

Reconstructing Israel: Apostolic Foundation and the Gospel of the New Jerusalem

LUKE 6:12-26

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Introduction

“But they [the Pharisees and teachers of the Law] were filled with fury (Madness and Folly!) and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”- Luke 6:11.

Jesus has already met great opposition from the leaders of Israel due to his display of Kingdom power and authority in offering the forgiveness of sins and healing. In our last sermon, Dr. Luke left us with a tension at the end of that passage or pericope. We are left asking: What happens next; how will Jesus respond to this opposition.

In our Scripture today from Luke 6:12-26, we learn of Jesus’ response to the Pharisaical opposition: **prayer and the calling of specific disciples of Jesus to be his apostles.** While the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law begin discussing “what they might do to Jesus” he acts with divine help to establish his 12 Apostles who will continue his mission of grace to the world.

We will learn in this passage the power and effectual calling of Jesus Christ, his sovereignty and his electing purposes in his calling. We also see in contrast to and in light of the rejection by Israel’s teachers, the reconstituting of the New Israel, or New Jerusalem: the 12 Apostles as the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Jesus not only lays the foundation of the New Israel, he teaches them the Kingdom characteristics of what the New Jerusalem will look like as the humble people of God live united to him by faith. In verses 20-26, Jesus preaches on the level place, or plain, or plateau, and makes known four blessings of the Kingdom. These four Kingdom blessings are characteristic of his disciple-followers, and those who are identified with him in his Person and Work. In a parallelism that Dr. Luke gives to us from Jesus’ sermon, we see that each of the four blessings is also contrasted with four woes.

Blessings are those characteristics of Kingdom People who are identified with Jesus and his Divine Messianic Mission; the woes are the characteristics of those who reject Jesus and his Kingdom, including many unbelievers in Israel such as the Pharisees and Teachers of Law.

I. Calling and Choosing Apostles (Luke 6:12-19)

Last Sentence for context on what happens next: “But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.” –Luke 6:11

- a. **Prayer** (v.12): Jesus continues to seek the Father by withdrawing for prayer (cf. Luke 3:21; 4:42; 5:16). **Jesus is showing his full dependence upon the Father and the Holy Spirit as he continues his Divine Messianic Mission.** Jesus is at a turning point of now appointing his 12 Apostles to continue his Divine Messianic Mission as his specially appointed messengers and this required for him to know intimately the Father’s will and electing choice about who he would choose specially for this out of all the disciples who were following him.
- b. **Reconstructed Israel: Jesus calls his 12 Apostles:** After praying all night, Jesus knew his Father’s will and who would be specifically called: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew (or “Nathaniel”, cf. John 1:45), Matthew (“Levi”), Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), Judas (son of James, or “Thaddaeus” as in Matthew and Mark), and Judas Iscariot (“who became” the traitor).

It should be noted that while the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law are beginning to oppose Jesus, with this resulting in his death; **God in his sovereignty is allowing it**, even as Jesus specifically chose **Judas who will be the “inside man”** who will reject him and join with the opposition, successfully putting the God-man to death!

- c. **The 12 Apostles are representative of the New Order of Fulfillment and Completion in Jesus Christ:** As there were **12 tribes** in Israel during the Old Covenant redemptive era, so now in the New Covenant (during the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus), there will be **12 Apostles**, or the reconstituted Israel (This is another aspect of Jesus’ “new wine”, cf. Luke 5:33-39).

Context of the Jewish Leadership’s Rejection: In the context from Luke chapters 5-6, the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law have shown themselves to be those who are rejecting Jesus as their Messiah (5:21 ff; 6:2, 7, 11). The Apostles will be the **official “remnant of Israel”**- those who believe and follow Jesus as Messianic King in contrast to most of the leaders of Israel during this time.

- i. **Definition of Apostles** (v. 13b): “...Whom he named *Apostles*.” Apostles comes from the Greek word **ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ** which simply means “messenger” or “one sent”. The Apostles will be following Jesus with the express purpose of knowing him better than the other disciples, and knowing his teaching more effectively than other disciples so that they might continue his teaching after Jesus has been taken away and joins the Father, and to be the

foundation of the New Covenant Church, and the realization of Israel's purpose in the Old Covenant (cf. Acts 7:38, Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:13-14). As the Book of Revelation teaches us that the Apostles are the foundation of the New Jerusalem:

^{ESV} **Revelation 21:12-14:** It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed- ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ **And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

- ii. **Jesus' Sovereignty and Effectual Calling:** Again Jesus shows himself to be equal with God in his sovereign calling. As v. 13 says: "He [Jesus] called his disciples and chose from them twelve."
- iii. Out of the many disciples Jesus had by this time, he appointed 12 "Apostles" for the specific task of continuing his Divine Messianic Mission after he went to be with the Father in his resurrection-ascension (Dr. Luke's second volume 'The Acts of the Apostles' will give us the details!).
- iv. Jesus chose these 12 not because of anything worthy in them, but because it was for the praise of his glorious grace and will that he chose them as his special messengers (cf. Eph. 1:3-14; Romans 9:6-18). The Greek word used for "chose" [ἐκλεξάμενος from verb ἐκλέγω] implies sovereign election as it is used elsewhere in this manner (Luke 9:35; 10:42; 14:7; Acts 1:2, 24; 6:5; 15:7, 22, 25).
- v. Jesus' call is **specific, effectual, and irresistible.** Even Judas Iscariot who is here called "the traitor" (v. 16b) is chosen for the purpose of being an Apostle for a season, although he is the one doomed to destruction as the scriptures teach (Luke 22:3, 22).

II. Blessings and Woes of the Kingdom- the Sermon on the "Plain" or "Level Place" (Luke 6:20-26)

- a. **Luke's Sermon "on the Plain" and Matthew's Sermon "on the Mount":** We want to appreciate the similar content here between Luke and Matthew's Gospels, but just because there is similar content this does not mean Luke necessarily copied from other sources such as Matthew. Luke's sermon and Matthew's sermon are probably two different sermon

events. In this time period, teachers preached and taught without notes, including Jesus.

We should expect that the main points of Jesus' Kingdom Proclamation would be in many of his sermons, perhaps put in different ways, and with a different emphasis appropriate for the crowds to whom he was speaking. Rather than being on a mountain as in Matthew's account of one of Jesus' sermons, Luke's record of one of Jesus' sermons was on the slope of a mountain, or literally on a level place, or plateau.

- b. In the context of Jesus calling his 12 apostles this sermon that follows could be called and understood as **an "ordination-preparation" sermon**. Jesus is turning the world's ideas upside down in order for those who believe in him and follow him might fully understand what "blessing" means in the Kingdom economy.

To the world it seems like Jesus' teaching is upside down, but in reality it is the sinful world that is upside down that Jesus comes to turn up straight in him!

Most in this world if asked would not consider being poor and hungry, and experiencing grief and the hatred of others to be blessings- but they are in the Kingdom economy!

In Jesus' Kingdom economy what is folly to the world is actually the wisdom of God, and what is weak in the eyes of the world is the power and strength of God, so what is considered a blessing in the Messianic Kingdom is a curse in the eyes of the world, as a woe in the Messianic Kingdom is a blessing in the thinking of the world!

The Apostles must understand this paradoxical Kingdom-teaching, as well as be prepared that through death will come life; through only 12 weak men, God will save his people all over the world.

- c. Jesus is still continuing his Divine Messianic Mission of preaching, healing, releasing the prisoners from unclean spirits (6:17-19).
- d. Jesus is still being received as a phenomenally popular speaker and teacher (v. 17); whole regions on the map are seeking him and they are coming from the "north and south" ("Tyre and Sidon" in the North, and "Jerusalem" in the South). In Jesus, there is life itself in him, and people are seeking wholeness from physical and spiritual sickness (v. 19).
- e. In this context, Jesus wants the disciples who are following him to know the true characteristics of Kingdom-People, or those who follow him. Jesus preaches here four blessings and four woes. This is another example

of parallelism in Luke like we studied in chapter 1 with Mary's *Magnificat* and Zecharias' *Benedictus*.

- f. **Blessings of the Kingdom:** These beatitudes “exalt what the world despises and reject what the world admires.” (Morris, Luke, 139).
- i. **“Beatitudes” or blessings:** In the Old Testament context (see Deuteronomy 28-29) there are blessings for covenant keeping and obeying God’s Law; woes or curses were prophetic pronouncements upon Law breakers. Jesus is our Law Keeper on our behalf, because we must trust in him for our hope and merit.
 - ii. This important point of these Kingdom “blessings and woes” is tied closely to Jesus’ meritorious work on behalf of his people. *Those who are characterized by being poor, hungry, weeping, and outcast from the world are those who are blessed by Jesus’ Law-Keeping as they realize their need by faith.*
 - iii. The blessings or merits of Christ’s law keeping go to those who have been broken in their self-confidence and works before God, so that they would trust only in Christ alone, seeking his merits and being justified before God!
 - iv. Because Jesus merits his righteousness to us, Jesus is not saying in this sermon that “IF” you are poor, then God will grant to you the Kingdom of God. Rather, he is saying that you will know that you are a member of God’s Kingdom because this is already the attitude you have before God (“**Yours is the Kingdom of God**”).
 - v. As Jesus has called his special 12 Apostles, now he makes a general call to all who have ears to hear his message through this Kingdom Sermon. Remember that there are three groups represented here: 1) 12 Apostles; 2) Jesus’ Disciples; and 3) The Crowds or Multitudes of People (v. 17).

Parallelism: Here in Luke 6:20-26 there is a series of four blessings and four woes in Jesus’ sermon; with a rejoicing in the middle and implied at the end for those whose hope is in the Kingdom that will be fully revealed in “heaven” or in the restoration of all things. Note the A-A₁ (prime) and B-B₁, C-C₁, etc. to mark the **parallelism** in Jesus’ sermon.

1. **Blessing:** Those who are poor (v. 20b)/ **Woe:** Those who are rich (v. 24)

A: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

A1: "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Remember Luke 4:18:

^{ESV} **Luke 4:18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news *to the poor*."

Matthew writes: ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The poor in scripture are often equated with *the pious and righteous*; Matthew brings out this translation-interpretation by using "poor in spirit" but Dr. Luke implies it; to be poor is not merely a socio-economic term but has spiritual content as in Psalm 40:17:

^{ESV} **Psalm 40:17** As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!

^{ESV} **Psalm 72:4** May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!

New Testament commentator Guelich summarizes "the poor": "The poor in Judaism referred to those in desperate need (socioeconomic element) whose helplessness drove them to a dependent relationship with God (religious element) for the supplying of their needs and vindication." –Quoted in Bock, Luke, 574.

Application Picture: You have nothing to give or offer God or man. You are perhaps sick, unable to work, barely getting by, and you cannot even take care of your own family. You are poor in good works before God with no merit of your own to offer him; you believe that others are much richer and prosperous in good gifts, and therefore God would easily choose them over you.

To be poor in Luke's gospel is not to be reliant on one's self, but like the lepers, lame and demon possessed people, they have no power in themselves before God to be healed

or delivered; they must seek God's aid and his blessing humbly. Sinners do not have a right in God's presence, but can come humbly to Christ in repentance and receive forgiveness. **The poor are social pictures of those who are completely dependent upon God for salvation.** Those like the 12 Apostles who have "left everything" to follow him - being utterly dependent upon Jesus as the poor (5:11, 28).

^{ESV} **Proverbs 30:8-9:** Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, **lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.**

The Kingdom of God is for those who are poor! Are you poor?

Application Picture: You have all that you will ever need, and you have made all of your riches yourself without the help of anyone else. You are rich in good works before God, believing God owes you favor and grace; you think you have lived a pretty wealthy life of good works before him. You already think you have achieved more than anyone else, and you think you have merited all that you need before God, and you pity those who

To be rich in Luke's gospel is to be self-reliant, proud, and "righteous" (as in "the righteous" of 5:31-32). The Kingdom is not for you, but a woe. A woe is a bad curse of God for receiving the wrath and sentence of God for your sins. A woe is the opposite of a "good word" or benediction; it is a "bad word" or malediction from God.

Riches are what the world thinks they need so that they will not worry, fret, or be anxious; Jesus says that riches can be a hindrance to seeking the Kingdom:

Luke 16:13-15: No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." ¹⁴ ***The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.*** ¹⁵ ***And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your***

hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

^{ESV} **Luke 18:25** For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." (see also Luke 16 for further study on this).

^{ESV} **Matthew 19:23** And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

^{ESV} **Matthew 13:22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

^{ESV} **Matthew 16:26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?

Woe to you (v. 24): If you are rich, you have received all the consolation that you're going to get; you will not receive consolation from God but rather his punishment for your sins, because of your pride and unrepentant attitude. Then you will experience the greatest poverty of eternity without Christ!

2. **Blessing:** Those who are hungry (v. 21)/ **Woe:** Those who are full (v. 25).

B: "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

B₁: "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

Like the poor, the hungry are those who are overlooked in society, and are pictures of not only literally those who hunger, but for those also who long for their souls to be satisfied. *Those who are hungry as both literally hungry as well as spiritually unsatisfied.*

We see how the fools of society treat the hungry and poor in Isaiah 32:

^{ESV} **Isaiah 32:6-7:** For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, *to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied*, and to deprive the thirsty of drink. ⁷ As for the scoundrel- his devices are evil; *he plans wicked schemes to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right.*

The Psalms speak of the spiritual advantages before God of being hungry:

^{ESV} **Psalms 37:16-19:** *Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked.* ¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, *but the LORD upholds the righteous.* ¹⁸ The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; ¹⁹ they are not put to shame in evil times; *in the days of famine they have abundance.*

Application Picture: Each day you wake up with hopes of getting food to fill your stomach that is crying out in pain and hunger; you also hope to find answers to the questions that are crying out from deep within your soul. *Your soul is restless and your stomach is hungry and aching to be satisfied.* Perhaps you remember St. Augustine's cry in his *Confessions*:

“You have made us for yourself, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in you.”

The hungry are needy; they need the assistance and provision that only God can give. The hungry are not merely physically hungry, but they hunger spiritually for a right standing before God, a removal of guilt and shame. The hungry know that only God in Christ can satisfy them both physically and spiritually. The hungry know that even if they were to live physical lives of eating well, their souls would ache until they find their rest in God.

As Matthew records in the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.- Matthew 5:6.

Jesus offers the deepest spiritual satisfaction by his blessing the hungry: “... You shall be satisfied.” This promise of

Jesus for sinners who are hungry is the very satisfaction that only God can give to humanity in our fallen state.

The Kingdom of God is for the hungry! Are you hungry?

Application Picture: You are full like one who just pushed away from the supper table; you couldn't eat another thing. You have never known the pain of hunger after many days of having nothing. You fill up, and eat and drink more than you will ever need, yet your soul aches within you. You fill your soul with food for the belly, that is, physical food, rather than food that only Jesus can give.

You are restless within your soul even though you're "fat and happy". Your soul cries out concerning life and death, justice and injustice, you have glimpses of right answers, but you busy yourself with trying not to think about it. You attempt constantly to sweep your guilt and shame before God and man under the proverbial carpet. **You are hungry, and admit to be unsatisfied by the delicacies of the world, yet you are too full of yourself to admit your condition before God and reject him.** Jesus pronounces a woe upon you: "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry."

Woe to you (v. 25): If you are full, you have received all the satisfaction that you're going to get; you will not receive satisfaction and fulfillment from God but rather his punishment for your sins, because of your pride and unrepentant attitude. Then you will be hungry eternally and wished that you had found your fill in Jesus Christ!

3. **Blessing:** Those who weep (v. 21b)/ **Woe:** Those who laugh (v. 25b).

C: "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

C₁: "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

^{ESV} **Psalm 126:5-6:** Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! ⁶ He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Isaiah speaks of the day when the Kingdom will be comforted in their weeping for sins:

^{ESV} **Isaiah 40:1-2:** Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

Application Picture: You grieve over the loss of a close friend or a family member; you realize death has conquered yet again, but you are powerless to stop it. A family member is sick, and you are required to care for him, and you are saddened that such a thing would happen to someone you love, and perhaps more importantly to one made in God's image. You grieve; you weep; you cry out to God for answers. You look around honestly and observe corruption, the great evils of mankind, injustice, poverty, and you are saddened by the devastating consequences of sin.

Mourners, or those who weep are those who grieve in this present world because of the reality of sin (especially one's own sin and contribution to the problem!); they weep because of sin's effects and consequences upon man - especially as sin causes the death of man rather than his glorification in the presence of God; those who weep will laugh joyfully in Christ, the One who heals and shows for that in the Kingdom of God, the weeping of the night will cease in the coming morning of the restoration of all things.

Those who weep in Christ will have the last laugh!

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:55-57:** "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the Book of Revelation teaches us:

"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ ***He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.***" - Revelation 21:3-4.

The Kingdom of God is for mourners! Do you mourn and grieve?

Application Picture: You laugh, thinking life is a big joke and you especially find it humorous that anyone would believe in a God who is sovereign and all powerful, yet allows suffering and death in the world. You busy yourselves with humor and keeping your mind entertained, because you don't have the answers or the solutions to pain and suffering in the world, but you think cynically that no one else does either. You laugh at other people who are weak and cannot fend for themselves; you were the great bully who picked on the weak when you were young, and you never outgrew your brutality –you laugh at the weak, thinking you're stronger and wiser.

You think belief in a crucified Messiah is one big joke, and you would not be caught dead being part of a religion such as this.

It is important to point out that Jesus is not dismissing the importance of mirth or laughter, but that he is speaking of haughty laughter of the wrong sort. As one theologian described the laughter that Jesus was forbidding:

“The carefree expression of contentment with the success of the present.” (Fitzmyer, quoted in Morris, 141). New Testament scholar Block says that this kind of laughter “is often tied to laughter that is boastful, self-satisfied, condescending, or rejoicing in the harm that others experience” (Luke, 584).

Woe to you: Jesus says the day shall come when you who have selfishly laughed at your great ease and comfort, while others have suffered, you will mourn and weep while others are comforted.

As Jesus taught in the story of the rich man (“Dives”) and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31, when the rich man cried out from his eternal separation from God, asked for mercy, but was too late-

'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'²⁵
But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in

your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, **and you are in anguish**. –vv.24-25.

James 5:5 warns: “You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.”

Woe to you (v. 25b): If you laugh and are filled with mirth, you have received all the happiness and joy that you’re going to get; you will not receive answers or comfort from God but rather his punishment for your sins, because of your pride and unrepentant attitude- - then you will mourn and weep when it is too late!

As Isaiah teaches: ^{ESV} **Isaiah 65:14** Behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit.

4. **Blessing:** Those who are hated, excluded, their names are spurned as evil (“Christian”) (v. 22)/ **Woe:** Those who are spoken well of (v. 26)

D: "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

D₁: "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Application: You seek all of your life to be loved, honored and respected, but you find you still make the same old mistakes, and even though the whole world receives you, you don’t necessarily receive yourself. You find your hope and full satisfaction for living in Jesus Christ, and then you find out that you are hated and reviled for it.

Everyone wants to be liked, honored and respected, but Jesus says that you’re blessed when identified with the Kingdom, and it causes people to hate you, exclude you, revile you, and speak evil or spurn your name, and he says you’re in good company because you’re like the faithful prophets of old. Because we are identified with Christ Jesus, we find not only our answers and only hope in him,

we also experience from the world, flesh and devil what he experienced in his life and suffering.

The Kingdom is for those who are hated! Are you hated for Jesus' sake?

Application Picture: You have sought most of your life to make yourself known, to be popular and to receive the respect and honor you think you deserve. You have lied and done whatever else you needed to be accepted and loved and revered. You are loved, and you are tolerant of all ideas and people; you will not correct anyone when they are wrong, for that is their “opinion” and you have yours; and you are respectful as well as respectable. You cannot imagine anyone following a Christ who is so intolerant about what one believes.

Jesus pronounces a woe on those who are spoken well of in this world. Those who think more highly of themselves than they ought; those who will do anything to avoid conflict for the Kingdom of God in Christ. The well-spoken of people are those who may follow Christ shortly until they realize that it causes conflict, and one must be intolerant of false truths and false Christs (cf. Matthew 13-Parable of the Sower and the Seed).

Those who are well spoken of include those especially within the visible Church (like Pharisees and Teachers of the Law). As Jesus points out, the unbelieving people of God in the Old Covenant spoke well of the false prophets!

People of God we live in a time when the world both loves and hates evangelical Christians: they hate us because they think we often have our priority on something other than the preaching and advance of the gospel; they love us because we tell them how to improve themselves and feed their worldly wants and desires telling that Jesus will make them healthy, wealthy and wise – in all the wrong ways!

Does the world hate us because we preach and teach the gospel of grace found only in Jesus Christ? Are we offending the world and causing its hateful response by telling the truth of hope found in Christ alone? Or do we merely tell the world how to live their best life yet, and speak to them about self-help and pop psychology?

As Jeremiah says in his prophecy:

^{ESV} **Jeremiah 5:30-31:** An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: ³¹ the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; *my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?*

This also seems to be the Apostle Paul's point about those who avoid the preaching of the Word of God that can be threatening and divisive to teach only what other people's itching ears want to hear. The implication is that they want to be well liked like the false prophets in Jeremiah's time:

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.- 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

We must be soberly reminded that only false prophets and false teachers are popular with unbelieving mankind! If a preacher or teacher is loved and admired by the multitudes of unbelieving people- -something is very wrong!

Woe to you (v. 26): If you are loved and well-spoken of, you have received all the acceptance and notoriety that you're going to get; you will not receive acceptance from God but rather his punishment for your sins, because of your pride and unrepentant attitude- -then you will wish you had been hated for speaking truth for the Kingdom's sake! Rather than hearing "Well done my good and faithful servant" you will hear "Depart from me I never knew you!" (Matt. 25:41ff).

5. Christians are those who rejoice, knowing that their reward is in heaven and they are recipients of Jesus' four blessings! (v. 22). Regardless of being poor, hungry, full of grief and despised, there is every reason to rejoice in Jesus Christ who has overcome the world as victorious King!
6. But four woes to the rich, full, laughing, and liked people who do not know Christ, and do not think they have a need

for him, whether they are secular humanists or religious folks trusting in their own works.

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

III. The Lord's Supper: Jesus' Law-Covenant Keeping for Sinners Visibly Shown to us!

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

We as polluted sinners are invited to the Table of the Lord Jesus. Are you poor? Are you hungry? Are you grieving and weeping over sin? Are you hated for Jesus sake? This table is for you. This table is a banquet of grace spread to feed you and to help you to continue to display by God's grace his Kingdom Ethics found in the "Sermon on the Plain".

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Exegetical Notes

^{ESV} **Luke 6:12** In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. [Jesus exemplifies the importance of prayer to God; he withdraws to be with the Father and prays to him.]

¹³ And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵ and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. [Here is Jesus showing forth God's sovereignty and election: he calls specific disciples and chooses some among other; Judas being outwardly called, but not truly elected; "Judas Iscariot, "who became a traitor" Dr. Luke writes.]

¹⁷ And he came down with them and stood on a level place, [Similar to Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7, here is a sermon Dr. Luke records that is sometimes called "The Sermon on the Plain" (it was a "level place" and has some of the theological points of Matthew's gospel, particularly combining Jesus' teaching from Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 23.)

with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. [Dr. Luke again points out Jesus' tremendous popularity: "a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people" from all over the map (north and south)! Dr. Luke says that they are coming to experience the Coming of the Kingdom in power and authority through hearing his teaching, healings, and release from unclean spirits.]

¹⁹ And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all. [In Jesus is found life; just a touch could restore one to wholeness and fullness before God as we considered this in Jesus' teaching and example of being "Lord of the Sabbath" in last week's sermon from Luke 6:1-11.]

²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: [Here we have a series of four blessings and four woes in Jesus' sermon; with a rejoicing in the middle and implied at the end for those whose hope is in the Kingdom that will be fully revealed in "heaven" or in the restoration of all things. Note the A-A₁ (prime) and B-B₁, C-C₁, etc. to mark the parallelism in Jesus' sermon]

A: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. [To be poor in Luke's gospel is not to be reliant on one's self, but like the lepers, lame and demon possessed people, they have no power in themselves before God to be healed; they must seek God's aid and his blessing humbly. Sinners do not have a right in God's presence, but can come humbly to Christ in repentance and receive forgiveness. The poor are social pictures of those who are completely dependent upon God for salvation.]

B: ²¹ "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. [The hungry are needy; they need the assistance and provision that only God can give. The hungry are not merely physically hungry, but they hunger spiritually for a right standing before God, a removal of guilt and shame.]

C: "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. [Mourners or those who weep are those who grieve in this present world because of the reality of sin, its effects and consequences upon man- -especially as sin causes the death of man rather than his glorification in the presence of God; those who weep will laugh joyful in Christ, the One who heals and shows for that in the Kingdom of God, the weeping of the night will cease in the coming morning of the restoration of all things.]

D: ²² "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! [Everyone wants to be liked, honored and respected, but Jesus says that you're blessed when identified with the Kingdom, and it causes people to hate you, exclude you, revile you, and speak evil or spurn your name. Because we are identified with Christ Jesus, we find not only our answers and only hope in him, we also experience from the world, flesh and devil what he experienced in his life and suffering.]

²³ ***Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.***

A₁: ²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

B₁: ²⁵ "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

C₁: "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

D₁: ²⁶ "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Implied repetition: ²³ ***Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.***

Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Matthew 5:1-12:** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is

the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

^{ESV} **James 5:1-8:** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴ Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵ You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. ⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

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