

Message #24

Luke 6:20-26

God's people, for the most part, from the perspective of this world, are not flashy, wealthy, rich or famous. In fact, most are just common ordinary people, who, when stacked up against the successful people of this world, don't look too impressive or successful. In many ways, those who have a truly close relationship with God, look as though they are being shafted. They look like they are losing, when in fact, in God's eyes they are winning.

God is not impressed, nor fooled by man's projection of himself. God sees the heart. He knows what is truly going on in one's life and in one's private world and ultimately there will come a day when the proud will be humbled and the humbled will be exalted.

That is exactly what Jesus Christ wanted His disciples to realize when He taught them these things. There is a major heresy that is promoted among many and that is God wants His people prosperous, healthy, wealthy and successful and if you are not that way, then you are not right with God. The truth is, you may be the most right with God.

Now this section features teaching that is called "beatitude" teaching. Now usually this section is compared to the Matthew beatitude passage found in Matthew 5-7. But frankly there are nine major differences.

- 1) Luke's sermon takes place on a level place (6:17); Matthew is a sermon on a Mount (5:1).
- 2) Luke gives teaching in about 30 verses; Matthew gives teaching in 107 verses (Matt. 5-7).
- 3) Luke has four beatitudes (6:20, 21, 21, 22) and Matthew lists nine (Matt. 5:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).
- 4) Luke uses a different order for the beatitudes than Matthew (Luke - 1, 4, 2, 8).
- 5) Luke uses the second person "you" whereas Matthew uses third person "those, their, they."
- 6) Luke addresses a slightly different theme than Matthew "poor" (Luke) versus "poor in spirit."
- 7) Luke alone adds four "woes" to this discourse (6:24, 25, 25, 26) that Matthew does not add.
- 8) Luke includes Gentiles from Tyre and Sidon (6:17); Matthew addresses Jews (Matt. 4:25).
- 9) Luke's purpose for using this discourse is completely different than Matthew's purpose.

Matthew's purpose is to show that the Jews did not have the proper attitude or the proper righteousness to get into the Kingdom (Matt. 5:20); Luke's purpose is to show that following and obeying the Word of God will eventually lead to a blessed and happy life.

What Luke was interested in doing here was to get each believer focused on his own spirituality and righteousness, so that he could experience a blessed life. What Jesus wanted His own disciples to realize was this:

WHEN YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORD OF GOD, YOU MAY GO THROUGH SOME LOW MOMENTS AND TOUGH TIMES; BUT GOD WILL SEE YOU THROUGH IT AND YOU WILL BE BLESSED AND HAPPY BECAUSE GOD WILL DECLARE IT FOR YOU.

Keep in mind that the word “disciple” means one is a student, or pupil or learner. There were people from all walks of life following Jesus Christ. For the most part they were not the upper class of the political, economic and religious world. These were average people, mostly poor. Jesus Christ was already headlong into ministry. He was teaching, healing and impacting the lives of people. He was forgiving sin and bringing people into a right relationship with God. He was hated, opposed, mistreated, and misunderstood by the rich and famous and powerful. There were some who were already plotting to kill Him (Luke 6:11).

Now Jesus did not look like a winner. He is not traveling around Palestine in limousines. He is not staying at 5-star motels and eating in the finest restaurants. He looked like a poor guy, who had to get food from cornfields. Many of the people who were following Him didn't have a lot either. So He wanted to encourage the disciples that a commitment to Him does pay off in the end. There are wonderful blessings that are to be gained from a commitment to Jesus Christ.

There are basically two messages Jesus Christ communicates to His disciples here. One of the messages has to do with getting blessings and the other has to do with getting woes:

MESSAGE #1 – Faithful disciples can find happiness knowing that ultimately all negative, temporal adversity will be replaced with positive, eternal blessings. **6:20-23**

These disciples were about to learn that even though they were traveling with the God/Savior/Messiah/King, life would not be smooth sailing. Four times in these four verses the word “blessed” (μακαροι) is used.

That word is a plural noun, so you could legitimately translate it “blessings.” Many, many blessings will come to the one who commits his or her life to Jesus Christ, regardless of what their present circumstances are.

That word “blessed” is one that speaks of a blessed and happy condition because one is in a right relationship with God and because of that, God has pronounced “happy blessings” on that individual. G. Abbott-Smith, a Greek Lexicographer, is clear to point out that this is a pronouncement or declaration of blessedness or blessings (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 275).

The status of being blessed by God has very little to do with temporal circumstances and situations. The status of being blessed by God is due to His pronouncement on a person's life. He literally can pronounce blessings on a person.

There are four hypothetical circumstances that Jesus gives to His disciples, which Jesus says will cause God to actually pronounce happy blessings on one committed to Jesus Christ. **Carefully observe at the end of verse 22 is that one is experiencing these kinds of things “for the sake of the Son of Man.”**

So these Christological hypotheticals are based on the fact that one believes and defends the fact that Jesus is the God/Savior/Messiah/King, who will one day rule over everything and everyone (Dan. 7:13-14).

Hypothetical Circumstance #1 - Christological disciples can find joy knowing they are blessed of God even if they are poor. **6:20**

There could be times when believing in Jesus Christ and standing up for Jesus Christ may leave disciples in a poor situation. They potentially could find themselves not having much of anything. This was not due to the fact that they refused to work, this was due to the fact that their commitment to Jesus Christ was costing them work.

In fact, that word “poor” is a word that describes destitute poverty level that puts one in almost the condition of a beggar (*Ibid.*, p. 393). So Jesus is telling these disciples, look, if you follow Me and you believe in Me and you defend Me, you may end up with practically nothing. If that happens to you, you can know with certainty that God has pronounced His blessings on you.

Now carefully notice what Jesus says here. The happiness and joy is not coming because one is in total poverty; the happiness and joy comes from the knowledge of the blessed condition of one’s eternal prosperity. If you go through this kind of thing you are guaranteed abundant wealth in the Kingdom of God. The interesting thing about the blessed state is that it is a present tense state. In other words, one who is in this condition is in a continual state of blessing right now.

For the most part, it was poor people who were believing in Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18). Their financial status did not change the moment they believed. Frankly, some of these disciples had left everything to follow Jesus Christ. They had left successful businesses, homes, bank accounts, families and friends (Luke 5:11, 28). Rome dominated the Jewish world and the Jewish world was dominated by the Pharisees and Scribes and they were big business and big money.

I doubt we have any idea as to what life became for these disciples. Peter once owned a successful fishing business and a couple of houses and in Matthew 17:26-27, he had to get tax money out of the mouth of a fish. He had never before done that in his life.

Jesus said to His disciples, I want you to know, you who don’t have much are the ones who are rich. You will one day have all the wealth of the Kingdom of God.

Hypothetical Circumstance #2 - Christological disciples can find joy knowing they are blessed of God even if they are hungry. **6:21a**

The word “hungry” has both physical and spiritual application. The specific blessed promise to the one who is hungry is that God, Himself, will see to it that their hunger will be “satisfied.” That word “satisfy” is one that refers to being satisfied to the full (*Ibid.*, p. 482).

So whether one is hungering after literal food or whether one is hungering after spiritual food, the promise from God is you will be completely satisfied for He, Himself, will see to it.

It was not easy for Christ's disciples to see the prosperity of the Pharisees while they were walking through fields picking ears of corn to have something to eat. When you are looking at a false religious world that is flourishing and you literally find you are trying to serve God and follow Jesus Christ and food is scarce, it can be discouraging. There have been some times in years past when we can relate to this. We were trying to serve God and we literally were struggling for food and groceries. When you are a father and you see your children run to the car because they are excited we have groceries, it touches your heart. Jesus said I want you to know when you are hungry, I will see that you are cared for and are satisfied. You can find happiness in that.

My grandmother was a tremendous woman of faith. Both my aunt and mother confirmed the story I am sharing with you. My mother grew up without a father because he left my grandmother with four daughters. There were times they literally wondered where they would get food. My grandmother loved the Lord and the Word and she taught her daughters to do the same. One night they sat down at the table and all they had to eat was some pieces of bread and hot water to drink. Grandma sat down and said let's thank God for the food and a couple of the girls were thinking, what food. As she started to pray, there was a knock at the door. So she got up and went to the door and standing at the door was a neighbor with a lot of wonderful cooked, hot food. The neighbor said we had invited some people for dinner and they didn't show and we have all this food, already cooked that we could not use. Could you use it and help us get rid of it? Those girls never forgot that. When you are hungry, God will supply the food.

Let me say one other thing. If you stay committed to Jesus Christ, you will one day be seated in a high honorable place at a major banquet. It will be a banquet for all who loved the Lord.

Hypothetical Circumstance #3 - Christological disciples can find joy knowing they will eventually laugh even if they presently weep. **6:21b**

The imagery here is that of going through things that bring you to tears as a believer. There are many things that can bring one to tears here. If you are committed to Jesus Christ, you may end up sharing some tears. God says I make you this promise, you will laugh again. Jesus says you can know that one day those tears will be turned to laughter.

Hypothetical Circumstance #4 - Christological disciples can find joy knowing that temporary mistreatment leads to great eternal reward. **6:22-23**

There are four specific types of mistreatment that may become a reality for those committed to Jesus Christ. If you are committed to Jesus Christ, and you stand for truth, there will be opposition. We can count on that. The opposition will come from "Pharisaical religious people" (v. 23).

(Mistreatment Reality #1) – Commitment to Christ means you may be hated. **6:22a**

The Greek word “hated” (μισεω) does not just refer to a low regard for something or an indifference to something; this is a real hatred (*Ibid.*, p. 293). You love Jesus Christ and the Word of God and there will be some people who not only won’t like you, they will hate you.

(Mistreatment Reality #2) - Commitment to Christ means you may be ostracized. **6:22b**

The word “ostracize” (αφοριζω) is one that means to mark you off and set a boundary of separation against you (*Ibid.*, p. 72). In fact, this word was used for one who was banned from the synagogue. You defend Jesus Christ and grace and stand for the Word of God and there will be some who will target you and brand you as one from whom to stay away.

(Mistreatment Reality #3) - Commitment to Christ means you may be insulted. **6:22c**

The word “insult” (ονειδιζω) is one that refers to being verbally attacked or slandered as a reproach because of your commitment to Jesus Christ and stand for the Word of God (*Ibid.*, p. 318).

(Mistreatment Reality #4) - Commitment to Christ means you may be scorned. **6:22d**

That word “scorn” (εκβαλωσι) literally means to cast out your name. To attack your name to the point that you are driven out or sent out and expelled. This is a total rejection of you as a person.

These are real possibilities of things that may happen to one who is committed to Jesus Christ.

In **verse 23**, Jesus says if you go through these kinds of things, “you rejoice in that day” for you can know that your reward will be great in heaven.

You have a big reward coming if you go through that and you can know that you are going through the same kinds of things as the great men of God.

Why will you be hated? Because you love the Lord, love grace and you stand for the Word. Joy comes in knowing that if we are going through these kinds of things, our reward is great.

MESSAGE #2 – Unfaithful disciples are warned that all their temporal success will be replaced by negative eternal disaster. **6:24-26**

After Jesus gave four statements of blessings, He gave four woe contrasting warnings. The word “woe” (ουαι) is a word that warns of future pity, pain, grief and judgment (*Ibid.*, p. 327). Now these warnings are given in the context of not doing anything for Jesus Christ. There were people following Jesus Christ who did not believe He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King. They did not believe He was the “Son of Man.”:

Instructive Warning #1 - Unfaithful disciples are to be pitied in their temporal wealth. **6:24**

It does not matter how much money a person has, if they do not come to terms with Jesus Christ, they are to be pitied because the only comfort they will ever have is what they have right now. Most people are envious of the rich and famous. People right with God pity them, because without Jesus Christ, when they leave this world they will burn forever.

Instructive Warning #2 - Unfaithful disciples are to be pitied in their temporal satisfaction.
6:25a

The word “well-fed” (εμπιπλημι) is one that refers to being filled and full and satisfied with who one is and with what one has (*Ibid.*, p. 149). This person will end up hungry.

Instructive Warning #3 - Unfaithful disciples are to be pitied in their temporal laughter. **6:25b**

Those not committed to Jesus Christ may laugh at many things now; they won't laugh one time in the future. In fact, they will end up mourning and weeping and gnashing their teeth.

Instructive Warning #4 - Unfaithful disciples are to be pitied for their temporal reputation.
6:26

Jesus says when you are not committed to Me and people speak well of you, that popularity you have will be very short-lived.

The way the world sees things and the way God sees things is poles apart. You commit your life to Jesus Christ and regardless what you have or don't have, you will be blessed.