

“The Sermon on the Level - Part 1”
The Blessings and Woes
Luke 6:17-26
Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. Of all the great preachers, Old Testament and New Testament, and throughout church history, none have been as great as Jesus Christ.
 - 1. “Never a man spoke like this man”
 - 2. We come today to one of the greatest sermons Jesus preached, called “The Sermon on the Plain”
 - a) Why is it called “The Sermon on the Plain?”
 - b) It means “on a level place” or “plateau”
 - 3. The sermon takes up the remainder of Luke 6 and is like “The Sermon on the Mount” recorded in Matthew 5-7.
 - a) Like The Sermon on the Mount, The Sermon on the Plain opens with the Beatitudes and ends with the parable of the two builders
 - b) The Sermon on the Plain has only four Beatitudes, whereas the Sermon on the Mount has eight
 - c) The Beatitudes in The Sermon on the Plain are followed by four corresponding woes which are not found in The Sermon on the Mount (vv. 20-26)
 - 4. We learn that God’s kingdom ways and thoughts are completely contrary to man’s kingdom ways and thoughts
 - a) “We see the utter contrariety between the mind of Christ and the common opinions of mankind”
 - 5. Let’s look at the four Beatitudes and their contrasting woes

II. The Blessing of Poverty (Luke 6:20)

- A. Who is Jesus speaking to?
 - 1. “He lifted up his eyes on His disciples...” (v. 20)
- B. What did He say?
 - 1. “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (v. 20)
- C. What did Jesus mean?
 - 1. The word “blessed” means “happy,” but Jesus is not speaking here of a subjective state or a feeling, but rather is making an objective statement about what God thinks of them
 - 2. To be “blessed” means to be “approved of by God.” It means you have the “applause of heaven”
 - 3. Who are the “blessed?”
 - a) “You who are poor”
 - b) What kind of poor?
 - 1) Not material poverty
 - 2) It’s spiritual poverty
 - 3) (Matthew 5:3)

- 4) To be “poor in spirit” is to acknowledge your spiritual poverty or your spiritual bankruptcy before God
 - 5) It’s to see yourself as you truly are- utterly sinful before a Holy God
 - 6) It’s seeing yourself as spiritually bankrupt before God
 - 7) Illustration- The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18)
4. Why is it first on the list of the Beatitudes?
 - a) It’s essential for salvation
 - b) It’s essential for spiritual growth
 - 1) “For yours is the Kingdom of God” (v. 20)
 - 2) “Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind...” Song by Charles Elliott
 - 3) It’s the only way a person can come to God
- D. The contrasting “woe” (v. 24)
1. These woes are not addressed to the disciples
 2. Most likely to the “great multitudes” (v. 17)
 3. Wealth predisposes men to think they have need of nothing
 - a) (Revelation 3)

III. The Blessing of Hunger (Luke 6:21a)

- A. In Matthew, there is again the additional “and thirst for righteousness”
1. Jesus is speaking of an intense, deep, all-consuming desire to be right before God and to be forgiven and accepted by God
 2. “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God” (Psalm 42:1).
 3. Jesus said, “man shall not live by bread alone”
 4. Illustration- The Prodigal Son
 5. The reason why the hungry are blessed
 - a) “For you shall be filled” (v. 21)
 - b) Only God can fill your empty heart and life
 6. The contrasting “woe” (v. 25a)
 - a) Jesus said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35 NKJV).

IV. The Blessing of Weeping (Luke 6:21b)

- A. Happy are those who weep?
1. What kind of sorrow is Jesus pronouncing blessed?
 - a) A sinful, self-centered sorrow
 - b) A weeping over some regret or failure
 1. Illustration- Judas
 - c) It is a godly sorrow
 1. It’s weeping over sin in my life and the lives of others
 2. It’s weeping over lost souls
 3. Illustration- Old Testament- Jeremiah
 2. “Weep now, for you shall laugh” (v. 21)
 - a) Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning

- b) (Psalm 126:5)
 - c) It's the comfort of our sins forgiven
 - d) The Holy Spirit is the "Comforter"
3. The contrasting "woe" (v. 25b)
- a) For the non-Christian, the world is as close to heaven as you will get

V. The Blessing of Rejection (Luke 6:22-23)

- A. The nature of the rejection (v. 22)
- 1. Hate you (v. 22)
 - 2. Separate you (v. 22)
 - 3. Reproach you or insult you (v. 22)
 - 4. Reject your name as evil (v. 22)
- B. The reason for the rejection (v. 22)
- 1. For the Son of Man's sake (v. 22)
 - 2. "For righteousness' sake" (Matthew 5:10)
 - 3. It's not for doing wrong (1 Peter 2:19-20)
- C. How should you respond to this kind of persecution and rejection?
- 1. We should not:
 - a) Retaliate like an unbeliever
 - b) Sulk like a child
 - c) Just grin and bear it like a stoic
 - 2. We should:
 - a) "Rejoice" (v. 23)
 - b) Imperative in the present tense
 - 3. Why should I rejoice?
 - a) A heavenly reward (v. 23)
 - 1) (Romans 8:18)
 - b) A holy company (v. 23)
 - 4. The contrasting "woe" (v. 26)
 - a) Persecution is a mark of a true disciple of Christ
 - b) "The time will come" (2 Timothy 4:3)
 - c) "Persecution is simply the clash between two irreconcilable value systems" – John Stott

VI. Conclusion

- A. Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:25)
- 1. "Son remember that you in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented."
 - 2. What kingdom are you living in and for?
- B. Moses
- 1. (Hebrews 11:24-27)