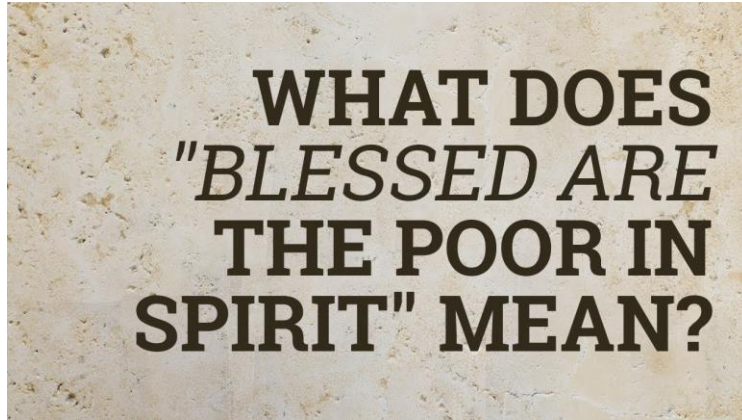


Thoughts and Smiles – January 10, 2022

I picked up a treasure at the Sauble Beach United Church book sale a few months ago. A little paperback entitled "**God in All Things**" by Gerard W. Hughes caught my eye, and I have been finding it spiritually nurturing ever since I opened the cover. The chapters are little powerhouse sermons and leave me thinking (and praying) long after I finish reading. Want a sample?

O.K. Here is a reflection on one of the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, to which the author asks:



How Can the Utterly Destitute be Blissfully Happy?

And in answer, he writes:

The original text of the Beatitudes uses the Greek word *makarioi* for "happy." A person who is *makarios* is blissfully happy, with a happiness nothing can disturb, not even death itself. The text also uses the Greek word *ptochos* for "poor," meaning "utterly destitute to be without food, water, clothing and shelter, and deprived of friendship, of

all support...

... What, then, does Jesus mean when he says, "How happy are you who are poor, yours is the kingdom of God"? Jesus came to rescue us from destitution, not commend grinding poverty. The use of the Greek word *ptochoi*, the destitute, is the graphic expression for an attitude of complete and total trust in God who is at work in every detail of our lives. In this context, "the poor" are those who find their ultimate security in God and who share the attitude of St. Paul: "*With God on our side who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:31). "*Nothing, therefore, can come between ourselves and the love of Christ, no matter whether we are troubled or worried, lacking food or clothes, being persecuted, threatened or even attacked. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Rom. 8:38-9) The *ptochoi* are utterly dependent on God: they have no ultimate security apart from God. For this reason, they can allow God to express Godself in all they say and do. As a result, they live and practice what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount: "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly*" (Matt. 5:44). Why are we to live this

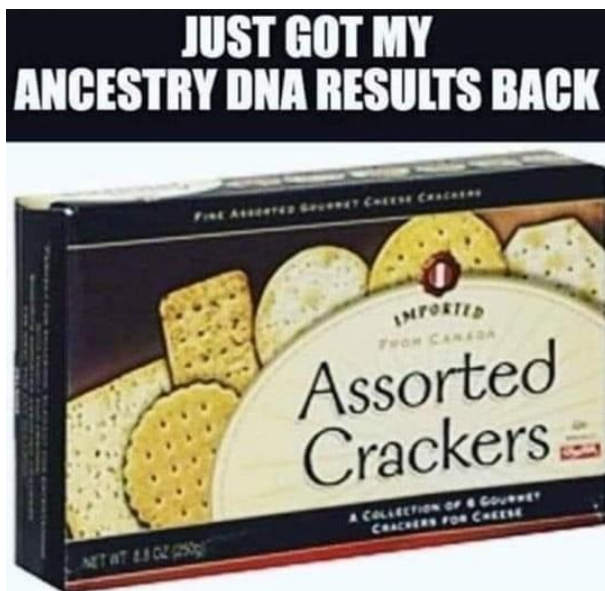


way? Because "*in this way, you will be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes the sun to rise on bad people as well as good, and rain to fall on honest and dishonest alike*" (Matt. 5:45). God is not a God who sends pain, suffering and death, but a God who has such love and compassion for creation that God becomes one of us and enters into the pain and suffering of the world.

Amazing to ponder, is it not?

SO, thank you, kind soul who donated the book to that church book sale from which this reflection is extracted –. You've played a part in sharing it to a broader audience for whoever you are. For indeed, the Word of God is to be broadcast and proclaimed to the glory of God, and someday I'll take this marvellous little book to another sale, and it will pass on to other eyes to read and ponder in the heart.

And some smiles for the day...



**When you're too lazy to
build a snowman**



Have a terrific week!
And A very Happy New Year!



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Check out "David's Blog" on the Sauble Beach United Church website.

<https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-blog/>

And if you want the online experience of the church worship services, follow the link here below...
www.saubleunitedchurch.ca and click: "Watch"

