

Dear members and friends of St. John Lutheran,

"Looking at His disciples, [Jesus] said: Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied (Luke 6:20-21).

There is the **world's wisdom** and then there is **true wisdom – God's wisdom**.

A leading economic expert, a professor at Yale University, had this to say about the future of the stock market in the United States: "Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." His statement was made just a couple of weeks before the stock market crash in October of 1929 that ushered in the Great Depression.

The unbelieving world says that **mankind's wisdom is unsurpassed**. God says that the so-called wisdom of this world is foolishness. As God's people of faith, we need not be fooled by the so-called wisdom of this world. We are enabled to tell the genuine wisdom of God from the counterfeit wisdom of the world!

It is great to be a Christian because through Holy Baptism and the Word, the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, shows us our sins, convicts us of that sin, leads us to repentance, and then blesses us with forgiveness, joy, peace, and eternal life. (Notice who does all the work here: God!) God enables us to realize how spiritually poor we are. Then, by His grace, through faith, He makes us rich in Christ!

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." That flies directly in the face of what the world says. But here Jesus is not talking about a lack of money or possessions. No, Jesus is talking in a **spiritual** sense. He is talking about the **spiritually poor**, believers who realize that they have no riches to bring to God. Jesus says all who realize that they are spiritually poor are blessed.

We need to consider what this word "blessed" means. It is the joy of the person who has salvation. It is the contentedness of the person who has experienced the grace of God.

How are we blessed? Jesus says, *"Yours is the kingdom of God."* Note the words of Jesus: He says **"is"** not "will be." The kingdom of God **already belongs to the believer**. Jesus and John the Baptist made that clear: *"Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."*

We who are God's children, spiritually poor, gladly accept - by faith - the riches which God showers on us. God holds nothing back. The spiritually poor are rich in faith. Jesus is our treasure!

It is great to be a Christian because God gives us a spiritual hunger for His Word and then, in His grace, satisfies us through His Word and Sacrament.

It is like giving us the hunger for good food and then sending us the very best cuisine to satisfy that hunger. It is like filling our hearts with His love and then giving us a spouse, or children, or parents, or family and friends to share that love with.

Jesus says, *"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied."* Jesus is not talking about

people who have an empty stomach. There is no blessedness in that. Just like people who fast during Lent do not *earn* a blessing from God by denying themselves food. Jesus is talking about those who resist the temptation to satisfy the desires of their sinful flesh and who, instead, live as God has called them to live. The followers of Jesus hunger for the Bread of Life and thirst for His "living water" of salvation. Jesus fills us with His righteousness in Word and Sacrament! His grace overflow in our lives!

So, why is it so great to be a Christian? Well - aside from the fact that the pension plan is, as they say, out of this world! - it is great to be a Christian because only a child of God recognizes true wisdom. Only a Christian knows the Truth, that is, Jesus Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, the Life." Only a Christian has had the miracle of conversion worked on their heart and mind. Only a Christian has the blessing of the Holy Spirit continually working in their life, through the means of grace. Only a Christian desires to follow God's wisdom in their daily walk with their Lord. **Yes, it is great to be a Christian!**

Pastor Travis