Scripture: Matthew chapters 5-7
Sermon by Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde January 22, 2025
Message from Bishop FitzpatrickNew Revised Standard Version Anglicised

Matthew 7:24-29
24 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25 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. 26 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. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!' 28 Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, 29 for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Gospel of Matthew chapters 5-7 (Jesus' Sermon on the Mount)

Matthew chapter 5
The Beatitudes
1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
6 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
8 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
10 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light
13 '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.

14 ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 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. 16 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 Law and the Prophets
17 ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. 18 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. 19 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. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Concerning Anger
21 ‘You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, “You shall not murder”; and “whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.” 22 But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; 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. 23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 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. 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Concerning Adultery
27 ‘You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 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. 30 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.

Concerning Divorce
31 ‘It was also said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” 32 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.

Concerning Oaths
33 '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." 34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

Concerning Retaliation
38 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies
43 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 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. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6
Concerning Almsgiving
1 'Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
2 '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. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Concerning Prayer
5 ‘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. 6 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.

7 ‘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. 8 Do not be like them, for
your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 ‘Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive
you; 15 but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your
trespasses.

Concerning Fasting
16 ‘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. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,
18 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.

Concerning Treasures
19 ‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust[v]
consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures
in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in
and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sound Eye
22 ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; 23 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!

Serving Two Masters
24 ‘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.

Do Not Worry
25 ‘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? 26 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? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 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? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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

Judging Others

Matthew 7
1 ‘Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. 3 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4 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? 5 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.

Profaning the Holy

6 ‘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.

Ask, Search, Knock
7 ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will
be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches
finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Is there anyone
among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? 10 Or if the child asks
for a fish, will give a snake? 11 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!

The Golden Rule
12 ‘In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law
and the prophets.

The Narrow Gate
13 ‘Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy[af] that
leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the
road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit
15 ‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are
ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from
thorns, or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but
the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree
bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown
into the fire. 20 Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Concerning Self-Deception
21 ‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord”, will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 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?” 23 Then I will declare to them, “I
never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.”

Hearers and Doers
24 ‘Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise
man who built his house on rock. 25 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.

26 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. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came,
and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!'

28 Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his
teaching, 29 for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 25:31-46

The Judgement of the Nations

31 '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. 32 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, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 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; 35 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, 36 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." 37 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? 38 And when was it that we saw
you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was
it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" 40 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." 41 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; 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave
me nothing to drink, 43 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." 44 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?" 45 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." 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous
into eternal life.'

A Service of Prayer for the Nation Homily
by Bishop Mariann | Jan 22, 2025
video recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwwaEuDeqM8



O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus said, "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. Matthew 7:24-29

Joined by many across the country, we have gathered this morning to pray for unity as a nation—not for agreement, political or otherwise, but for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division, a unity that serves the common good. Unity, in this sense, is the threshold requirement for people to live together in a free society, it is the solid rock, as Jesus said, in this case upon which to build a nation. It is not conformity. It is not a victory of one over another. It is not weary politeness nor passivity born of exhaustion. Unity is not partisan.

Rather, unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects differences, that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect; that enables us, in our communities and in the halls of power, to genuinely care for one another even when we disagree. Those across our country who dedicate their lives, or who volunteer, to help others in times of natural disaster, often at great risk to themselves, never ask those they are helping for whom they voted in the past election or what positions they hold on a particular issue. We are at our best when we follow their example.

Unity, at times, is sacrificial, in the way that love is sacrificial, a giving of ourselves for the sake of another. Jesus of Nazareth, in his Sermon on the Mount, exhorts us to love not only our neighbors, but to love our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us; to be merciful, as our God is merciful, and to forgive others, as God forgives us. Jesus went out of his way to welcome those whom his society deemed as outcasts.

Now I grant you that unity, in this broad, expansive sense, is aspirational, and it's a lot to pray for—a big ask of our God, worthy of the best of who we are and can be. But there isn't much to be gained by our prayers if we act in ways that further deepen and exploit the divisions among us. Our Scriptures are quite clear that God is never impressed with prayers when actions are not informed by them. Nor does God spare us from the consequences of our deeds, which, in the end, matter more than the words we pray.

Those of us gathered here in this Cathedral are not naive about the realities of politics. When power, wealth and competing interests are at stake; when views of what America should be are in conflict; when there are strong opinions across a spectrum of possibilities and starkly different understandings of what the right course of action is, there will be winners and losers when votes are cast or decisions made that set the course of public policy and the prioritization of resources. It goes without saying that in a democracy, not everyone's particular hopes and dreams will be realized in a given legislative session or a presidential term or even a generation. Not everyone's specific prayers—for those of us who are people of prayer—will be answered as we would like. But for some, the loss of their hopes and dreams will be far more than political defeat, but instead a loss of equality, dignity, and livelihood.

Given this, is true unity among us even possible? And why should we care about it?

Well, I hope that we care, because the culture of contempt that has become normalized in our country threatens to destroy us. We are all bombarded daily with

messages from what sociologists now call "the outrage industrial complex," some of it driven by external forces whose interests are furthered by a polarized America. Contempt fuels our political campaigns and social media, and many profit from it. But it's a dangerous way to lead a country.

I am a person of faith, and with God's help I believe that unity in this country is possible—not perfectly, for we are imperfect people and an imperfect union—but sufficient enough to keep us believing in and working to realize the ideals of the United States of America—ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with its assertion of innate human equality and dignity.

And we are right to pray for God's help as we seek unity, for we need God's help, but only if we ourselves are willing to tend to the foundations upon which unity depends. Like Jesus' analogy of building a house of faith on the rock of his teachings, as opposed to building a house on sand, the foundations we need for unity must be sturdy enough to withstand the many storms that threaten it.

What are the foundations of unity? Drawing from our sacred traditions and texts, let me suggest that there are at least three.

The first foundation for unity is honoring the inherent dignity of every human being, which is, as all faiths represented here affirm, the birthright of all people as children of the One God. In public discourse, honoring each other's dignity means refusing to mock, discount, or demonize those with whom we differ, choosing instead to respectfully debate across our differences, and whenever possible, to seek common ground. If common ground is not possible, dignity demands that we remain true to our convictions without contempt for those who hold convictions of their own.

A second foundation for unity is honesty in both private conversation and public discourse. If we aren't willing to be honest, there is no use in praying for unity, because our actions work against the prayers themselves. We might, for a time, experience a false sense of unity among some, but not the sturdier, broader unity that we need to address the challenges we face.
Now to be fair, we don't always know where the truth lies, and there is a lot working against the truth now, staggeringly so. But when we do know what is true, it's incumbent upon us to speak the truth, even when—and especially when—it costs us.

A third foundation for unity is humility, which we all need, because we are all fallible human beings. We make mistakes. We say and do things that we regret. We have our blind spots and biases, and we are perhaps the most dangerous to ourselves and

others when we are persuaded, without a doubt, that we are absolutely right and someone else is absolutely wrong. Because then we are just a few steps away from labeling ourselves as the good people, versus the bad people.

The truth is that we are all people, capable of both good and bad. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn astutely observed that "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties, but right through every human heart and through all human hearts." The more we realize this, the more room we have within ourselves for humility, and openness to one another across our differences, because in fact, we are more like one another than we realize, and we need each other.

Unity is relatively easy to pray for on occasions of solemnity. It's a lot harder to realize when we're dealing with real differences in the public arena. But without unity, we are building our nation's house on sand.

With a commitment to unity that incorporates diversity and transcends disagreement, and the solid foundations of dignity, honesty, and humility that such unity requires, we can do our part, in our time, to help realize the ideals and the dream of America.

Let me make one final plea, Mr. President. Millions have put their trust in you. As you told the nation yesterday, you have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are transgender children in both Republican and Democrat families who fear for their lives.

And the people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings; who labor in our poultry farms and meat-packing plants; who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the night shift in hospitals—they may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes, and are good neighbors. They are faithful members of our churches, mosques and synagogues, gurdwara, and temples.

Have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away. Help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands to find compassion and welcome here. Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger, for we were once strangers in this land.

May God grant us all the strength and courage to honor the dignity of every human being, speak the truth in love, and walk humbly with one another and our God, for the good of all the people of this nation and the world.

Message from Bishop Bob

Aloha,

I have been asked about the homily of the Bishop of Washington, the Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde, delivered on Tuesday, January 22, 2025, during A Service of Prayer for the Nation at Washington National Cathedral.

Bishop Budde's words were faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a clarion call to live into the hope of the beloved community. She had a unique opportunity to fulfill her ordination promise to "be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper" (see the Book of Common Prayer, page 518, "The Ordination of a Bishop").

I hope all Episcopalians in the Diocese of Hawai'i will read the full text of her homily (and not just listen to a sound bite): A Service of Prayer for the Nation Homily Text by Bishop Mariann, Jan 22, 2025. Please share it broadly with friends and family members. I hope it will be reproduced on the websites of congregations. I hope it will be discussed and engaged.

Her words shared the teaching of the Episcopal Church and of the message of the Gospel.

After you carefully read the text of the homily, I urge you to read again the "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Judgement of the Nations" in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 25:31-46: The Judgement of the Nations

As we consider the days ahead, we must be resolute in our call as Disciples of Jesus Christ to be living examples of mercy and compassion, justice and righteousness, faith and hope.

I leave you with the three verses of Scripture that I hope guide my life:

"Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy." (Matthew 5:7)
"Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. This is because an angry person doesn't produce God's righteousness." (James 1:19-20)

"He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

Please pray for Bishop Budde as she faces a backlash from some corners. As your Bishop, please know that I stand with her and support what she said in her homily as a faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I pray all Disciples will have such courage.

Again, please read and share her homily, reread the lessons of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew, and ruminate and pray about your faithful discipleship in these times.

Please know that you are in my prayers. Please pray for me.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,
+Bob

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick

Bishop Diocesan
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i
The Episcopal Church in the Hawaiian Islands, Guam and Saipan