

A Blessed Nowonder to you!

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The month of Nowonder bears down on us. (No, this isn't a typographical error or failure of spell-check either.)

Nowonder, as we called it back in my days of teaching time management to pastors of new and redeveloping congregations, often falls in the last month of the church year. The month of Nowonder seems like five weeks of 8 days each, each day 30 hours long and never long enough. It's the month when calendars chock-full of occasions, sacred and secular, scramble for the church's attention. From All Saints' Day to Christ the King Sunday, to Veterans Day and Thanksgiving and everything in between life gets complex if not confusing. And I haven't even mentioned Black Friday and the last laps of the Christmas rush.

But there is a timeless Word for us, a word that is infinitely longer than the calendar month of November or the mythical time called Nowonder. This Word give Christ's church timeless rigging upon which to hitch our hopes. This Word IS the Living Word Jesus Christ, to whom all of Scripture points us.

Each of us has a favorite Bible translation, I suppose. I have several – ranging from a searchable Greek New Testament for the most serious study, to the English Standard Version (ESV) for lesson- and sermon-preparation, and, for devotional reading when my mind is weary, The Message Edition. So, when November – or *Nowonder* – gets the best of you, pull out your favorite translation of Luke 6:17-23 and let it remind you just how blessed you are to be a subject, a follower, of Christ our King. Whatever estate, whatever ministry the Lord has called you to: *Who* you are and *Whose* you are *matter* in ways that go beyond us and beyond anything we can understand. In the midst of these church year-ending days morphing into the month of Nowonder, may you remain focused, grounded, and reassured by first things. The first things, those things of faith, are the last and lasting things, the things that matter for now and for eternity. They are only reason we dare to sing:

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,

All who by faith before the world confessed

Your name, O Jesus, be forever blessed. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Many, many thanks for the generous \$50 gift, from Women of Peace in behalf of the entire Congregation, for October–Pastor Appreciation Month. Red and I will enjoy an evening out with this gift very soon! We appreciate you, too, God's People of Peace!

In Christ, Pastor Cathi & Red Braasch

You're Blessed....

Luke 6:17-23 -- The Message

Coming down off the mountain with them, [Jesus] stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed!

Then [Jesus] spoke:

You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding.

You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.

You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning.

“Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don't like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.”

With all my love,

+Jesus

