

offene kirche

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Nadia Bolz Weber, Predigt/Talk anlässlich der theologischen Tagung «Frisch und Weise», Basel, 26.-28.4.2019

Maybe the Sermon on the Mount is all about Jesus's lavish blessing of the people around him on that hillside, blessing all the accidental saints in this world, especially those who that world—like ours—didn't seem to have much time for: people in pain, people who work for peace instead of profit, people who exercise mercy instead of vengeance.

Maybe Jesus was simply blessing the ones around him that day who didn't otherwise receive blessing, who had come to believe that, for them, blessings would never be in the cards. I mean, come on, doesn't that just *sound* like something Jesus would do? Extravagantly throwing around blessings as though they grew on trees?

So I imagine Jesus standing among us offering some new beatitudes:

Blessed are the agnostics. Blessed are they who doubt. Those who aren't sure, who can still

be surprised. Blessed are they who are spiritually impoverished and therefore not so certain about everything that they no longer take in new information. Blessed are those who have nothing to offer. Blessed are the preschoolers who cut in line at communion. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are they for whom death is not an abstraction. Blessed are they who have buried their loved ones, for whom tears could fill an ocean. Blessed are they who have loved enough to know what loss feels like.

Blessed are the mothers of the miscarried. Blessed are they who don't have the luxury of taking things for granted anymore. Blessed are they who can't fall apart because they have to keep it together for everyone else.

Blessed are those who "still aren't over it yet." Blessed are those who mourn. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are those who no one else notices. The kids who sit alone at middle-school lunch tables. The laundry guys at the hospital. The sex workers and the night-shift street sweepers.

Blessed are the forgotten. Blessed are the closeted.

Blessed are the unemployed, the unimpressive, the underrepresented.

Blessed are the teens who have to figure out ways to hide the new cuts on their arms. Blessed are the meek.

You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are the wrongly accused, the ones who never catch a break, the ones for whom life is hard, for Jesus chose to surround himself with people like them.

Blessed are those without documentation. Blessed are the ones without lobbyists.

Blessed are foster kids and special ed kids and every other kid who just wants to feel safe and loved.

Blessed are those who make terrible business decisions for the sake of people.

Blessed are the burned-out social workers and the overworked teachers and the pro bono case takers.

Blessed are the kindhearted football players and the fundraising trophy wives.

Blessed are the kids who step between the bullies and the weak. Blessed are they who hear that they are forgiven.

Blessed is everyone who has ever forgiven me when I didn't deserve it. Blessed are the merciful, for they totally get it.

I imagined Jesus standing there blessing us all because I believe that is our Lord's nature. Because, after all, it was Jesus who had all the powers of the universe at his disposal but did not consider his equality with God something to be exploited. Instead, he came to us in the most vulnerable of ways, as a powerless, flesh-and-blood newborn. As if to say, "You may hate your bodies, but I am blessing all human flesh. You may admire strength and might, but I am blessing all human weakness. You may seek power, but I am blessing all human vulnerability." This Jesus whom we follow cried at the tomb of his friend and turned the other cheek and forgave those who hung him on a cross. He was God's Beatitude—God's blessing to the weak in a world that admires only the strong.