

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | November 2, 2017

What would it look like if we honored those whom God honors?

Matthew expands on the smaller set of Beatitudes as Luke presents them, and the additional ones make clearer what kinds of behavior got Jesus's followers into trouble. They were "meek," refusing to engage in contests for honor that affected their families as much as it did the individual who refused to "be a man" when challenged. They were "merciful" and "peacemakers," seeking reconciliation with rather than revenge on someone who wronged them. They were "pure in heart," and as Jesus defines purity, that meant doing things—like eating with any who would break bread with you—bound to render them impure in others' eyes.

Jesus gathers in all of these people who are without blessing (the Greek word *makarios* or "honor") in their culture's eyes. He gives them two gifts which more than compensate for their very real losses.

Jesus gives them honor. In front of all the crowds, Jesus ascribes honor to the disciples and to those with whom they minister, declaring that these are the people whom the God of Israel honors. Their human fathers may have disowned them, but they are children of the God who created the universe, to whom all honor belongs.

Then, Jesus makes them family. They are children of one Father and that makes them siblings. They will never be bereft in a community that understands itself as family, which cares for one another in ways that take family relationship with utmost seriousness.

What does God ask of us, as God's children? Not sacrifices of blood, not impressive buildings, not achievement or respectability—rather, relationships with one another, gratitude and helping to build the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. No simple task, and living into this has costs in our culture. But, God promises that we won't be left destitute. When we say "YES! In my backyard!" to a homeless shelter, our neighbors might not be grateful, but God says thank you.

It is through our ministry that God continues to honor those whom our culture looks down upon: the young immigrant who is working their way through college, the person who has been released from incarceration and is starting again, those with emotional or physical disabilities who are challenged each day by independent living. God honors you and your service, as God honors those whom you serve.

This week, call our delegation in Washington. Let our senators and representatives know that as a person of faith you value the Dreamers as members of your family. As part of [#Faith4Dream Week](#), ask them to vote for a clean Dream Act that allows all DACA recipients to live and work in this country without fear. Talk with your friends and family about doing the same. Learn more about the contributions young immigrants are making to our state by reading [more here](#).

What would it mean if we honored those whom God honors? What would happen if we stopped engaging in our culture's expectation of status and power and privilege? What would it cost us if we lived more deeply into justice? And more importantly, what blessings await us on that journey? It's quite an adventure. And we can embark on it together, as one family. (Adapted from [Sarah Dylan Breuer](#).)