

FBC POWELL, 6-25-17 PM NOTES
"Blessings and Woes"
Luke 6:17-26
19 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

Revelation 13:8b (NIV) "...the Lamb [Jesus] who was slain from the creation of the world."

Genesis 3:15 (NIV) when God said "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head [a fatal blow], and you will strike his heel."

Leviticus 7:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Philippians 3:10 "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

I. The Setting of the Sermon (vv. 17-19)

Matthew 5:1 "When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up **on the mountain**; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him."

A. The Popularity of Jesus (v. 17)

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A. The Blessings (vv. 20-23)

"Blessed" is a sense of satisfaction and contentment in the knowledge that we are, by God's grace, approved of by Him.

Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV) "To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved."

2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

1. The Poor (v. 20)

“To be poor in spirit is to realize that I have nothing, I am nothing, and I can do nothing, and have need of all things.”
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Isaiah 57:15 “For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”

Philippians 3:7-9 “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”

Romans 1:17 “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”

2. The Hungry and Weeping (v. 21)

Psalms 42:1-2a “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”

3. The Hated (vv. 22-23)

B. The Woes (vv. 24-26)

First Baptist Church Powell 06 25 17 PM

Sermon 19: Blessings and Woes

Luke 6:17-26

The central theme in the Bible is God’s plan of redemption for a fallen race – the human race. Only four of the Bible’s 1,189 chapters do not take place in the context of a sin cursed, fallen world. The first two chapters of the Bible (Genesis 1-2) describe creation before the fall and the curse. Then, the last two chapters (Revelation 21-22) take place after the coming down of the New Jerusalem to the new heaven and new earth.

The central character in the Bible is the triune God – God the Father, God the Son – the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is involved in this plan of redemption. We could say (though it is somewhat of an oversimplification) that the Father thought it, the Son bought it, and the Holy Spirit wrought it.

This plan of redemption was planned by God before man ever sinned in time, and before God the Son took on human flesh in a virgin's womb. Revelation 13:8b (NIV) says "...the Lamb [Jesus] who was slain from the creation of the world." The Old Testament prepared the way for the coming of the Son of God to the earth. This plan of redemption from the slavery of sin was prophesied in Genesis 3:15 (NIV) when God said, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head [a fatal blow], and you will strike his heel."

When God raised up a people for Himself from Abraham's descendants, it was a part of this grand plan for redemption, for the redeemer would be a Jew, a descendent of Abraham. The enslavement and deliverance of Abraham's descendants from slavery in Egypt illustrated the deliverance from the wages of sin which is death. The Passover lamb that was slain, and its blood put on the doorposts so that the death angel would pass over those under the blood, was a timeless picture of this redemption.

The formal giving of the moral law to Moses was God mercifully giving mankind a clear definition of sin. The sacrificial system was a picture of Christ's sacrifice and the necessity of shed blood to pay the wages of sin. Leviticus 7:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement". The prophets pointed to the coming Messiah, and the Gospels detail His coming and the price He paid for our redemption. The book of Acts tells us how the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers, the Gospel of redemption through Christ is to go to everyone in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and those at the uttermost part of the earth. The epistles of the New Testament detail the receipt of the good news and the application to our lives. Finally, the book of Revelation shows us the final demise of the devil and how the ultimate result of salvation is realized. We who have been redeemed will dwell in the New Jerusalem with Jesus the Savior and He will reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

As we study the Gospel of Luke, we will focus on the teaching of the Son of God, His life, His substitutionary death, and His resurrection from the dead. As we see more clearly who He is and what He did, we will see Him as our greatest treasure. We desire to know Him more deeply. I pray that the greatest desire of our heart will be that which was written by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:10: "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

In this message, and several that follow, we will focus on these highlights of the greatest sermon ever preached.

I. The Setting of the Sermon (vv. 17-19)

Competent Bible scholars disagree as to whether Luke 6:17-49 is from the same sermon Jesus preached in Matthew 5-7 (called the Sermon on the Mount) or if it was a different sermon, at a different place that just contained many of the same truths. I don't think we can be dogmatic, but I am convinced that this passage in Luke is an abbreviated account of the more lengthy "Sermon on the Mount" recorded in Matthew 5-7. I realize that Matthew 5:1 begins this sermon by saying, "When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up *on the mountain*; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him." However, the word for mountain can mean a hill. The "level place" could have been a plateau on the side of the mountain/hill that Matthew referred to. In the end, it really doesn't matter if this was from the same sermon as Matthew 5-7 or if it was preached at another time and place and simply proclaimed some of the same truths. The important thing to remember is that these are words from our Lord to us. Listen carefully and ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to obey completely.

A. The Popularity of Jesus (v. 17)

At this point in Jesus' ministry, the crowds were flocking to Him and heard Him gladly. Some of the crowds were very large. A later crowd would number 5,000 men, not counting women and children (Luke 9:14). In this large crowd were the newly chosen apostles, a large group of disciples who were following Him and learning from Him, a large group of people with needs that they hoped Jesus would meet, and finally those who were just curious and wanted to see what Jesus would do. It is interesting that while the

disciples were impressed with the crowds, Jesus wasn't. He knew the fickle nature of the crowd that one day would cry, "crown him" and later "crucify Him."

B. The Power of Jesus (vv. 18-19)

Much of Jesus' popularity was because of the power that was manifested in His teaching, in His healing of sick bodies, and in His delivering them from demonic spirits. Notice that Jesus didn't have "front men" who interviewed those desiring healing and deliverance. There was undisputed healing to all who came to Him. He ministered to the minds through His teaching, to the bodies through His healing, and to the spiritual problems by casting out the demons that possessed them.

II. The Sermon (vv. 20-26)

In this section of the sermon, we see two key words that we need to understand. The two words are "blessed" (verses 20-22) and "woe" (verses 24-26).

A. The Blessings (vv. 20-23)

In one of my Greek word study books, eight and one-fourth

pages (really small print), are given to this word translated "blessed." *Blessed* is not a bad translation, but for some reason that word doesn't communicate a lot to most people. Some translations translate it "Happy are..." That's not a bad translation if you have the right definition of happy. I fear that when most people in our culture think of *happy*, they think of positive emotions in a context of pleasant circumstances. That certainly doesn't fit the context of Luke 6:20-22! The kind of "happy" Jesus is speaking of is present when you are poor, hungry, weeping and when people hate you!

This word translated "blessed" primarily means "to be approved." We are blessed when we seek the approval of God over the approval of man. We only have to please an audience of One! We are blessed when we see Jesus as our greatest treasure and pleasing Him is the primary motive in all that we do. But even "approved by God" doesn't adequately translate "blessed." It also has the idea of *being fully satisfied and content*. It was used of someone who experienced God's grace in an unusual way. Here is my stab at the meaning of "blessed." It is *a sense of satisfaction and contentment (whatever the circumstances) in the knowledge that we are by God's grace approved of by Him*. Is that not what every true Christian is really seeking?

Let me caution you about getting God's approval and God's acceptance mixed up. If we are in Christ, we are accepted by God because of what Christ has done. The Bible says in Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV): "to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved." Acceptance is not something that we strive to accomplish; it is already accomplished if we are in Christ! Approval is quite different from acceptance. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." That word "approved" means that like pure gold, we have been through the testing fires of God and the impurities, the dross, has been removed. It is that kind of approval that every true believer craves and longs for. It requires the kind of poverty that Jesus is speaking of in verse 20, the kind of hunger He speaks of in verse 21, and the kind of satisfaction and contentment when we know the fellowship of Christ's suffering, when we are hated, ostracized, insulted and scorned for the sake of Christ (v. 22). The typical unbiblical concept of happiness is dependent on what happens externally to me. Being blessed however is totally independent of what happens. It cannot be affected by what another does to me. When I have been obedient and am approved unto God I am fully satisfied and content – blessed even though I may not feel good about my exterior circumstances. Who is blessed; who is approved by God?

1. The Poor (v. 20)

Note how verses 20 and 24 parallel one another. Verse 20 is "blessed are you who are poor" and verse 24 is "woe to you who are rich." We see that same kind of parallel in verse 21 and verse 25. "Blessed are you who hunger now" and "Woe to you who are well fed now." In those same verses, "Blessed are you who weep now" and "woe to you who laugh now." Then look at verse 22 and then verse 26. "Blessed are you

when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.” Verse 26 says, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.” We will look first at the “blessed” and then the “woes.”

When verse 20 speaks of the poor, Jesus was not just speaking of physical poverty. The word translated “poor” is an intense word. There is another Greek word that is sometimes translated “poor” that means to be having a tough time and struggling to make ends meet. The word used here, however, literally means to shrink or cower or cringe as totally destitute beggars did in that day. This term doesn’t mean just poor; it means begging poor – to be totally destitute and bankrupt. What kind of destitution and poverty is this speaking of? It is not material poverty. Notice that in Matthew, Jesus says “poor in spirit.” Luke assumes the readers will know that this is spiritual poverty that the Lord is referring to. There is no inherent merit in being materially poor. Entrance into God’s kingdom has nothing to do with the size of your bank account. There are ungodly rich people and ungodly poor people. Jesus was talking about poverty of spirit. It is the acknowledgement that we are bankrupt in merit to stand before God. It is the conscious confession of our unworthiness before a holy God. It is total radical repentance regarding our self-righteousness and merit before God.

Before we can come in faith, depending totally on Christ’s merit and sacrifice on our behalf, we must see our own spiritual bankruptcy. Arthur Pink said, “To be poor in spirit is to realize that I have nothing, I am nothing, and I can do nothing, and have need of all things” (Arthur Pink). God has always reached out to the poor in spirit and rejected the proud in heart. Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”

Throughout Scripture you see God honoring those who were poor in spirit and pushing away the proud. When we look at the apostle Paul, we find that he could not know true righteousness until he took all the things he thought gave him merit before God and counted them as rubbish. Philippians 3:7-9:

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

Martin Luther set out to merit entrance into the kingdom of heaven. He tried to do everything the church told him to do, but failed the internal test. When he finally realized his spiritual bankruptcy, the Lord brought him to Romans 1:17: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’” Luther realized that he had no merit and, in humility of heart, he came to God through faith alone and found the salvation he longed for. Until we see our poverty of spirit we will never know the riches of His salvation.

2. The Hungry and Weeping (v. 21)

The Greek word for hunger is intensive. He is not speaking of a nagging want; He is speaking of a consuming desire. It literally says, “Blessed are those who are continually and intensely hungering.” It is the type of thirst the psalmist spoke of in Psalm 42:1-2a: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”

The weeping speaks of those who are broken over their sin and their separation from God.

3. The Hated (vv. 22-23)

In verse 22, the Lord uses four verbs, *hate*, *ostracize*, *insult*, and *scorn*. This is often the lot of a true disciple of Christ. Those four verbs aren’t normally associated with the words “blessed” (v. 22) and leaping for joy (v. 23). In Christ, they are. Verse 23 tells us why we can rejoice when we are hated, ostracized, insulted, and scorned for the sake of the Gospel. First, we know that there is a glorious reward in Heaven. The reason that we can rejoice in being hated, ostracized, insulted, and scorned, is that our

time here on earth is short and our time in eternity is long – infinitely long. We should be overjoyed to suffer rejection and persecution, here, because it means reward for eternity. When our view is to this world only, we have a warped view of persecution. If this world is all that there is, we are tempted to do whatever it takes to be comfortable and happy. If we realize that our life here is but a vapor, and heaven is forever, and persecution increases our enjoyment capacity in heaven, we can rejoice in being hated, ostracized, insulted, and scorned.

We should not be surprised when the world treats us this way. What wimps we tend to be when we get criticized, rejected, and hated. Can you picture a Marine being ordered into battle and coming back crying and saying, “I was just minding my own business and they started shooting at me! Why can’t we all just get along?” No, that’s what Marines expect! As we go into this world, and Christ lives out His resurrection life through us, there will be rejection, but rejoice because there is reward in Heaven. We are going to be in Heaven a lot longer than we are going to be here.

Notice also that we are in good company (v. 23b). We are in the company of Isaiah, who was sawn in two, Jeremiah who was falsely accused and rejected, Daniel who was slandered and thrown to the lions, and John the Baptist who was beheaded. That’s pretty good company!

B. The Woes (vv. 24-26)

These verses sound strange to most that are attached to the church today. These woes in verse 24 are what most people (even most professing believers) are longing and looking for – riches, being well-fed, laughing, and being highly thought of by others. The point of this passage is that when we fully follow Jesus, we should not be surprised when we are treated as the world treated Him. Let me give you a caution. Some people are rejected or even persecuted by the world not because they are like Jesus, but because they act like jerks! We are to be filled with the love of Jesus, filled with compassion, and filled with desire to see others come to Christ. But when we walk through this world with a refusal to accept the world’s values and ways, we don’t have to go looking for hate, ostracism, insult, and scorn (v. 22). It will find us. When we adopt the world’s goals, values, and seek the world’s acceptance, we lose reward in Heaven having traded it for temporal acceptance and comfort.

Jesus is saying that His disciples are not to treasure the trinkets, acceptance, or the “comfortable life” that the world longs for; we are to treasure Him! Even if we are materially poor, in Him we have a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Our goal is to come to the place that we can say, “Lord Jesus, You are my treasure. You can take away everything else in life, and as long as I have You, I have enough! Someone put it this way, “He’s saying, ‘In this hand, I will give you all the treasures that the world admires and seeks and longs for, and in this hand I will give you Me – which is it going to be?’ and the disciple says, ‘I’d rather have Jesus!’” [Ligon Duncan Sermon, *Blessed or Cursed? Weal or Woe?*]

One of the Puritans said, “If Christ were not in Heaven, I would not want to go there.” Why? It is because He is our treasure, not the stuff the world has to offer like fame, finances, and frivolity. He is our treasure, not the streets of gold, the gates of pearl, and all the beauty of Heaven. Just give me Jesus!

Conclusion

In one sense there are only two categories of people in the world. There are those who treasure Jesus above everything, every person, and every award or honor. And there are those who treasure something or someone above Jesus. That’s it! Where do you stand?