

August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 (full sermon notes)

## "Are You Blessed or Cursed?"

Luke 6:17-26

Last week we finished Luke's narrative that closed with Jesus having gone up on the mountain to spend the night praying to the Father. Jesus then called the Twelve to Himself, and afterward brought them down to a plateau on the side of the mountain. This is where we pick up our study today.

Read **Luke 6:17-19**... By this time in Jesus' ministry, He is very popular, and wherever He went the crowds would follow Him, to listen to His marvelous words, and witness His healing of every kind of illness, disease, infirmity, and oppression.

Jesus finds a level place on the side of the mountain where He begins to preach and teach what is known as, the Sermon on the Mount. Luke gives a shortened version in 29 verses (**Luke 6:17-49**), of what Matthew records in 3 full chapters (**Matthew 5-7**).

Luke mentions three separate groups of people: the Twelve Apostles; a large crowd of people who were regular followers of Jesus, some genuine, some not; and a great congregation of people from all Judea (all the people of Israel), Jerusalem (some of the religious leaders), along with people from Tyre and Sidon (prominent Gentile seaport cities, NW of Galilee) where some Jews lived.

Jesus is standing and hasn't started teaching (rabbis normally sat down to teach). He is healing those who are physically ill, and (**verse 18**) casting out demons. Jesus is performing miracles among the people (**verse 19**), "for power was coming from Him and healing them all" (pp. **5:17; 8:46**)

Jesus was able to minister to the whole person, mind, body and soul; he taught God's sovereign Truth, healed diseases, and cast demons out of the possessed. But His main purpose was to preach the good news of salvation; to offer forgiveness for sins and eternal life (see **Luke 4:40-43**).

Everywhere Jesus went He preached how God would forgive and save those who were spiritually deaf, blind, and captive, to sin; if they would repent and believe the good news, and follow Him (**Mark 1: 15, 17**), "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

Jesus spoke with supernatural wisdom, with complete and sovereign authority.

Jesus claimed absolute equality with the Father (cf. **John 10:30**), using the covenant name of God "I AM" for Himself (**John 8:24**), "unless you believe that I am *He [Savior and Lord]*, you will die in your sins" [*unforgiven, condemned to hell*] to ." (**John 8:58**), "before Abraham was born, I am."

**Matthew 7:28-29**, "When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."  
**John 7:32**, "The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him." **45-46**, "The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, [who] said to them, 'Why did you not [arrest and] bring Him?' The officers answered, 'Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.'"

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Jesus' teaching is in opposition to that of the world system that rejects God's Son, Lord and Savior, Crucified, Resurrected, Coming Again. Jesus taught that He had "come from God" the Father (cf. **John 8:42**), was "going back to God" (**John 13:3**), that He is (cf. **John 4:7-14**) "the living water," (**John 6:35**) "the bread of life," (**John 10:11**) "the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep," (**John 11:25**) "the resurrection and the life," (**John 12:46**) "the light of the world," and (cf. **John 14:6**) He is the only Way to the Father, only Truth from the Father, and only Life with the Father.

**Colossians 2:8-10**, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority."

Luke records, a shortened version of what is called the Beatitudes, from the Latin *beati* (*blessed*), Greek *makarios* (*happy, fortunate, to be envied*). Jesus is declaring a state of being and heart attitude in the life of those who have received eternal forgiveness for sins and eternal life with God through belief in Jesus Christ, God's Son, Lord and Savior. Saving belief brings genuine happiness and blessing; whereas, those who continue to reject Jesus Christ are unhappy and cursed.

Read **Luke 6:20-23**... As Jesus begins to preach, He directs His attention to His true disciples who are among this large crowd of mostly Jews, both the uneducated and religious scholars, the poor and the wealthy, the religious elite and the irreligious, all those who need healing of their mind, body, and soul.

What a way to start a sermon: happy are those who are poor, hungry, mournful, those who are hated, ostracized, insulted, and scorned because of Christ. Wow!

Jesus (**Luke 6:20**) is not teaching that those who are economically poor or physically hungry are blessed. Matthew's recording of this event gives us more clarity (**Matthew 5:3**), "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Those who understand their spiritual poverty, realizing their greatest need, that apart from the merciful saving grace of God through Christ we cannot obtain God's favor, nor be considered acceptable to the Holy and Righteous God of Creation, by anything we might personally acquire, obtain, or do (see **Luke 18:9-14**).

In His very first sermon, Jesus described the human condition apart from the saving knowledge and presence of God (see **Luke 4:14-21**).

Jesus is bringing the good news, the loving kindness of God poured out on mankind, so that those who confess their need to be made right with God will be received in the kingdom of heaven, immediately (**Romans 8:17**) "as heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ," (**Romans 14:17**) "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**2Peter 1:3**, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and

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excellence." **Philippians 4:19**, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Jesus (**Luke 6:21a**) speaks of a hunger that has nothing to do with physical food (**Matthew 5:6**), "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be *satisfied*" [*satisfied = unable to eat anymore, completely satiated*], this is speaking of spiritual hunger that can only be satisfied with God's provision. **Psalm 107:1**, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting," **Jeremiah 31:14**, "I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the Lord.

Jesus goes on to say (**Luke 6:21b**), "blessed are those who weep now." This is speaking of deep sorrow of repentance, the realization that we have sinned against God (**Matthew 5:4**), "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." **James 4:9-10**, "Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." **Isaiah 61:2**, "To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."

**Isaiah 35:10**, "And the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

The first three Beatitudes are from the perspective of the repentant sinner, whereas the final Beatitude in Luke's narrative (**Luke 6:22**), is from the perspective of how the world views a believer and follower of Christ.

Jesus uses four strong verbs (hate, ostracize, insult, scorn) to describe the way the unbelieving world views and responds to believers and followers of Christ.

When a person genuinely repents of sin and believes in God's Son to save him, that person becomes a member of God's family, a Christian, who will demonstrate a changed life that seeks to obey God's Word, while bringing honor and glory to God.

Jesus told the Twelve (cf. **John 15:18-19**), that the world would hate them and persecute them, just as it did Him. But we have what we need to be victorious in this world (**1John 4:4**), "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

How should we respond to a godless world when we are persecuted? Jesus says (**Luke 6:23**) "be glad in that day, leap for joy, for [our] reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."

As children of God, the world we see is not our home; we are citizens of God's kingdom, a world we can't yet see (**1Corinthians 2:9**), "which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and *which* have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him."

Whatever pain or sorrow or trouble we experience on this earth does not even begin to compare to the eternal joy that is ours (**2Corinthians 4:17-18**), "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we

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look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Read **Luke 6:24-26**... Jesus now shifts from the blessings belonging to God's children, to the "woes" or curses that belong to those who reject God's salvation.

Jesus (**Luke 6:24**) is not speaking of those who are materially rich; but of those who presume they are rich in a spiritual sense, through their works, rituals, or ancestry, through which they have obtained a righteousness that can save them from sin's condemnation.

Jesus says they have received their reward in full, the comfort in which they have lived their life on earth; whereas, their eternity will be spent in a place of torment, and gnashing of teeth, where they will receive absolutely no comfort at all.

Next (**Luke 6:25a**) Jesus speaks to the curse that belongs to those "who are well-fed now," i.e., those who are full of themselves, totally satiated with their own self-imposed righteousness. This is in contrast to those (**Luke 6:21a**) who hunger for the righteousness and are blessed; these so-called "well-fed" hypocrites believe they lack nothing and have attained righteousness based on their own merits.

Jesus says to those who are cursed (**Luke 6:25b**), those who are laughing now, actually thinking they have "made it," maybe even contemplating what it is going to be like in heaven, perhaps even better than they are experiencing on earth.

In **Matthew 8** Jesus gives a reality check to those righteous Jews who think they are going to heaven just because they belong to Israel...

**Matthew 8 11-12**, "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the [earthly] kingdom will be cast into the outer darkness; [and] in that place [the Lake of Fire] there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" forever and ever.

The final "woe" (**Luke 6:26**), speaks to the self-centeredness of the wicked unbelieving. Back in **verse 23**, Jesus spoke of how those who believe in and live for Him will be mistreated and scorned, just like people treated God's prophets.

Those who reject God's Word, God's Son, gladly receive others of the same mindset, i.e., those who are dead in their sins, unwilling to acknowledge their need to repent and believe in Christ; therefore, there is no hope for them, only an expectation of judgement (**Hebrews 10:26-27**), "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries" [of God].

There are only two types of people on this planet:

1. **The Blessed** - True followers of Christ who have repented of their sins and believed in Jesus alone for salvation.
2. **The Cursed**, Unbelievers who reject Christ, trusting in their self-righteous works and/or other human acquisitions, or attributes to save them.

Whether you are blessed or cursed for eternity, depends solely upon what you do with Jesus Christ while you are alive.

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**Matthew 16:13-16**, "When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

The question is, Who do you believe Jesus to be?

**1John 5:4-5**, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Everyone who repents of their sins, believing in Jesus Christ for salvation, will be saved.

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