

4Epiphany, Matthew 5:1-12
Rev. Kimberly Glenn
February 1, 2026

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts and minds be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our merciful redeemer. Amen.

Lately I've been seeing posts on social media that say things like, "*Remember growing up in the 1960s?*" Those posts show pictures of kids drinking out of water hoses, climbing jungle gyms made entirely of metal, riding bikes without helmets and apparently surviving it all. According to these posts, when we were kids, we faced danger every afternoon... and yet here we are. We had no idea how resilient we were. But what's interesting is that we don't remember those years as being risky. We remember them as feeling *stable*; as feeling safe. and familiar. Maybe that is why when the world feels unsettled to us now it's tempting to wish we could go back to a time that felt simpler and more secure.

And yet, if we're honest, part of what made those years feel stable wasn't that the world was calmer. We felt that way because we were young. Most of us had grownups in our lives who were looking out for us and making us feel protected. We trusted the ground beneath us more because we hadn't yet learned just how much it could shift.

Most of us in our lives, no matter how long we may live, expect that things will finally settle down. We live with the hope that there will come a time when the world will make a little more sense. We want the systems we have built and trusted to be stable and enduring. We pray that things will stay the same long enough for things to *feel* predictable and familiar.

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That does not seem to be what has happened in my lifetime. I have experienced life in the 1960's, the 70's, the 80's, the 90's and on into this twenty-first century. Things have not gotten more stable or predictable, at least not in our social and political world. In fact, a whole lot of people feel like just the opposite is happening. Instead of feeling *more* grounded and enduring, our institutions feel *less so... much less so*. The voices we hear from media sources seem louder these days, but they do not seem to be wiser. Headlines seem to intentionally frighten us while they describe stories that may or may not be accurate, and truthfully most *are* biased - one way or the other. Even people whose faith is deep can't help but feel doubt looming like a monstrous shadow. The faithful can find themselves wondering quietly among themselves, "*Where can I find solid ground now?*"

Scripture never pretends that this feeling is new. In the text from Matthew, when Jesus sits down on a hillside and begins to speak, he does not bless the confident. He does not bless the successful, or the people who think they have it all figured out. Instead, he blesses the poor in spirit. He blesses those who mourn and the meek. He blesses those who hunger and thirst—not for power, but for righteousness. And in the letter from Paul to the church in Corinth, he doesn't try to make faith sound impressive or competitive. He simply says to them that God's wisdom often looks foolish to the world, and God's strength often shows up where we least expect it. God reveals to us in His wisdom that His strength shows up most clearly in weakness.

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These two texts, the Sermon on the Mount and Paul's letter to tenuous, uncertain new Christians in Corinth, speak perfectly into the lives we are living right now. They serve to remind us of something steady. We are reminded that Jesus is steady and reliable in this unsteady and unsettling time. When institutions seem to shake and crumble, these words remind us that He stands firm. They remind us that God has never depended on what appears to our eyes and ears to be strong. God brings strength to, and even through, what the world sees as weak. We instinctively know that, and we believe that God has always worked through a human being's faith and trust. God through Christ works in and through us with humility and without pomp and pageantry. These texts remind us that God is the one in whom we can feel certain and sure when the world around us feels like anything but that. Even now, when our institutions are shifting and certainty seems to be fading away, God continues to work. My friends, God *is* working in our world - not through the loudest voices or the most powerful platforms but through people around us whose actions quietly reveal the trust and humble love that flows through Him into us.

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Healthcare and hospice workers who show up when others tend to hesitate out of fear or dread. Teachers who embrace and nurture the world's children without big budgets or fanfare. Families who care for elderly relatives with patience despite their weariness. Neighbors who help each other rebuild after natural disasters or after the devastation of war. Friends who choose forgiveness and reconciliation over stubborn resentment. These acts of ordinary faithfulness reveal God's presence where we need it most. God acts in the smallest of ways. Maybe that is why it is **not** the message we hear most often. Our media platforms want clicks, the loudest voices in our media platforms want to be noticed. But the message we need to hear is not where Satan is present but where God is present in our world and working quietly and diligently to overcome his evil ways.

The peace God offers us is not the kind of peace that asks us to ignore what is happening in the world. It is not the kind of peace that demands we carry the weight of fixing it. It is the kind of peace that comes from knowing where our life is rooted. Jesus does not bless the loudest voices or the most certain arguments. He blesses those who mourn, because they have loved deeply enough to grieve. He blesses those who hunger for righteousness, because they still care. He blesses those who choose humility and mercy when the world rewards superficiality and corruption.

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In his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul reminds us that God's work has never depended on appearing to be wise or powerful. God's work has always moved forward through trust, patience, and faithfulness - characteristics that often go unnoticed. So, God's invitation to us today is not to withdraw in fear. He wants us to not harden our hearts against each other. God's is inviting us to be awake and present to what is going on in the world without being consumed by it. To stay engaged without getting swept up. To care deeply without feeling like you are carrying everything alone. To trust that even now—especially now—God is at work in ways that are not shouting for attention. God is in the quiet acts of faithfulness. His Spirit pours out steady love. Jesus is blessing those who choose humility over control. Blessed are the ones who trust God enough to keep walking, one step at a time, even when the path is uncertain. My friends, God is here, God is near and God will never let us go. Amen.