



— THE —
TABLE

Living the Politics of Jesus in a Partisan America - 2020

This is a collection of the words and prayers created among us as we sought to center ourselves on Jesus through his sermon on the mount. Let us pray:

Matthew 4:17-25, 5:1-2, 7:28-29

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan....

...When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:....

....Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

Into the ramped-up rivalries of election cycle politics, Jesus comes to do nothing less than establish a new political order, embodying and proclaiming a completely new way of being human together that takes us beyond the polarities of partisan America, into the healing justice of the kingdom of God, present among us.

Prayer of Response

King Jesus, I pledge my allegiance to you and your kingdom today. I’m leaving behind my _____ to follow you as a disciple. Teach us your politics this fall, so we can embody the healing justice of your kingdom together.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

King Jesus, Lord of all, make in us repentant hearts—hating what is evil, loving what is good—setting us free to live out the politics of your arriving kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit who with the Father, you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Matthew 5:1-16

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

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

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

God's Kingdom is available to you today... When you're at the end of your rope, you're at the front of the line... It's not the wealthy or the well-connected, but the outcast, the overlooked, and the overwhelmed who are in pole position to enter Kingdom Life.

Prayer of Response

King Jesus, I lay my assumptions about the “good life” at your feet. Teach me how to really live. Meet me in _____.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

King Jesus, Lord of all, make in us repentant hearts—hating what is evil, loving what is good—setting us free to live out the politics of your arriving kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit who with the Father, you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Matthew 5:17-20

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

Today -friends - we declare the good news that Jesus is what God has to say: he holds all the Scriptures together in his teaching and life making sense of it all. And he doesn't make following God HARDER, but reorients our focus towards loving justice for the sake of others, particularly the powerless, penniless, and spiritually destitute. Let's receive the Word of God, the love who holds EVERYTHING together today.

Prayer of Response

Jesus, you are what God has to say: Be at work in the depths of our hearts to birth your loving justice in our _____. In faith, we choose to hold all things together in this love and justice today.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Almighty God, Lamb of God, fulfillment of our every human need, fill us full (all ways) with your Holy Spirit, that our hearts might be sweetly ordered in your heavenly realm: where you reign forever—One God—world without end. **Amen.**

Matthew 5:21-37

You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

In a world where human beings are treated as resources to be used, where the powerful exploit and oppress the weak, Jesus shows us God's way of being human together: the politics of love, where the powerful lay down their lives for the weak, and leverage their status to lift up the lowly, where all human beings are treated as the precious and holy image-bearers they are.

Prayer of Response

Jesus Christ, you've drawn us together as your Body. Show us how to live out your politics of love, especially in _____. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Almighty God, who created us in your own image to live in loving community: Grant us grace fearlessly to practice the politics of love as we contend against evil and humbly pursue peace and justice in our communities and among the nations, that all people might live together in unity to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Matt 5:38-48

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

Jesus didn't give us a sit down and take it gospel. Rather, Jesus gave us a new way to confront injustice with Kingdom power, through cruciform and creative love. Church, lay down your urge to retaliate today so that you can stand up with the power of Heaven.

Prayer of Response

Perfectly Loving Father, you have created both us and our enemies in your image. Help us to abandon the way of retaliation and embrace the way of creative love in _____.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Merciful Father, whose creative love capsizes our ideas of justice, direct us in the path of your politic, that we may love one another in perfect love and holy justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him....

....And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

You don't have to pretend you're something that you're not to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Your Father already knows you, brokenness and all, and he refuses to stop loving you. Instead of Power Piety and Religious Rackets, Jesus is inviting us to confess and be transformed.

Prayer of Response

Heavenly Father, I repent of my hustling in _____. Flood my heart with your Kingdom love and restore me from my brokenness.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Mighty God, loving, always loving, quietly capture our fearful hearts that your glory may come in—and fill the world— One God, holy and everlasting. **Amen.**

Matthew 6:9-15

Pray then in this way:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

We are not abandoned to figure out how to live out Jesus' politics of love on our own, in our own strength. Our loving generous Father gives us prayer as a gift, opening up full access to His Kingdom power. This gift enables and empowers us to partner with Him in living out the politics of His love.

Prayer of Response

Loving and generous Father, in the midst of _____ help me receive your gift of prayer and live into it. Let it empower me to live out your politics of love.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Loving, generous Father, empower us with the gift of prayer as we live out your politics of love in the world, partnered with Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Matt 6:19-34

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his *justice*, and all these things will be given to you as well.

So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

Your Father, the creator of all things, is HERE right now. Be freed from the worry of the infinite possibilities of tomorrow. Through the power of the God who provides, open yourself to Jesus' politic of justice and experience freedom.

Prayer of Response

Lord of all creation, I submit to you my worry/shame about _____. I open myself to your politic of justice and your presence with me here at this exact moment. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Gracious God, our keeper and protector, help us to orient our decisions, our outlook, and our lives around the certainty of your security and generous love. May we trust that we will find your presence and your work in every possibility we may encounter tomorrow and in the days to come. Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Matthew 7:1-6

Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

Today we proclaim the good news that Jesus' Justice runs on the power of repentance. Into a partisan world that runs on the power of rightness where to be wrong is to lose everything, where you must perpetuate injustice to 'win' - today receive the gift of repentance, church. Christ is full of mercy: let us see clearly that God's justice is present among us in the gift of repentance.

Prayer of Response

Merciful Father, trusting that your mercy and justice are present among us, I repent of _____. Help me to open my heart to receive and participate in this gift. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Most Merciful God, who sings songs of deliverance over us whenever we are afraid of our own sinfulness: Grant us the courage to face our faults, that we may receive your gift of repentance and relationship through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen.

Matthew 7:7-12

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

God is our loving Father, not a demanding and distant deity. His kingdom of abundance is obliterating scarcity and win-lose relationships. Instead of demanding, defending, and deceiving you are free to simply ask for what you need.

Prayer of Response

Heavenly Father, teach me to trust in your goodness. Resting in the knowledge that I am your child, help me to move towards my brothers and sisters in _____. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Loving Father, who holds back no good gift from us, not even your own Son, embolden our hearts, that as confident children we might audaciously ask, persistently seek, and loudly knock on the door that is Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in perfect self-giving love for all eternity. **Amen.**

Matthew 7:13-29

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

In a world that runs on the superficial status games of impressions and clicks and likes, Jesus opens the way for us to actually participate in God's new way of being human, living out the politics of love and justice, in our bodies and our relationships, by simply putting his teaching into practice, trusting God's power to meet us in our weakness.

Prayer of Response

Lord Jesus, you have revealed to us a new politic of love! Trusting in your power to meet us in our weakness, help us put your teaching into practice in our _____. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Jesus, Gracious Rabbi, the bedrock that we are built on, teach us to trust your Way, that we may stand firm in steadfast love, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Good News Proclamation

The measure by which we will be judged is our participation in merciful justice - the social justice of loving each other as we love God. Let us love God by loving each other. Let us give and receive, share and welcome, take care and visit each other as we would Christ. Let us be a righteous people - filled with just mercy and merciful justice - as we live together under the Lordship of Christ

Prayer of Response

King Jesus - what an honor it is to be in your family. We pledge our allegiance to your Kingdom in our _____. May we see you in each other; may we love you as we love each other.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Collect

Good Shepherd, whose rule is far above all other rule, authority, power, dominion and name: turn our hearts to pledge allegiance to your Kingdom by seeing you in seeing each other and loving you in loving each other; through Jesus Christ our King, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



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