

THE BEATITUDES

By Kyle Dunham

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DEDICATION

In memory of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian and martyr, whose insight into the Beatitudes helped me see my deeper need for absolute dependence on Christ my Savior.

The Playwright

STORY

Join Jack Foley, an ordinary guy with his wife, Kate, and son, Brian, on a gripping spiritual journey as they encounter the true significance of the Beatitudes in an extraordinary way. From being skeptical seekers to becoming fervent followers of God, the call of Christ beckoned them - and summons us. Each skit passes through their lives and deals with a separate Beatitude.

INCLUDED IN THIS COLLECTION

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

Blessed Are They That Mourn

Blessed Are the Meek

Blessed Are They Which Hunger and Thirst After
Righteousness

Blessed Are the Merciful

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Blessed Are They Which Are Persecuted For
Righteousness' Sake

**“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT: FOR
THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”**

Matthew 5:3

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 M)

JACK: Middle-aged.

TOM: Jack's brother, in prison.

(JACK enters SL with his hands in pockets, strolling along carelessly, whistling. He meanders toward CS where a mail box is set up. He looks at his watch and edges closer to the box.)

JACK: *(Speaking to HIMSELF.)* Boy, I sure hope the mail's here already. The past couple of days it's been...*(Opening the box HE spies some letters.)*...well, lookee here. I don't believe it! *(HE takes the letters out.)* Good old "Mailman Joe" is on time today! There must be a good football game on this afternoon. *(Closes box, turns toward SL.)* Let's see what good stuff he brought me today. *(Begins flipping through the letters.)* Hmmmph. A bill...make that two bills. So much for that bonus I was gonna be getting at work. *(HE seizes a rather large brown envelope and holds it up. He stops walking.)* Whoa...sweet Betsy! Would you look at that! Would you look...at...that. I won 10 million dollars! Again! That's the second time this week. *(Stops, looks more closely.)* Uh-oh. Wait a minute...*(Looks despondent, begins shaking HIS head.)* Ed McMahon, you dirty dog. That small print sneaks up on you quicker than tax day. *(Begins walking slowly.)* Well, Ed, just donate my small fortune to the poor and needy in Calcutta. Better yet, why don't you donate your small fortune to the poor and needy in...*(Stops altogether. Stares for a few long seconds at the next letter. A look of curiosity mingled with surprise mars HIS face.)*

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JACK: *(Cont'd. He turns swiftly toward the audience and sits on the imaginary curb. His eyes are still fastened on the letter. He seems a little dazed.)* I don't...I don't believe it. Could it be? *(HE begins looking the letter over, front and back.)* Grand Forks Correctional Institute. That could only be...it can't be. But it has to be. *(HE looks away from the letter.)* Tom? How long has it been? Three years? Five? I told him not to write me ever again unless he had better news. *(Says with bitter disgust, fingering the letter.)* What a disgrace to the family! A law-breaking jailbird! I wonder what he did now. Maybe I should just throw it away. *(Begins slowly shaking HIS head, HE opens the letter gingerly almost as if dismantling a bomb.)* No, Momma would at least want me to have the decency to give him the time of day. *(JACK takes a deep breath and pulls out the letter. He unfolds it and begins silently reading as TOM'S voice is heard over the loudspeakers reading the letter, or you may wish to have Tom speaking from his prison room on SR.)*

TOM: Dear Jack. Hey there, big brother, how's it going? I hope you and Kate and the boys are all good. I'm doing all right, I guess. The days are long, but I'm getting by. I know you are ashamed of me and what I've done. You probably don't even want to hear from me. It's just that so much has been happening recently that I just had to write and tell someone and...well...you were the first person I thought of. It's been real hard here in prison the last few years. You never really understand freedom until it is taken away. I feel like I've lost everything. I think the most painful thing I've lost is the sense of dignity and independence that comes from being able to get up on your own in the morning, go to work and make a decent living. Respect for others and having them respect me is what I took for granted before I came here. You could say it's been a real eye-opener. Well, as you know, I've still got a long time before I can walk out the front gate of this place and be a free man. I had been thinking about that a lot and it really got me down.

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TOM: *(Cont'd.)* So anyway, to make a long story longer - like you used to say - I started doing some real soul-searching. Now, I know you're not real religious, Jack, but please hear me out. You can rip up this letter if you want to when you're done, but please at least consider what I say.

There's a really good man who comes in here every Thursday night. He has Bible studies for the men. I figured maybe he had the answers to some of the questions I was asking. I thought I'd give him a shot, because, hey, what do I have to lose, I'm already in jail. At first, I kind of laughed at what he said. He made it sound so simple. He kept talking about Jesus Christ and how He can change your life. It reminded me of when Momma forced us to go to Sunday School as kids. The more I thought about it, though, the more it made sense. I started reading through the New Testament he gave me. You have a lot of free time when you're locked in a cell. Suddenly one day it all seemed to click. I understood for the first time what Jesus Christ really did when He died on the cross to take my terrible sins upon himself so that I could have God's forgiveness. I gave my life to Jesus, Jack. I asked Him to forgive my sins. To make me a new man. And He did. He really did. The preacher said one of the first things I should do was to make right whomever I had wronged before coming in here. I'm writing to apologize to you, Jack. I'm so sorry for how I hurt you and Momma and everyone else. I want to tell you that Jesus Christ can make a difference in your life, too! Please read through the pamphlet I enclosed and think about it.

The preacher likes to quote a verse from the Bible in the book of Matthew, I think. He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." You know, it's kind of funny, big brother, Jesus had to take away everything I had and put me here in jail, so that I could find Him and share a part of all the riches He has to offer. Well, I better go. The guard will be coming pretty quick to take all our letters to the mailroom. Please think about what I said. I love you, Jack. Love, Tom.

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(JACK puts his head down as LIGHTS dim on him and shine on SR where TOM in prison uniform is kneeling behind his bed facing the audience. His hands are folded and his face is tilted heavenward as he prays.)

TOM: Dear God, please use what I said to make an impact on Jack. He needs you, too. God, help him to see that Jesus is the answer and he can find forgiveness in Him. Amen.

(LIGHTS off TOM and back on JACK. He lifts his head slowly and stares absently into the distance. He waits a few beats and then slowly shakes his head and puts the letter back in the envelope.)

JACK: Tom, Tom, Tom. What am I going to do with you? *(HE stands up and dust himself off. He speaks thoughtfully, carefully.)* So, Jesus is the answer, huh? Maybe he's right. I guess I'll take a look at this pamphlet. Hmm, that is kind of funny. Tom had to go to jail, to learn something from some jail preacher, to write me, to teach me a lesson. *(HE looks toward the audience.)* Maybe that's just the way God works. *(HE slowly walks off SL.)*

THE END

End of Freeview

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