

# Many Blessings

Reflect

Pray

Listen

Be blessed

Bless others

## Psalm 23

You, LORD, are my shepherd.  
I will never be in need.

<sup>2</sup> You let me rest in fields  
of green grass.

You lead me to streams  
of peaceful water,

<sup>3</sup> and you refresh my life.

You are true to your name,  
and you lead me  
along the right paths.

<sup>4</sup> I may walk through valleys  
as dark as death,  
but I won't be afraid.

You are with me,  
and your shepherd's rod<sup>[a]</sup>  
makes me feel safe.

<sup>5</sup> You treat me to a feast,  
while my enemies watch.

You honour me as your guest,  
and you fill my cup  
until it overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Your kindness and love  
will always be with me  
each day of my life,  
and I will live forever  
in your house, LORD.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to speak afresh to you through this well-loved psalm. Re-read it slowly and note anything that seems significant.
- Verse 5 says, *you fill my cup until it overflows*. Another version has, *my cup brims with blessing*. (MSG). What are the blessings conveyed throughout the psalm? How do these blessings relate to your life and to your relationship with Jesus?
- Choose one of the images to meditate on eg fields of rest, streams of fresh water, dark valleys of trouble, a feasting table, a cup overflowing, a loving home. Take time to listen further to Jesus, your shepherd, in quiet prayer.
- If blessing is overflowing from your cup, is there someone to whom it might be directed? Find opportunities to bless this person as you share God's love with them. Pray for their well-being.

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## The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the hillside, and sat down. His disciples came to him.

<sup>2</sup> He took a deep breath and began his teaching:

<sup>3</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the poor in spirit! The kingdom of heaven is yours.

<sup>4</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the mourners! You're going to be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the meek! You're going to inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) people who hunger and thirst for God's justice! You're going to be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the merciful! You'll receive mercy yourselves.

<sup>8</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the pure in heart! You will see God.

<sup>9</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) the peacemakers! You'll be called God's children.

<sup>10</sup> 'Wonderful news for (*Blessings on*) people who are persecuted because of God's way! The kingdom of heaven belongs to you.

<sup>11</sup> 'Wonderful news for you (*Blessings on you*), when people slander you and persecute you, and say all kinds of wicked things about you falsely because of me! <sup>12</sup> Celebrate and rejoice: there's a great reward for you in heaven. That's how they persecuted the prophets who went before you.'  
(Matt 5:1-12 NTE)

Commenting on the Beatitudes in *Matthew for Everyone*, Tom Wright says that Jesus is not giving a philosophical analysis of the state of the world but is making an announcement of what is already starting to happen through the coming of God's kingdom:

**The blessings that Jesus announces are "Gospel: good news, not good advice."**

- What difference can the Gospel – good news – of God's kingdom make on people in the situations mentioned in the Beatitudes?
- If eg you mourn or are poor in spirit what present realities of God's kingdom, as announced by Jesus in the Beatitudes, might affect your life and speak to your circumstances right now?
- Take some time to consider how you might announce good news to people by speaking words of blessing.
- Consider how speaking a blessing to someone could change the moment, the day and the direction of their life? What difference might this make to the way you think of sharing the Gospel with others?

*May Jesus bless you with an abiding awareness of his presence.*

*May your eyes be open to see him at work in those around you.*

*May his Spirit continually fill you.*

*May you hear God's voice guiding you, giving you words of blessing to speak.*

*May you have the heart and mind of Jesus as you live out his blessing in your life with his wisdom and grace to bless others.*

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- Explore examples of blessing/s and in the Bible, especially the ways that Jesus blesses people.
- What actions, attitudes and lived out expressions of God's kingdom are evident as Jesus speaks and enacts blessing into peoples' lives?
- Practice speaking blessing to those around you. Write a blessing every day. Pray that God will bless you so that you can bless others. Ask the Holy Spirit to overflow blessings through you to others.
- Some blessings can be sung. Find one in a favourite song book, on a CD, or on-line and sing it during your prayer time as a blessing on someone you are praying for. Tell them about it and read or sing it to them!
- As well as praying for the community, why not also bless your neighbourhood, state, and nation. Bless all peoples and nations of the world. Bless specific groups in need, or troubled individuals.
- Bless the church and bless God's kingdom
- Ponder – can we bless God? What words might you use? Are songs of praise blessings to God? How might our how lives be a blessing to God? A blessing to others?
- One way in which God has been at work during the COVID19 Pandemic is to inspire Christians to work together to bless their nations and beyond through collaborative songs of blessing released on the internet. This has now become a significant movement of blessing. Consider the many ways this is bringing blessing. Who is being blessed? Who else?

It began with the UK Blessing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U> and many other nations joined in. You can search for them online but here is a different example of blessing unique to the place:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TascsWZPi8U>

plus our own Aussie version: <https://theblessingaustralia.com/>

**<sup>24</sup> The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
<sup>25</sup> the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
<sup>26</sup> the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.**

**Numbers 6:24-26**

*God bless you!*