

Welcome everyone. Glad to be worshipping with you all this morning. We have been working our way through the Gospel of Luke ... and we come today to one of the most famous passages in the Bible - namely, the Sermon on the Mount. Right away, we will find that Luke's account of the Sermon on the Mount is much shorter than Matthew's version... And if I am not wrong, all of us, I believe are more familiar with Matthew's version... but I am thankful to be preaching through Luke's account for two reasons - the first being - I think that we will find that Luke's up-front, in your face approach... particularly in this version of the Beatitudes... will cut through that familiarity and once again align our hearts to the values of the God's kingdom...

Secondly... if I were to be preaching this from Matthew.. it would take us A LONG time... but since we are in Luke, I was able to split it up into 4 parts...

Sermon on the Mount Part 1 - Luke 6:20-26

Sermon on the Mount Part 2 - Luke 6:27-38

Sermon on the Mount Part 3 - Luke 6:39-45

Sermon on the Mount Part 4 - Luke 6:46-49

So that's what the coming 4 weeks look like... And here's a quick big picture summary of the Sermon on the Mount...

Luke 6:20-26 is addressing your attitude toward life. Luke 6:27-38 is about your attitude toward other people. Luke 6:39-45 is concerned with your attitude toward yourself, and Luke 6:46-49 discusses your attitude toward God.

And what ties all four of these together is the WORD - BLESSED. True happiness is found in being a disciple of Christ as you live with the right attitude towards life... the right attitude towards others, the right attitude towards yourself... and the right attitude towards God...

So with that, would you turn with me in your Bibles, if you haven't done so already ... to Luke 6:20-26.

Before we begin.. let me be clear - THIS IS NOT a manual on how to BECOME CHRISTIAN.. This is a MANUAL DESCRIBING Christians. We are concerned today with answering the question - WHAT are the followers of Jesus supposed to look like... And simply, the answer is - in one word - DIFFERENT...

You are supposed to look so RADICALLY DIFFERENT from the WORLD that the world looks at that and says.. hmm - I've never SEEN that BEFORE... THAT'S BRIGHT... and hmm... That's SALTY...

So as we work through the Beatitudes this morning... examine your hearts to see if it is aligned with the VALUES that Jesus teaches here...

And NOTICE that Jesus is addressing values... He is not so much concerned with what you do, so much as WHO YOU ARE... He is addressing the HEART ATTITUDE that you have TOWARDS LIFE...

So lets read the Beatitudes again...

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:
“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
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! **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.

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.
“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Something is not quite right here...

Since when are riches, satisfaction, happiness and popularity a curse?

And how are poverty, hunger, sorrow and rejection a blessing?

I mean, EVERYONE in the world live their lives in order to turn poverty into riches, hunger into satisfaction, sorrow into happiness and rejection into popularity.

This is not conventional wisdom.. its not politically correct.. it is ALIEN to the wisdom of the world.. Jesus is turning the world UPSIDE down... Or to be more precise.. He is turning the world right-side up. Jesus here is turing a world that has been driven upside-down mad... right-side up...

And to a world driven mad by sin, the VALUES of those who follow Christ are seen as MARKS of LOSERS...

But that is precisely the point, isn't it? The world and all its thinking is exactly opposite the truth. ITS NOT JUST SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. IT IS COMPLETELY THE OPPOSITE. Christian wisdom IS NOT complimentary to worldly wisdom...

That's why the apostle Paul said, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, that the wisdom of God is foolishness with men and the wisdom of men is foolishness with God. And in Romans 1, Paul said that man professes himself to be wise, but in fact he is literally, a MOROS - which is where we get the english word... MORON.

What Jesus says here - the Beatitudes - it isn't adding something to man's wisdom; it replaces it.

Now, we don't have much time to cover everything in detail.. but.. i mean.. poor... We don't like that word. We like STRONG... RICH.. FAME.. But what does it mean when Jesus says BLESSED are the poor? And on the flip side.. WOE TO THE RICH?

In the Gospel of Matthew, it says blessed are the poor in spirit.... and to be sure - it would be a FOOLISH mistake to say that the poor - by virtue of BEING POOR - are blessed... Rather, this is pointing toward a poverty of the heart... BUT, we should ALSO not be so hasty as to dismiss the fact that Luke says - BLESSED ARE THE POOR. period.

Let me drive this point home a bit more... Our church is part of a ministry that serves the poorest of the poor... A polite term that we use to describe that service is — reaching out to the less fortunate... Last Monday, after coming back from Potter's Place, I logged on to Facebook, and saw that I was tagged in a picture that Jae had put up- and in its caption, it read, serving the less fortunate, Downtown East Hastings with brothers and sisters... I clicked like... But I paused to think... But if we take Jesus seriously here...when He says... BLESSED ARE THE POOR... SOMEHOW... IN SOME WAY... THESE PEOPLE ARE BLESSED... We are reaching out to serve the fortunate..! Not the less fortunate...

How are we to wrap our minds around this???

The poor.. are blessed - because the kingdom of God is available to them... They are NOT blessed because of their condition, but because the kingdom of God is more readily available to them than the rich... They are blessed because they are not far from entering into eternal life... On the other hand, woe to you who are rich... because it is harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God...

When Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor” ([Luke 6:20](#)), he meant it.

The Bibles does not treat riches and poverty as equally dangerous or blessed REALITIES. In the Old Testament, riches were a sign of God's blessing upon you... but in the New Testament... riches are presented A GREAT DANGER. There's a reason for this... simply, that Christianity is no longer a COME-SEE RELIGION.. but a GO TO religion.. In the OT... EVERYTHING was covered with GOLD right.. the temple.. the palaces.. because the nations were to COME see the GREATNESS of God through the PROSPERITY of ISRAEL... BUT IN THE NT... we are told to LAY DOWN ALL THAT WE HAVE.. and FOLLOW JESUS as we GO OUT INTO THE WORLD... So its not rocket science here... it is easier for a poor man to follow Jesus than for a rich man to follow Jesus... We never read, “Only with difficulty will a *poor* person enter the kingdom of heaven” ([Matthew 19:23](#)).

But rather, only with difficulty will a RICH person enter the kingdom of heaven.

Going back to the people of Hastings street... They are blessed because they have more opportunities to hear the gospel and be saved... It is not just our church...

throughout history.. the people of God have ALWAYS reached out to the WIDOWS, ORPHANS, and POOR - BECAUSE that is what the BIBLE commands... And when THEY DO BELIEVE... it is easier for them to LAY ASIDE everything that they own... because they did not own much to begin with.

MOREOVER... The fact of the matter is... the poor... the hungry... the sorrowful... are more receptive to the gospel because THEIR CONDITION is a PARABLE-of sorts of their SPIRITUAL CONDITION... A poor person will have an easier time accepting his destitute condition before God than a wealthy businessman or lawyer. A hungry person will sooner come to the awareness of his SOUL thirst for God than the one who has a full stomach - By the way, THAT IS WHY CHRISTIANS FAST. TO RENEW OUR THIRST for GOD.

And the person who has LOTS to laugh about will not be so easily be broken by SIN and the effects of SIN as the one who is IN MOURNING over the death of a loved one.

THIS is the POWER of the CROSS.. IT RESTORES A BROKEN WORLD driven mad by sin and flips it right side up. Without the person and work of Jesus Christ ... THIS IS ALL BALONEY! BUT... if what the cross has accomplished for us is so great that Jesus can say ... BLESSED are the poor... BLESSED ARE THE PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD DOES NOT CONSIDER BLESSED. BLESSED are those who have little hope in this life.. Blessed are the couple who cannot have a child.. Blessed ARE THE UNEMPLOYED. BLESSED ARE THE ORPHANS AND THE WIDOWS! Blessed are the elderly WHO CAN'T AFFORD RETIREMENT! I wonder, how many of us are inclined to look at our aging parents who are still struggling to get by... or loved ones who are suffering... and say in our hearts - BLESSED... WHY? Because YOU GET ME! I will comfort you... I will make you rich.. I will satisfy you.. I will CLOTHE YOU! I will give you rest! Jesus is saying - THE KINGDOM of heaven is READILY available to such as these! You are blessed!

And lastly, it is a blessing to be persecuted... because the persecuted will LONG for the return of Christ more than those who have an easy comfortable life... And we simply do not have the time to address all the beatitudes in detail.. but we will be coming back to this one in the very near future..because I am convinced that this is ONE OF the MOST relevant verses in the BIBLE for us TODAY.

SO.. blessed are the poor... the hungry... the sorrowful... and the persecuted...

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.

25

Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.

26

Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

The point here is ... as a disciple of Jesus, these things in the list of woes must not be the things we chase after.

The world chases after these things - BUT we have to KNOW that riches, a full-stomach, laughter, and popularity ... these things...GET IN the WAY of ENTERING the KINGDOM... REALLY. Jesus isn't joking here... RICHES... a full stomach.. laughter and POPULARITY ... GET IN THE WAY OF YOU and OTHERS entering the kingdom.

Our core value systems must be different. Although we live IN the world... We must not be LIKE the world... We must not run after the same things that the world does... BUT here's the catch... We must be different not only in the things that we pursue.. but in the things that we CONSIDER BLESSED! We must be HAPPY in poverty... happy in hunger and sorrow and persecution...

I find it striking.. that when reading the biographies of the great Christian men and women of old... that they were able to rejoice and receive with thanksgiving from the Lord times of abundance.. BUT RECALLED most HAPPILY and LONGINGLY those times that they were POOR.. and HUNGRY AND LOCKED up in a prison cell... OR mourning the death of a loved one - BECAUSE IT WAS THERE that they met with the Lord most DEEPLY.

Ok... so, does that mean that we are ALL supposed to sell our possessions and become poor? Maybe. God might call some of you to do exactly that. My family is just one example among many. But most likely, God will allow you to go through seasons in your life where you are POOR and HUNGRY and SAD... in order to teach you that TRUE BLESSEDNESS COMES FROM God. Not in riches... not in FOOD. Not in FAME OR A PAIN-FREE COMFORTABLE LIFE... BUT IN GOD...

let me make it clear... I've spent a lot of our time today talking about being the blessedness of being poor... so let me make this clear... So you don't mishear me on this. We are a people that DENOUNCE MATERIALISM... but we are not like the monks who denounce MATERIALS...as if CREATION itself were EVIL.. Rather, we worship God as the CREATOR of all things, and we celebrate the goodness of His creation. Paul writes in 1 Timothy that God... In His generosity ... God has given us everything to enjoy, and we receive it from His hands with humble thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:4; 6:17). But the key here is HUMBLE thanksgiving... flying first class or driving around a FERRARI is NOT humble. The measuring rod that determines what is in the "humble thanksgiving" category is going to be DIFFERENT for all... BUT - I think it goes without saying that luxury and the Christian life do NOT go together... In fact, the New Testament makes clear that if God has given you much, He means for you to share your abundance with those who have little. For it is more BLESSED to GIVE than to RECEIVE and HOARD up wealth for yourself.

We have seen today... that at the very least... what the Beatitudes means is that the core values of Christians must be different.. Although we live amongst the world.. we are NOT LIKE the world... How are you different?

Where's the difference? Are you EMBRACING the same lifestyle... DO YOU HAVE THE same values as the world... Are you chasing after the same things? Riches... food? fame? comfort?

Where is the difference... There will be many on that day that say to me, Lord Lord... but I will say to them - Depart from me.. I do not KNOW you... You can know everything there is to know about the Bible... but if your life is not affected, if your heart attitude towards the most fundamental values in life are not RADICALLY different... than your faith will most likely prove to be useless on that faithful day..

and with that, lets pray.

Let's pray.