



# The Word @ Home

Epiphany 4

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

## The Point

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Those who work for the kingdom might suffer now, but God promises to bless them.

## Key Verse

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“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

– Matthew 5:3

## Scripture Summaries

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**Gospel:** Matthew 5:1-12

### The Beatitudes

Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount with statements of blessing known as the Beatitudes. The first four (verses 3-6) are addressed to people in bad situations (poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness) and assures them that God will reverse their suffering. The next three (verses 7-9) are directed at people who are practicing virtues (mercy, purity, and peace) rather than power. The last two give strength to those who are being persecuted. These characteristics together describe the identity of those who are living in the anticipation of the coming kingdom.

**First Reading:** Micah 6:1-8

God has done great things for the people of Israel, but they have rejected God. God cares less about physical acts of worship than following God's way: doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

For the ancient Romans, the entire purpose of the cross was to discourage people from breaking the laws by threatening a painful death. Now some people claim one of these men has risen from the dead, and they have adopted this shape as the symbol of their faith.

## Seasons & Festivals

The season after Epiphany is similar to the season after Pentecost. The liturgical color is green, signifying the growth of our faith, as well as the continued revelation (epiphany) of Jesus as the Son of God. The length of this season changes as it ends just prior to the season of Lent, which itself moves due to the changing date of Easter.

## Discussion Starters

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- Which beatitude is the most difficult for you to understand?
- How might a cross in your pocket help you focus on your faith this week?
- Compare different translations of the Beatitudes. Which one is your favorite? Why?

## Prayer of the Week

Jesus, help us to see the blessings around us and to know are with us always. Amen.

## Daily Bible Readings

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

### Sunday

**Read Matthew 5:1-12** Jesus preaches about the Beatitudes.  
Choose one beatitude and act on it in your life this week.

### Monday

**Read Luke 2:22-40** Simeon meets Jesus.  
There are many musical interpretations of this text. Search online for Simeon's Song.  
Which is your favorite?

### Tuesday

**Read Ruth 2:1-16** Ruth meets Boaz.  
What would you do for another family member? Optional: Start reading from Ruth 1:1.

### Wednesday

**Read Ruth 3:1-13; 4:13-22** Ruth and Naomi have a happy ending.  
How is this story similar to the Beatitudes?

### Thursday

**Read Psalm 112** Happy are the righteous.  
Compare this psalm with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. How are they different? How can they work together?

### Friday

**Read James 3:13-18** Wisdom comes from heaven.  
Each day this week, choose one family member who best demonstrated the wisdom mentioned in verse 17.

### Saturday

**Read Mark 7:1-8** The Pharisees challenge Jesus about the law.  
Gather at a sink or bowl and wash your hands as you read this.



## Blessing for the Week

Share this blessing while tracing a cross on each person's forehead or hand with their permission:  
**Blessed are you.**