



# Blessed For Life

## Life Sunday Children's Message

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

Items Needed: two boxes, both containing the same kind of candy, measuring about the size that shoes come in—one in fancy gift wrap, the other wrapped in a tattered or damaged grocery bag or newsprint and defaced or misshapen.

Good morning!

I have two presents for you today. *[Show boxes.]* Which one do you think you'd like to open first? *[Await responses.]* Why? *[Await responses.]* Oh, the one looks better than the other, doesn't it. But if I shake this one, what does it sound like it has inside? *[Shake first box; await responses.]* And if I shake this one, what does it sound like it has inside? *[Shake second box; await responses.]* Do they sound like they could have coins inside? Or do they sound like they could have greasy bolts or broken glass or bits of gravel in them?

Can we tell for sure just by looking at them? No, of course not. The outside doesn't say very much at all about it. In fact, sometimes the outside is actually supposed to trick us a little, isn't it. The wrapping makes a nice disguise! Who would know what they're hiding without even opening them? *[Await responses.]* Sure, whoever prepared them. And what if I told you that I bought and filled and wrapped these gifts? Would you still think either one has greasy bolts or broken glass or bits of gravel in them? Do you believe I would give you something that hurts you? Or can you trust me to put something good for you inside?

Jesus tells us that people are gifts. He wants us to know that every person is a blessing from God. Today He says, "Blessed are the poor people. Blessed are the sad people. Blessed are the weak people. Blessed are the hungry and thirsty people. Blessed are the people who don't fight back. Blessed are the people who get made fun of." Do you think poor or weak people feel blessed? Do you think it looks like a blessing or a present to get made fun of or not fight back?

When we don't do what we should, it can make us look ugly and yucky on the outside, just like this busted-up box here. When we do what we shouldn't, it can make us feel dreadful and dangerous even on the inside, as if our hearts had greasy bolts or broken glass or bits of gravel in them. And sometimes we even say things to try to make one another look ugly or feel yucky, don't we. Our Father in heaven calls that sin, when we treat ourselves or each other like trash. Sin never brings gifts. It's our way of stealing or losing or throwing people away, and it ruins everyone's packaging.



But the Lord God made us precious. He made every human life a blessing. “Blessed are you anyway,” Jesus says. The Heavenly Father put special inside you. He put precious inside you. He created us, every one, even before we were born, with love and grace and joy and hope when we were still invisible inside our mamas’ bellies. He put Jesus inside when He came among us in His mother’s belly, was born in the manger, and looked sad and weak, and felt hungry and thirsty, and got made fun of and didn’t fight back. On the ugly, yucky, dreadful, and dangerous cross, Jesus suffered and died to forgive our sins, to cover our guilt and take it all away. And on the third day, when He rose from the dead, God tore off the paper and opened the grave to show us how wonderful, beautiful, and blessed He finds us, that we will live forever with Him in heaven.

So, shall we see what’s waiting for us inside these boxes? Will you help me open them? *[Allow children to rip wrappings and break into boxes.]* Aha! Although they look different, they both have something good inside. *[Distribute candy to children.]* I hope this helps you remember that every human being who exists, no matter what they look like or where they come from, how old they are or what they do, every person you ever meet, is as precious and special as you are to our Heavenly Father!