ages, when influenza epidemics wiped out hundreds of thousands in a couple of weeks, a sneeze was usually the first sign the victim had been bitten by the fatal bug. The doomed person’s friends would mutter, “God bless you,” and scurry off as fast as their feet would carry them. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 20)***

**It is not doing the thing we like to do, but liking the thing we have to do, that makes life blessed. *(Goethe)***

**Grandma: “Nelson, why don't you go play with your friend, Lloyd?” Nelson: “No. He's a dork.” Grandma: “I'm surprised at you, Nelson! You shouldn't call people names like that.” Grandpa: “That's right, son. Unless you do like Grandma does and follow it by saying ‘Bless his heart.’ Then it's okay!” Grandma then says to Nelson: “Don't listen to Grampa. He's just a lunkhead, bless his heart.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Blessed are the young for they shall inherit the national debt. *(Herbert Hoover, former U.S. president)***

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they are sticking to their diets. *(Tidbits)***

**We sat down at the dining room table. On the menu: leftovers. As we were saying grace, I noticed that my young son wasn’t joining in. I asked him why. His response: “Because I already blessed it last night.” (Judy Moore, in Reader’s Digest)**

**When I was in third grade, my religious education teacher spoke with us about the Beatitudes, specifically, “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.” As part of our lesson, we were asked to make a poster including pictures of people in need as well as a title reading, “Theirs is the kingdom of God.” As unofficial class artist, I was asked to do the lettering on a large piece of poster board. In my desire to have it look just right, I measured out equal space for each letter of the heading. Unfortunately I failed to account for the fact that each letter is a different width and doesn’t take up the same amount of space. I completed the lettering and proudly held up the poster for my parents to see. My dad took one look, and without missing a beat, read the poster exactly as it appeared. “THE IRS IS THE KINGDOM OF God.” *(Angela Cross, in Catholic Digest)***

**Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused. *(Rodney & Cathy's Joke List)***

**The woman says to her minister: “I’ve been trying and trying to get my husband to cut the grass -- could you come over some time and bless our lawnmower?” *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**One of the more amazing recent shows was narrated and presented by Saba Douglas-Hamilton, whose entire family is involved in nature conservation and filming in one way or another. With her sister Dudu behind the camera. Saba followed a lone female lioness that had adopted a baby oryx antelope, treating the baby as a cub of her own. Following the death of that baby, the lioness, Kamunyak, “the blessed one,” adopted several other oryx babies, always attempting to raise the prey species rather than kill it. *(D. L. Nashton, in Tidbits)***

**Blessed are those who can hear their alarm clock on Sunday as well as Monday. *(Miss Piggy)***

**Billy says to his Dad: “I sneezed twice while you were downstairs, Daddy, so you owe me two ‘Bless you’s.’” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Ciorcus comic strip)***

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit,” who are receptive to the flow of good through them and who acknowledge God as the source. “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven”--they will actually release the imprisoned splendor of the depths within themselves. *(Eric Butterworth)***

**Why didn't Sam Snead get his putter blessed by the pope? Sam Snead, golfdom's all-time leader in career wins, paid a visit to the Vatican at a time when he was undergoing a shaky interval on the greens. Hoping to have his putter blessed, Snead was bemoaning his troubles to a monsignor while waiting for the papal audience to take place. The monsignor quickly told Snead that his putting had become hopeless, too. Whereupon Snead decided not to bother Pope John XXIII about his putter. “I figured,” Snead said, “that if a good Catholic living in the Vatican couldn't putt, what chance was there for a Baptist from Virginia?” *(Nino Lo Bello, in The Incredible Book of Vatican Facts & Papal Curiosities*)**

**A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER: Blessed are the quilters, for they shall be called the piece makers. *(Reminisce magazine)***

**At the religious retreat I attended, the participants could purchase various publications of a spiritual nature. On the retreat’s final day, one of the priests was to bless the pamphlets and books for those who wanted him to do so. As we gathered for prayer and the blessing, I heard a voice two rows back whisper, “John, did you bring the lotto tickets?” *(Craig A. Todd, in Reader’s Digest)***

**No other success in life -- not being President, or being wealthy, or going to college, or writing a book, or anything else -- comes up to the success of the man or woman who can feel that they have done their duty and that their children and grandchildren rise up and call them blessed. *(Theodore Roosevelt, 1917)***

**As Mom keeps sneezing, Zoe says: “Gazinhoot! Guzeenhut! Gazoonheet!” Mom: “You mean, Gesundheit. How about just a simple bless you?” Zoe: “Too hard to say.” *(Rick Kirkman and Jerry Scott, in Baby Blues comic strip)***

**It’s customary in our part of the country to say, “Bless you” when somebody sneezes. So one day, when we were on our way to a dress-up function, my 3-year-old sons suffered a big wet sneeze that spattered everywhere. “Oh, no,” he moaned, “I’ve got bless you all over my good shirt.” Everyone in the car laughed so hard, we almost had to pull off the road. *(Joyce Bradshaw, in Country magazine)***

**How blessed are some people, whose lives have no fears, no dreads, to whom sleep is a blessing that comes nightly, and brings nothing but sweet dreams. *(Bram Stoker, in Dracula)***

**There’s a story going around campus about a student from Thailand, with bookbinding experience, who was seeking employment in order to put her husband through graduate school. She landed an opportunity to practice here craft and, upon reporting to work the first day, found this note of welcome: “Blessed be the Thai that binds.” *(Chapel Hill, N.C., Daily Tar Heel)***

**Blessed are they who understand my faltering step and shaking hand; blessed, who know my ears today must strain to catch the things they say; blessed are they who seem to know my eyes are dim and my mind is slow; blessed are they who looked away, I spilled my tea on the cloth that day! Blessed are they who, with cheery smile, stopped to chat for a while; blessed are they who know the way to bring back memories of yesterday; blessed are they who never say, “You've told that story twice today!” Blessed are they who make it known that I'm loved, respected and not alone. And blessed are they who will ease the days of my journey home, in loving ways. *(Elizabeth Clark, in Another Beatitude)***

**What does it mean to bless a problem, a need, a situation? To bless it is to quit fighting it. Perhaps this is the meaning, in part at least, of Jesus’ words, “Agree with thine adversary quickly” (Matthew 5:25). To bless anything is to agree with it spiritually, to see God, to see the good, where before you have seen something disturbing, troubling, or harmful. When we bless the troublesome situation, the unhappy environment, the unhealthy body, the appearance of lack or failure, we are letting go our fear, our anxiety about ourselves or anyone else, we are beholding the good that is always present, we are remembering that the loving presence of God pervades and permeates all. Blessed is the man who has discovered that there is nothing permanent in life but change. *(Land Title Guarantee Company calendar)***

**Blessed is the man who starts each day with zest, who gives the world his best, who takes the time to pray, who knows the joy of play, who sees the best in others, and treats all men as brothers. *(William Arthur Ward)***

**Happy is that man who, as when Jacob by the fords wrestled with the angel and refused to let him go unless he blessed him, is resolved that life, however much it may baffle him or wound him, will not be permitted to come to a close without having blessed him, without having taught him that fear of God which endureth forever! *(Clarence E. MacCartney's Illustrations, page 11)***

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