

Readings: *Jeremiah 17: 5 – 8; Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16 – 20; Luke 6: 20 – 26.*

One of our difficulties in following Luke's exposition of the prophetic ministry of Jesus is that the Sunday lectionary for Year C tends to leave out incidents which have been read in the years of Matthew and Mark. So this year we jump forward from the calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John to today's version of the Beatitudes. The lectionary omits further healings, the call of Levi, disputes with scribes and Pharisees about the authority of *the Son of Man*, and the choice of twelve of the many disciples of Jesus to be *apostles*.

It is only when Jesus has chosen the Twelve who are to share and later to carry on his prophetic ministry that he begins to teach them – and the others, including us, who hear – what kind of life they must lead. This teaching will provide our Gospel readings until Lent. It begins with Luke's version of the Beatitudes, which Matthew gives at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Luke's version differs in two ways: first, he provides only four Blessings, whereas Matthew has seven, and, secondly, he provides four Woes, contrasting with the Blessings. So the rich are contrasted with the poor, the well-filled with the hungry, those who laugh with those who weep, and those of whom the world speaks well with those it hates.

In this way Luke makes even it clearer than Matthew does that the way of life which is to be followed by the apostles and disciples of Jesus is the exact opposite of the way of life accepted and applauded by the world. This turning-upside-down of the world's standards echoes Mary's words in the Magnificat: *He casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly. He fills the starving with good things sends the rich away empty.*

Luke will show Jesus associating with those whom the world *hates, drives out and abuses* – the sinful woman (chapter 7), a man possessed by demons (chapter 8), Zacchaeus the tax collector (Chapter 19). And much of his teaching shows concern for the poor and rejected (16:19, 18:9.)

Jesus himself lives according to the pattern Luke sets out – he *has nowhere to lay his head* (9:58); he is abused (11:15), he weeps over Jerusalem (19:41); and in the end he is reviled, condemned to death and crucified with criminals.

Luke's Beatitudes are a description both of Jesus himself and of his faithful followers

C6 SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(FEBRUARY 17TH, 2021)

1

2

3

4

5