

[Opinion](#)

[Guest Voices](#)



At left, one of the Beatitudes, displayed in a church window; at right, Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister in 2018 (CNS/Crosiers; NCR photo/Toni-Ann Ortiz)



by John Dear

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

February 17, 2025

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

What if the Beatitudes weren't just comforting words, but a blueprint for a way of life? What if Jesus wasn't just offering hope, but a call to action in a world of injustice, violence and oppression? What if we took the Beatitudes seriously and started all over again to live what he says?

In this episode of "[The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast](#)," I sit down for the first of three episodes with my friend, longtime NCR columnist, author and speaker Sr. Joan Chittister to unpack the Beatitudes — not as prayers, but as bold, countercultural ways of living that challenge systems of power.

"The Eight Beatitudes of life are actually the eight attitudes for life!" Sister Joan says.

Together, we dive into:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit — what does it mean to let go of ego and privilege in a world obsessed with power?
- Blessed are those who mourn — how do we turn grief into action in the face of war, climate collapse, and social injustice?
- Blessed are the meek, humble, and gentle — why is humility a revolutionary force for peace?

Advertisement

Sister Joan doesn't hold back. "The Beatitudes are not prayers of supplication: they are the reality of everything we could get out of life right now," she says.

She speaks truth to power as the fierce advocate for justice, peace and human dignity that we know her to be. A Benedictine sister, activist and author of over 60 books, she has spent her life challenging the church, political systems, and all of us to live out our faith with courage.

Sister Joan urges us to get up, get moving, speak out, take action, and live the Beatitudes right now in response to the global collapse and chaos.

[The podcast can be found here. Listen now.](#) Get inspired. Change the world.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. [View the full series.](#)