

God's Kingdom Manifesto, P. 1

E.T.S.

Luke 6:20-49, which represents Luke's version of the sermon known in Matthew as the Sermon on the Mount, expresses the spiritual implications of Jesus's rule in the lives of His followers.

E.S.S.

Part one of the message pronounces blessings on some and woes on others.

OBJ.

For the Christ Seeker: Show the unbeliever that God's Kingdom will be the only enduring kingdom. Convince him or her to become part of God's Kingdom through believing in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Christ Follower: Show the believer what being part of God's Kingdom looks like. Convince him or her to live according to God's Kingdom principles.

Introduction

Find your place for the message by turning to Luke chapter six.

Illustration

One of the most important events that affects the lives of those of us who live in the United States today transpired on July 4, 1776. That day, Congress ratified the text of the Declaration of Independence, two days after voting to declare independence. The DOI contains three main sections: The Preamble, an introduction designed to convince Americans to lay their lives on the line for the cause; a list of grievances, twenty-seven complaints leveled against King George III of England explaining the colonies' right to rebel; and the resolution of independence, a statement declaring the colonies' complete disconnection from England and establishment as a separate and independent nation.

The actions of so many during that period in American history provided for the nation we are today. Their declaration proclaimed to the world set in motion the events that led to the establishment of this nation.

Introduction

However, a declaration proclaimed long before the American DOI should impact our lives as believers and followers of Jesus even more.

Luke 6:20-49 accounts Luke's version of Jesus's message known in Matthew as the Sermon on the Mount. I personally believe that this was a different occasion from what is recorded in Matthew 5-7, but the tenants of the message are the same. Jesus likely preached a similar message many times as He journeyed through different areas.

What was the message?

It contains a variety of blessings, woes, imperatives, declarations, and illustrations. It all works

together for one main purpose: It represents God's Kingdom Manifesto.

Often, the Gospel penmen inform us about Jesus's preaching that He preached about the Kingdom. As He speaks this message, He presents the plan and agenda of the Kingdom. The message represents the implications of the rule of Jesus in our lives. It opens with pronouncements of blessings and woes.

We'll read the first section and then begin to break it down.

Bible

(20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. (22) Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. (23) Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. (24) But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. (25) Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (26) Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Luke 6:20-26 - KJV

Explanation

Let's begin with examining who Jesus directed the message to.

Whom did He make eye contact with?

He made eye contact with His disciples. He directed the thoughts of the message to them. The message may have applications and implications for others, but it primarily contains applications and implications for those who are disciples of Jesus.

One pastor and theologian wrote that "the sermon served a twofold function: to encourage faithfulness among Jesus' disciples and to challenge non-disciples to follow Him" (Pate, as cited in Guzik).

Application

Which category do you fall into?

- Are you a believer?
- Are you a believer who is not a committed follower of Jesus?
- Are you a disciple, a believing, committed follower of Jesus?

Whatever your connection to Jesus Christ, His message has applications and implications for you.

Explanation

Jesus opened His message by declaring blessings and woes on groups of people dependent on their response to Him. Before looking at the specific responses, let's consider the contrast

between blessing and woe.

"Blessed" in its original Greek form means happy, fortunate, well-off. The Greeks limited the original use of the word to outward prosperity. If you were "blessed", you were healthy, wealthy, and wise. Later, Greek philosophers connected a moral component to the word. To them, knowledge represented the main pursuit. Knowledge provided the key to virtue, only a few had true knowledge and could be "blessed" because of it. Christianity expanded its definition and application. The simplest explanation is that of the joy that comes from knowing, believing, pursuing, and serving God. That joy comes not from the circumstances of life, but from the recognition of God above all, in all, and through all.

"Woe" translates a Greek word that is an interjection. It represents an exclamation of grief or denunciation. Jesus announces the result of failing to live according to the agenda of God's Kingdom.

Those who are blessed and those who have woes pronounced over them are set in contrast to each other.

- Verse 20 contrasts with verse 24.
- Verse 21a contrasts with verse 25a.
- Verse 21b contrasts with verse 25b.
- Verse 22 contrasts with verse 26.

Then, right in the middle, Jesus provides a command and promise for those who experience what He speaks about in verse 22, but also for all those who are blessed. As we consider the

four contrasts by attaching a theme to them, reflect on how you will need to respond today.

You may have never trusted Jesus Christ to forgive and save you. God's Kingdom is the only forever enduring kingdom. Every kingdom of this world, and the kingdom you may be seeking to build for yourself, will fade away. His never will. Become part of His Kingdom through trusting Jesus.

Others have trusted Jesus Christ to forgive and save you. This represents His agenda for His kingdom. This message shows us the kind of people He is transforming us to be. He identifies what we should live for, seek, and cooperate with Him in building. Pattern your life after what He shows through the message.

Now, let's consider the four contrasts by seeing them as themes.

1...The Contrast of Dependency (vv. 20 & 24)

Bible

(20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:20 - KJV

(24) But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Luke 6:24 - KJV

Explanation

Immediately, we are confronted with an analogy that we must reconcile. Jesus identifies the poor and the rich.

Who does this describe?

Rather than describing those who are poor and rich according to the world's standards of health and wealth, Jesus describes a spiritual standard.

How can we know this?

Let's let the Bible interpret the Bible. Let's let Jesus interpret Himself.

Bible

(1) And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto 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.*

Matthew 5:1-3 - KJV

Explanation

The contrast represents the difference between someone who recognizes his or her complete self-insufficiency in exchange for Jesus's all-sufficiency.

Application

I am spiritually bankrupt! My sincerity, zeal, work, resources, etc. are incapable of producing anything of spiritual value to myself or others. When I recognize the truth of that, it drives me to depend on Him.

Do you remember how Jesus spoke of the rich in relation to His Kingdom?

After conversing with a wealthy man who came to Him sincerely desiring to know about the Kingdom of God, Jesus said these words...

Bible

(23) And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (24) And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! (25) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:23-25 - KJV

Application

Notice, it is not ultimately being poor or rich according to the world's standards, but about where your dependence is. Rather, who your dependence is in.

To be poor is to recognize that you are spiritually bankrupt. There is nothing in you, nothing you possess, nothing you can give, and nothing that you can do to make you worthy of being God's

child or add to Him. Depending on you in any way sets you up to nothing better than what you have in this present moment. And when that is gone, so too is that which you depended on.

What does this mean for you in relation to God's Kingdom?

It's interesting and purposeful that this appears first, and causes us to reflect back again to what category we fall into related to Jesus Christ.

- Are you a believer?
- Are you a believer who is not a committed follower of Jesus?
- Are you a disciple, a committed follower of Jesus?

Then, even if we are or strive to be committed followers of Jesus, it causes us to reflect on our dependency now.

- Are we dependent on Him for all things related to our daily supply, strength, and service?
- Are we abiding in Him in humble recognition of our need for Him?
- Are we looking to Him for direction, wisdom, and help?

“Not what I have, but what I have not, is the first point of contact, between my soul and God”

(Spurgeon; as cited in Guzik).

2...The Contrast of Desire (vv. 21a & 25a)

Bible

(21) *Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep*

now: for ye shall laugh.

Luke 6:21 - KJV

(25) Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Luke 6:25 - KJV

Illustration

How many of you know what hunger feels like?

Most of us likely rarely, if ever, get beyond those hunger pains, which are actually movements in our stomachs. Your body is telling you that it is hungry and needs nutrients.

However, if you move past that point to where hunger becomes excessive, other symptoms appear. These often include physical, as well as emotional and mental symptoms.

All of these, progressively worsening, drive you to do something. Eat!

Explanation

We should already recognize that the characteristics described here are not so much physical as they are spiritual. When Jesus declares, "Blessed are ye that hunger now...", we should understand that He is not talking about stomach pains that are your body's way of telling you to eat something.

So, what is He talking about?

Bible

(6) Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6 - KJV

Explanation

Hunger represents need, appetite, and desire. It identifies the lack of something for which the one who lacks desires and seeks. Without meeting that desire, the symptoms progressively worsen.

In contrast, fullness represents satisfaction. No lack of anything, and no need for anything.

Though this may be the goal physically speaking, it is a poor spiritual level to be at. It means satisfaction with where we are, with what we have already done, and the level we have reached.

It identifies a sense of fulfillment in the here and now as if what we can obtain here in this temporal world is enough.

Illustration

C. S. Lewis, the Christian apologist and author, preached a sermon called *The Weight of Glory*.

In his introduction, he spoke about desire. He said, "If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who

wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. *We are far too easily pleased*

(<https://www.cslewis.org/journal/the-pursuit-of-happiness-c-s-lewis's-eudaimonistic-understanding-of-ethics/>).

Application

What are you hungry for?

What do you desire?

Is pursuing God as important to you as eating today?

Are you just as motivated to pursue and obtain spiritual goods as you are to pursue and obtain the temporal things of this life?

I struggled writing this part of the message in particular because I know that, more often than I would like to admit even to myself, I desire things of this world more than I crave pursuing God.

God, help me to hunger more for You!

3...The Contrast of Delight (vv. 21b & 25b)

Bible

(21) *Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep*

now: for ye shall laugh.

Luke 6:21 - KJV

(25) *Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

Luke 6:25 - KJV

Explanation

About this portion of the passage, C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "I do not believe in that faith which has not a tear in its eye when it looks to Jesus. Dry-eyed faith seems to me to be bastard faith, not born of the Spirit of God" (Spurgeon; as cited in Guzik).

It seems to me that two prominent ideas are at play in this contrast.

First, the idea of my response to sin is at play.

Interestingly, a different Greek word translated as "mourn" appears in Jesus's sermon recorded in Matthew 5. There, we read...

Bible

(4) *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

Matthew 5:4 - KJV

Explanation

What's interesting is that the Greek word used there and the Greek word translated as "weep" in

our text appear together in two N.T. passages: here in Luke 6:25 and again in James 4:9.

What does James 4:9 say?

Bible

(9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

James 4:9 - KJV

Explanation

James writes about what the believer's response should be to sin, specifically personal sin.

Application

How does sin affect you?

How are you impacted by your personal sin?

Explanation

Then, the idea of waiting for the return of Jesus is at play.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus spent time with His disciples - teaching and encouraging them. As He spoke about leaving them, He also promised them that He would return. Here's how He spoke with them about it in John 16:20-22.

Bible

(20) Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. (21) A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. (22) And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

John 16:20-22 - KJV

Explanation

Two applications come from the text.

First, they would weep over His crucifixion, but would rejoice over His resurrection.

Second, they would weep over His departure, but would rejoice in the promise of His return.

Application

How does it apply to us?

Paul writes in Romans 8 that all creation groans and travails in pain, as do those adopted into God's family by God's Spirit.

Why groan and travail in pain?

Because we are waiting for a totality of salvation to be realized. We are looking forward with

anticipation until Jesus sets right all that is wrong.

Why weep and mourn if we look forward to it with anticipation?

Because our present, personally and corporately, is still inflicted with and influenced by sin.

So, why is this a contrast in delight?

Because those who delight in the Lord will experience a holy grief over our present predicament that no prescription or pleasure of this world will relieve. Those who can find that give evidence that they do not or are not delighting in the Lord.

A holy dissatisfaction with things as they are will characterize those looking for and building God's Kingdom.

4...The Contrast of Drive (vv. 22 & 26)

Bible

(22) Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Luke 6:22 - KJV

(26) Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Luke 6:26 - KJV

Explanation

Just so you do not go out looking to make it happen, Jesus is not addressing an attempt to get people to hate you rather than like you!

Did you ever know someone who seemed to try to be hated?

So, then, what is it that Jesus is speaking about?

Let me tell you in the words of Paul...

Bible

(10) For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Galatians 1:10 - KJV

Explanation

The main thought Paul presented was that of his drive in ministry. Ultimately, he was not driven by pleasing men, but by pleasing God.

Application

Your first thought and desire of your heart should be pleasing God. If in that process, others commend you, fine. However, if my motivation is men's commendation, then I am on dangerous

ground.

So, Jesus does not mean to go out of your way to get people to hate you. Set your heart on pleasing Jesus, and it will happen in some cases naturally.

This is where verse 23 comes into view.

Bible

(23) Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Luke 6:23 - KJV

Explanation

If you pattern your life after God's Kingdom, as one whose life is lived under Jesus's rule, He has a command and a promise for you.

The command: *Rejoice now.*

The promise: *Reward in heaven.*

Conclusion