

## **The Beatitudes: A Paraphrase**

Esther Loewen

Blessed are people who self-harm –  
the hopeless, the traumatized, the disassociated, and the depressed – you belong.

Blessed are those with scars on their bodies, and on their hearts –  
whose souls have been marked by the brutality of life.  
For they know the meaning of love – and of healing.

The creator of the universe sides with people who keep their heads down –  
too weary to speak up, they have absorbed shame,  
microaggressions, and discrimination.  
She sides with those who are in the closet – hiding to stay safe.  
You are enough.

God is on the side of the wrongly convicted and punitively punished.  
The Divine marches with protestors of injustice,  
they speak through community educators and activists,  
and inspire prophets of futures not their own.

The Merciful are the lucky ones – for in their weakness, they are strong.  
They're blessed by going to coffee with bigots, naming truth to the ignorant,  
and returning insults with calm boundaries.  
By preserving their dignity in the midst of mockers' contempt, they've  
struck the mystical jackpot.

Blessed are trans kids, whose pure hearts long to express themselves,  
and to be cherished, and to be protected.  
Blessed are those who vulnerably open their hearts to the world,  
for it is only they who will taste JOY.

Blessed are peacemakers, who shapeshift to belong.  
Blessed are those who don't have identities or opinions,  
but instead hide in the reflection of others' projections.  
You are God's children.

Blessed are the persecuted –

those who lose their careers for being transgender.

Blessed are the vilified, the misunderstood, and demeaned.

Blessed are the persecuted, who risk their lives by driving to the store,

who are shot dead by representatives of the state,

who are raped and not believed,

whose basic rights are legislated out of existence.

God is on your side.

This is not the end.