

Homily ~ OT IV (A) > February 1, 2026.

Today's readings place before us a very important question: *What does it mean to live a truly happy life?* The world tells us that happiness comes from wealth, power, comfort, and success. But Jesus, in today's Gospel, turns that idea upside down. Through the Beatitudes, He shows us God's way to eternal happiness.

The Beatitudes complete the Ten Commandments. While the Commandments tell us what not to do, Jesus goes further and shows us the virtues we must live. These are not promises of comfort here and now, but promises of salvation and lasting joy in the Kingdom of God.

In the first reading, the prophet Zephaniah speaks to a small "moral minority" who remained faithful. He calls them blessed because they seek justice, humility, truth, and righteousness. Their strength is not in themselves, but in their dependence on God. They teach us that real blessing begins when we humbly trust in the Lord.

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians - and us - that everything we have is a gift from God. Our talents, our faith, our very life come from Him. Paul urges us to use these gifts not for pride or selfishness, but for the good of the community, because in Christ we are justified, sanctified, and redeemed.

Then in the Gospel, Jesus speaks words that can sound strange: blessed are the poor, the hungry, those who mourn, and those who are persecuted. Why? Because poverty opens our hearts to God's reign, hunger teaches us to trust in His providence, sorrow leads us to true hope, and persecution unites us more closely with Christ. Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, merciful, pure of heart, peacemakers, and those who remain faithful even when mocked or rejected.

All three readings invite us to make what we might call a personal Declaration of Dependence on God - to admit that without Him, we cannot live fully or happily.

So what does this mean for us today?

First, we are challenged to live the Beatitudes in daily life: to be compassionate, humble, merciful, and peacemakers - in our families, workplaces, and society. Every time we help the poor, comfort the sorrowful, or stand for justice, we allow others to taste the promises of the Beatitudes here and now.

Second, we must choose our way wisely. As the early Christians taught: *there are two ways - the way of life and the way of death.* Jesus Himself is the Way of Life. The real question is: *Do we want happiness the world offers, or the deeper joy Christ promises?*

May we choose Christ's way, trusting Him completely, loving God with all our heart, and loving one another as true brothers and sisters in His family.