

BLESSINGS ALWAYS  
February 12, 2025  
Association Minister Message  
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*BLESSINGS*—that word can be both comforting and challenging. As people of faith, with thankfulness to God, we often declare that we have been *BLESSED* beyond our imaginations. Jesus' words found in Luke (6:17-29) are from the "*Sermon on the Plain*." When Jesus' words are received only for "*me, myself, and I*," overlooked are the challenging words such as "*woe/terrible*." In Mathew (5:1-7:27), Jesus words are the "*Sermon on the Mount*," and are instructional, affirming, and comforting.

God surprises us with dreams, wonders, and possibilities that can become realities and *BLESSINGS* in abundance. The "*Sermon on the Plain*" recognizes human suffering and tragedy, but there is a vision of resolution and fulfillment. Hunger leads to being fed. Those who are weeping will be comforted and filled with laughter. Eventually, death results in resurrection. When *BLESSINGS* are self-serving, they result in greed, selfishness, and inability to care for God's world and people with compassion.

Jesus challenges His followers to *BLESS* others who need care, affirmation, hope, peace, and love. He uses *BLESSINGS* as a way to affirm the creation and every person as created in the image of God. Jesus turned to the prophet Isaiah for words of call to ministry, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captive and recover of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" (Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus held nothing back in changing the lives of those in need. We, as the community of faith, are called to ministry with *BLESSINGS* that can change the world.

Our trust is not in being influential, rich, and powerful. Trusting in God's unchanging love *BLESSES* us with God's amazing grace of compassion and love. Rev. William Sloane Coffin's benediction declares, "*So may God take your minds, and think through them. May God take your lips, and speak through them. May God take your hearts, and set them on fire.*" *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.