



Blessed to Follow: The Beatitudes As a Compass for Discipleship (Lutheran Voices)

Martha Ellen Stortz

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In Matthew's Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount inaugurates Jesus' public ministry, and the first word out of Jesus' mouth is 'blessed'. He repeats this word throughout his first sermon. Jesus calls his disciples by blessing them, and as he speaks, Jesus introduces himself to us but also introduces disciples to themselves, for the Beatitudes offer a character sketch of who disciples will become if they follow him.

The Beatitudes, says Martha Stortz, function as a compass for the journey of Christian discipleship. The first group of Beatitudes target people in situations of suffering. The second group of Beatitudes target people who help those who suffer. Each chapter in *Blessed to Follow* is structured around a similar pattern: appeal to experience; biblical stories; Jesus: the one blessing and the one blessed; disciples: blessed to be a blessing; practice: the blessing made real.



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