

Luke 6:20-23 (LD 24) "Reward Offered"

For the Children: Perhaps you have seen a reward offered for the return of a missing pet, or for information about someone for whom the police are searching. These rewards are offered not because the people who supply information necessarily *deserve* such a reward; they are offered to encourage others to help if they can. The Lord does not offer us a reward for serving Him because we deserve it; He does so to encourage us to serve Him even more because we are thankful for His mercy to us. The more we realize how little we deserve His mercy, the more we should want to serve Him. These rewards also help keep us from despairing because of our sins. **Questions:** What are some of the "rewards" God promises His people? What kind of people receive these rewards? How do we know they are not rewards we deserve?

Introduction:

First Point: The Blessed State

- 1) Gospel Not Law: The Beatitudes are a promise of blessings for God's people, not a set of exhortations to behave in a certain way. They are Gospel-promises derived from the OT presentation of the Gospel e.g., in Is. 61, Ps. 37:11. There, the Gospel was expressed in terms of relief for the oppressed, persecuted and afflicted people of God. Only those who fit the description below receive these blessings.
- 2) Poverty: When Luke pronounces blessing on the "poor," he does not mean all those who are materially poor. Like the parallel in Mt. 5, he means *spiritual* poverty - when God's people in extremity realize that there is nowhere else to turn than to the Lord; and that they have nothing to offer Him.
- 3) Hunger: Similarly, those who "hunger" are not just those who have no physical food; but those who have a desire for spiritual food, for God's mercy and righteousness, for a close relationship with Him, for His salvation.
- 4) Grief: Those who "weep" are also those who suffer loss because they belong to the Lord; who also grieve over the sin and misery in the world, for the state of the church, as well as for their own sins.
- 5) Persecution: That the whole section here and in Mt. 5 is talking about the affliction of God's people is seen in that the description of persecution is the longest. God's people are often poor, oppressed, afflicted, hungry, imprisoned, grieving etc. due to persecution for the Lord's sake. They are hated, ostracized, , insulted and scorned by those who hate the Lord. This should not dismay us. It is actually a privilege to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts. 5:41). We are in good company – the prophets. We also receive a reward far greater than any losses.

Second Point: The Blessed Reward

- 1) The Great Reward of the Kingdom: The reward matches the various afflictions. The poor inherit the great wealth of God's Kingdom – heaven and earth under God's rule, forgiveness, adoption, sanctification, eternal life and glory.
- 2) Satisfaction: Receiving such a great Kingdom more than satisfied the hunger we have for God's Presence, mercy and forgiveness etc.
- 3) Joy: Receiving these blessings also turns our grief at affliction, persecution loss, sin and misery, into the joy of salvation.
- 4) A Gracious Reward: As Q. 64 makes clear, these blessings must be a reward of grace, since no good we do in this life can ever meet God's perfect standard. On the contrary, all we do is contaminated with sin. That is why the reward includes mercy and forgiveness. See Lk. 18:18f.
- 5) No Indifference: Knowing all this does not make the believer spiritually lazy or indifferent. The true believer, the person described here, is hungry to know and serve the Lord. As someone joined to Christ, he cannot, by definition, lack all gratitude for the mercy shown to him

Conclusion: