



17 February 2019, 8 a.m. | 6th Sunday Year C | Children's Mass

Jeremiah 17:5-8 | Psalm 1:1-6 | 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20 |
Luke 6:17, 20-26

BEATITUDES: BE HAPPY

Introduction

My dear sisters and brothers, my dear children, look around at your neighbours – is anybody smiling in church today? Everybody's got serious faces. And yet, the message of today's gospel is to be happy – the Beatitudes. We cannot be happy unless we have joy in our hearts and we smile. So, let us begin this Eucharist by smiling in the presence of God, because God is here to do great things for us and to bless us this morning as we participate in this Mass.

Let us begin by calling to mind our sins – not that this should make us unhappy, but to know God is merciful and heals us. We can be aware of our sinfulness in front of God because he is always willing to forgive us.

Homily

The boys and girls of the seventh standard have just given us a beautiful message, comparing what we see in advertisements to what Jesus teaches us in today's gospel. All of you study the Bible and answer questions during the Bible quizzes. So, where do we read about the law in the Bible? Through whom did we receive the law? Let me give you a hint: we read about ten 'laws'... Moses – that's correct! Did Jesus come to give laws? No. Then what did he give us? The Beatitudes.

Yes, that is the difference. In the Old Testament, we read about the laws given by God, which we call the Ten Commandments, which Moses brought down from the hill where he went to pray. But Jesus gave us only one law. If you read the gospels, tell me what is that law? Yes? Love God and love your neighbour as yourself. That's right.

This is the big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Jesus came to give us a programme of happiness – the 'be happy attitudes'. Today's teachings are: Happy are the poor, happy are those who are hungry and those who mourn now, happy are the ones who are hated, insulted and rejected. All of us must build up these 'be happy attitudes' in ourselves. It is not what the advertisements on TV tell us that will make us happy – new shoes or big cars. Often, we see people wearing expensive clothes and driving big cars, but they always look sad and stressed. The advertisements tell us lies so that we buy more and more.

Jesus gives us a real plan for happiness. He gives us the beatitudes. There are two gospels in which we find the beatitudes – the gospel according to Matthew, and the gospel according to Luke, which we heard today. What is the difference between these two gospels? In the gospel according to Matthew, Jesus gives the beatitudes, the teaching on happiness, on a mount. That is why it is called the Sermon on the Mount. He gave us eight beatitudes according to Matthew. Whereas, in today's gospel, Luke tells us that they were praying on the mount, and when they came down to level ground, to the plain, Jesus taught them the beatitudes. We heard only four beatitudes today. Which are they?

As we saw in the skit enacted by the children, 'Happy are the poor'. Which advertisement would tell you to become poor?! They all tell us to get rich and buy costly things. But Jesus tells us that the poor will be happy and receive the kingdom of God. The reward will be much greater than our being poor. Jesus also

tells us that we are to be happy even when we are hungry because God will satisfy us. To those who are sad and crying, Jesus says: Be happy, because God will make us joyful so that we laugh again. And the fourth beatitude in the gospel of today is to be happy when we are hated. As we saw in the skit, the child who goes to Sunday school and attends Mass instead of watching movies with his friends is ridiculed. The other children make fun of him but he does it anyway. Jesus says we will be rewarded in heaven when we do good work.

So these are the four beatitudes that we learnt today. The beatitudes are gospel to us; it is not law. The law is something that compels us to abide by it. For example, your principal in school might set some new rules which you have to follow every day. You may not like it and you may even feel sad to follow these rules. But Jesus does not make us sad. His beatitudes make us happy even when we are in sad situations. He came to give us the gospel.

What is the difference between the law and the gospel? When we are given laws, it is we who have to try hard to follow them, and when we fail, we are disappointed in ourselves. We have to rely on our own strength to abide by the laws. Jesus came to give us the gospel, and tells us that even if we fail, he still loves us. That is good news! And so we must be happy! The gospel is a gift of God to us. The law has to be achieved: it is our success. In faith, we receive the good news: it is God's success working in our lives. Happiness is a personal gain in the law, whereas in the gospel, happiness is received as a gift from God.

And so, dear children, all of us can be happy because Jesus did not come to give us laws, but a programme of happiness. You can be happy even in the midst of your problems. My dear children and adults, when we experience difficulties in life, we need not be sad because Jesus achieves joy in our lives through the gospel, Amen.



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