

Meditation:

Centering in, notice breath, physical sensation of the body being held wherever you are sitting ... opening to the experience of peace and love found within the silence, peace surrounding you, love flowing to you and from you, opening to awareness of your divine nature..

I send my love/peace over the mountains
I send my love/peace over the seas
I send my love/peace into the heavens
And it returns to me

And so it is. Amen.

Message notes and inspiration:

Matthew 5: 1 - 12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him and he began to teach them saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who weep and mourn; they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice; they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful; they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the Sons and Daughters of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you, when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

From *The Gospel of Peace* by John Dear

To understand the beatitudes, it's helpful to remember that they were originally spoken in the ancient language of Aramaic not in Greek or Hebrew. ... Instead of beginning with the familiar phrase, 'Blessed are you'... they should each begin with the phrase, 'Arise and walk forth.' Imagine how empowering Jesus's Beatitudes would be if in fact they each began, "Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something, you who are poor, mournful, meek, hungering for justice, merciful, peacemaking, and persecuted! "

This...non-violent Jesus: ...empowers poor, oppressed, rural Galileans to get up and get moving and live out their calling as the sons and daughters of the God of peace, to live as if they were already in the Kingdom of heaven. The Aramaic version includes hints of resurrection, walking, and discipleship. With this commandment to rise and go forth, Jesus begins to send his followers out as sheep into the midst of wolves, as non-violent campaigners commissioned to disarm everyone and prepare for God's reign of peace on earth.

Two weeks ago, I found inspiration in ***The Beatitudes of Peace*** as I considered our call to bring/be peace in the cities, peace in the nations. Over the next few weeks, I'll be prayerfully working with the Beatitudes, exploring passages that make my heart sing– or stumble! I invite you on a journey that was shared by both Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. As the author relates in each of these books– ***The Beatitudes of Peace*** and ***The Gospel of Peace***– Gandhi read the Sermon on the Mount, which includes the Beatitudes, each day for over forty years. We are part of a lineage that is called and commissioned to "Arise and walk forth," as beatitude people. You don't need to buy more books by John Dear! Simply invite the words of the Beatitudes into your prayer/meditation if you choose, and see what unfolds.

This morning, I want to focus on the passage: *Blessed are those who weep and mourn; they will be comforted.* This is close to my heart as our family walked this sorrow this week.

- “Gates of Sorrow” Francis Weller and The Wild Edge of Grief
- Our private gate of grief at personal losses and sorrow
 - The sacred bedside vigil and witnessing that final transition; prayer of protection; WHEREVER WE ARE, GOD IS...and all is well.
- Grief at the gate of the world’s sorrows
 - Oh so many! Send our love over the mountains/seas

In *The Gospels of Peace*, John Dear writes:

“In this second Beatitude, Jesus instructs us about the emotional life of nonviolence. He ... says here at the start that we should practice grief.

Later there will be instruction on how to cultivate joy and peace, not anger or fear, but we early on “Jesus encourages us to mourn for our sisters and brothers. That grief will break our hearts and lead us to compassion and finally nonviolent actions.”

In our larger Western culture, we are not taught how to mourn our personal losses, let alone grief that comes when we recognize and feel the suffering of our kin– ALL beings, and all of creation. When we live our oneness with all of creation and feel the suffering we are invited to face our grief as squarely as we can, and then “enter God's realm of comfort and compassion.”

Two weeks ago I reminded myself– and us!– that ***healing is not the absence of suffering but the integration of it into the wider story of love and growth. WE are part of the wider story of love and growth!*** So here is this version of the Beatitudes that reminds us we are commissioned to embody the God of Peace.

Matthew 5: 1 - 12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him and he began to teach them saying:

““Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something, you who remember that God is your source poor in spirit; live knowing the kingdom of heaven is here.

“Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something, you who weep and mourn; live AS the compassion and comfort of God.

“Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something you who are meek; live knowing the reign of God is now.

“Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something you who hunger and thirst for justice and are merciful; work for God’s justice and mercy now.

“Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something you embody the pure in heart of God; live knowing you are the hands and heart and eyes of God.

“Arise, get up, get moving, start walking, walk forth and do something you who are the peacemakers; your sacred presence stands up, speaks up, works for peace in all ways; you are the beloved sons and daughters of God.”

And so it is! Amen!