

Remember Who is Truly Blessed

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Preacher: Pastor Dave Thompson

[0 : 00] You can be turning with me to Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6. And you can be praying my voice holds out.

! If you're turning there, there are a couple of people in the Old Testament who are known for their discouragement. But probably the most famous was Elijah the prophet. Remember he gave Ahab the word from the Lord.

Except by my word there will be no rain for these years until I say so. And so he ran from Ahab and God had him to go to the brook Cherith and live there where he would drink the water and the ravens would bring him food.

He was there alone. He was there until the brook dried up and God sent him to a Gentile woman in Zarephath.

It was a woman with her son. And he says, you know, make me some food. And she says, all I got is just a little bit and we're going to eat that and die. And God provides miraculously, but he stays there.

[1 : 14] And the indication is that he's not out amongst people much, at least not out amongst his people much, because he's been fleeing from the presence of Ahab. Well, God says, go to Ahab, tell him I'm going to send rain.

And so he does. And you know that then takes place that famous situation on Mount Carmel where two altars are set up. And the false prophets have the opportunity to call down fire on their altar on behalf of their gods.

And Abraham, Elijah could call down fire on the altar for the Lord, for the God of the universe. And so that happens.

Fire comes down on God's altar. Nothing happens to the false gods altar. And what did it do?

I mean, Ahab didn't seem to change. And we find then Elijah discouraged.

[2 : 18] Because at that point Jezebel says, If by a certain time from this day your head is not off from your body, something's wrong.

So he runs. Runs to the point of exhaustion. Falls down under a broom tree and basically says, What's the use, Lord?

Just kill me. Sadly, this can be the plight of many who serve the Lord. Serving the Lord costs.

I'm not talking about just prophets. Nor am I talking about just preachers. Preachers. God's people. Serving the Lord. It costs.

Sometimes God's servants are poor. Sometimes they suffer. Sometimes they weep.

[3 : 24] Sometimes they're hungry. Often those around them are against them. And what's a person to do in this situation?

You're going, Don't end the message here, preacher. This is pretty discouraging. And we're not. With a number of disciples growing, thinking again now of Luke chapter 6, with a number growing, growing to the point that he can't be in towns anymore.

Jesus can't minister to people in towns. He has to go out into the countryside. And it's growing and it's growing. And we saw last time where he went up onto the mountain, spent all night praying.

And as a result of that, he chose 12 men. Of all the disciples he had, he chose 12 men and called them to be apostles. And so, he's called these 12 men, and we'll see just in a minute, that he comes down from this mountain.

But he's called these 12 to be apostles. And Jesus, because he is the God man, because he has felt it already, but because he is the God man, he knows what these disciples and the apostles, and really at this point, he could just call the apostles disciples, because they're still in their learning stage.

[4 : 50] And in one sense, they'll be disciples all their lives. But they've not been sent out yet. So they're grouped with the disciples. And though they are just beginning to see the taste of this, Jesus knows that what they will face, could put them very much in a situation to feel like Elijah.

And so if I'm understanding what's here properly, I think Jesus begins what we often call here in Luke 6, the Sermon on the Plain.

He begins this sermon in a way so as to make his first order of business to teach his disciples some truths that will carry them through.

And so Luke chapter 6, I'm going to read verses 17 to 26. Luke 6, 17 to 26. Before I read, you'll see it says, and he came down.

That's coming down from the mountain where he spent the night in prayer. Some of his disciples were there, and Jesus picked the 12 to be apostles. And he came down with them and stood on a level place with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coasts of Tyre and Sidon who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases.

[6 : 29] And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him for power came out from him and healed them all.

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh.

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. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy for behold your reward is great in heaven for so their fathers did to the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now for you shall mourn and weep.

[7 : 43] Woe to you when all people speak well of you. For so their fathers did to the false prophets. Let's pray together.

Father, I thank you that this passage of scripture is here. And I thank you for what you teach us in it.

And I pray that your spirit would bless, guide us through it, help us to understand what's there. But Lord, may we not just walk away people who pack away knowledge into our hearts.

May we be people who take away what Jesus intended for these people to take away. And may we draw strength from your promises, from your truths as we live our life for you.

And Lord, I pray that even what is here, which is not only an encouragement to those who are your people, may it be a warning to those who choose or have to this point chosen not to be your people or who have never made a choice.

[8 : 47] So Lord, I pray that you would open all of our eyes to the truths of your word and that you would work in our hearts in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I mentioned a little bit of the setting.

Jesus had been up on the mountain. He comes down. And he comes down with the twelve that he's chosen but with some other disciples also because he took more than the twelve up or so it would seem.

But they come down and they land on a level place. Now, I am purposely not going to get into a lot of discussion. This passage is called The Sermon on the Plain.

I'll do just this little bit of discussion on it. You'll see here things that compare to the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew chapters 5 through 7.

You'll see a lot of comparison. And there's a lot of argument. Is this the Sermon on the Mount? Is it a different sermon? I think there are elements in which, yes, this is the Sermon on the Mount.

[9 : 52] But again, Luke orders what's going on here. Now, he doesn't change the truths. He just emphasizes that which is particular to his audience.

Matthew deals with a lot of things that relate to the Jewish law. Luke deals with none of them. He's not ultimately sending this gospel to Jews.

He's sending them to Greeks or to Gentiles. And he takes from the Sermon on the Mount and puts together what often people call the Sermon on the Plain to minister to the people he is sending this letter to.

It's still the truth of the gospel. It's still the truth of what happened there. He just records some things that Matthew doesn't record. Now, he takes one thing that's in what's called the Sermon on the Mount, puts it later in his book, because it applies to the theme that he's dealing with there.

So, Luke is being a wise writer of Scripture because think of it, don't think of it as a sermon, but in the sense of a sermon, you want to go somewhere. You want to do something.

[11 : 00] And you plan your thinkings, you plan your points so that you get to where you want to go. And that's what Luke is doing. He's not trying to misrepresent. Matthew didn't represent all that's there.

We find here in Luke that there were people there from Tyre and Sidon. The Jews would have been incensed if they had heard that there were people from Tyre and Sidon.

But Luke was glad to report it because these were Gentiles. There were some probably Jews there, but these were generally Gentile cities.

And here in Luke, they're hearing, oh, Gentiles are coming, being healed. Jesus is ministering to Gentiles. And so that would be an encouragement to them.

So, we've already touched on that. We've touched that there are people from Tyre and Sidon, but who else is there? Well, first of all, it's a great crowd of disciples. We don't know how many. But beside the disciples, which would include the 12, there's a great crowd of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and of course, we've already mentioned the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon.

[12 : 07] So there were people from vast areas of the land of Israel. And it mentions particularly Jerusalem, probably because the religious leaders had been following him around.

And if you were to look at the Sermon on the Mount, you'd see how he addressed some of those religious leaders. But again, Luke doesn't go into that here. But those are the people who are around.

And why were they there? In verse 18, the first part, you can see that they're all there to hear him. And it's interesting that, well, let me just say, I can go off into a tangent, but they're there to hear him.

They're interested in what he's saying. Now, some of these people are disciples. They're not interested from the sake of curiosity. They're interested for the sake of understanding and following and learning, being a follower of Jesus.

But there were others there who were just listening. saying, well, this is curious. Or, let's see what he has to say and I'll tear his message apart and I'll be able to give evidence to folks as to what they shouldn't be doing and shouldn't listen to.

[13 : 17] So they were there to hear for all kinds of reasons. But they were also there to be healed of their diseases. And again, it's not just the people from Israel that were healed.

There were people from Tyre and Sidon, Gentiles, that were healed also. And he healed all of them. All of them. It says that there were those who were troubled with unclean spirits and they were healed of their being troubled of unclean spirits.

And there's an interesting phrase here. He says that all the crowd sought to touch him because they were being healed by touching him. The situation here is not just that someone comes up and says, oh, have mercy on me, Master.

people were crowding Jesus and simply touching him and they were being healed. Now, among other things, I believe this shows of the amazing mercy and grace of God.

He did not make anyone jump through any hoops to be healed. They just came to him and touched him. He was a merciful God to all who came around.

[14 : 27] He didn't say to those from Tyre and Sidon, step back. You're Gentiles. He let them come. And so, all of them were being healed. And we find that that is something that happens in a couple other places.

One most famous, the woman with the issue of blood who simply touches the hem of his garment and he says, who touched me? And they're like, everybody's touching you. Well, no, there was someone who touched and was healed.

And so, in the midst of that situation, it seems as though the way verse 19 or the, yeah, verse 19 talks that when everybody was done being healed, they're all just kind of standing there and he begins to teach.

So, he turns to the crowd at the beginning of verse 20 and it says he addresses his disciples. I think this phrase, many, any commentator I read said the same thing.

That phrase is important to understanding the Sermon on the Mount here because he is addressing people who are choosing to follow him. These are not measuring standards to be sent out to those who don't know Christ.

[15 : 48] These aren't rules for people to live by. These are things he is telling those who are already following him. Things he wanted to know. He addressed his disciples.

Would you say it's just the 12? No, I think it's all of the disciples. But I think especially the 12 are probably close where they can see him and, you know, interact more directly.

Okay. So, as he begins to speak, he says what to us seem like odd words.

Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn you spurn your name as evil.

I think this has already begun to happen in Jesus' ministry. I think, remember we heard the one situation where Jesus is in Levi's house and the Pharisees are already saying to Jesus' disciples why are you not praying and why are you eating with these people?

[17:18] They're already against Jesus and his disciples but I don't know if excuse me if this to this point they've seen the greatest brunt of it they will they will see much more so much so that at one point Peter denies knowing the Lord.

So in their situation they're beginning to suffer and again I've by my introduction and where I'm going here I'm broadcasting forth through the whole ministry but I think I'm right for doing that because I think Jesus is preparing the disciples for what they would face.

At that point the disciples those following Jesus may not be working as Jesus would move around or as he would preach during the day they would be taking off from work or moving around with him and where's the money coming from?

There may be at that point they may be suffering poverty and hunger and already rejection Peter why aren't you here? these boats won't sail themselves these nets won't pull fish out of the lake by themselves and so they may have suffered rejection and the service of Christ as the world begins to turn against those who are following Christ the thing that often comes up is that question I think that Elijah asked is it worth it?

Is it worth it? Now if you think just about the twelve they left all to follow Jesus four fishermen left their business Levi left his tax booth now I don't know how much money they took with them but you can think through their lives from this point forward and how different their life were probably their lives were probably going to be others probably went through the same we don't know what others of the disciples left behind but again it would be easy to begin to get to that point where you say is it worth it?

[19:51] Now probably not now probably at this point it's still exciting it's still oh look what he's doing look what he's doing but in a couple chapters we're going to get to chapter 9 or part way through chapter 9 and see the whole situation turn and Jesus will turn his face towards Jerusalem and he's making that march to where they will crucify him and those enemies of his who are around him will turn more and more against him and they will become sharper and sharper in their endeavors to try to trip him up to try to catch him in his words and so it's going to be much more difficult to this point Jesus is still ministering in their hometown but I think they begin to feel it they get to the point where their provisions are supplied by others at one point a man comes and says

I want to follow you Jesus the definition of a disciple and he asks are you willing to follow me the birds of the air have nests and the fox have holes in the ground but I don't have anywhere to lay my head and so Jesus in his life is already becoming by the world's standards destitute and his disciples would follow and we can even look back into the old testament and notice the prophets those who followed Christ even back then went through much the same Bible speaks of them living in holes and in caves having nothing the rest of the disciples lives they would end up moving around to answer the call of the gospel call to share the gospel and so suffering was growing ever closer when that wouldn't be true just of the twelve it would be true of all those who chose to follow

Jesus they would flee from Jerusalem because of the tyranny of Rome but then many of them would end up in Rome and you've heard what Nero did with the Christians in Rome he blamed all the problems on the Christians in Rome and ended up persecuting them and end up martyring so many of them impaled dipped in oil and lit on fire just because they were Christian is that situation right now the Gentiles may have known some of this but I want you to think with me in a Jewish way of thinking for just a second because I think even though it was something the Jews would have thought more of I think that even in our world people tend to think this way I think the book of Job proves this flat out in the Old Testament the Old Testament saints were promised that

God would multiply their crops and all they'd have and he would bless them and generally those who serve the Lord for the most part I'm thinking people like Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and many of those followed some of the kings of Israel and all they when they served the Lord God blessed them and Jesus comes on the scene and he's not sitting on a throne on earth he doesn't have a place to lay his head his disciples are following him and what are they facing things are looking pretty different here from the normal expectation people think oh God blesses his people and they won't have wants and they won't have needs but Jesus and his followers are not being blessed financially and they're starting to suffer at the hands of religious leaders so I think what Jesus does here is preemptive teaching now they've started to feel a little bit but preemptive teaching things they needed to know for what they would face until he got to the cross but things they would need to know the rest of their lives and so he lifts up his eyes on his disciples and says first of all blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of

God what's he mean by poor is he speaking financially Matthew speaks about poor in spirit but Luke doesn't mention that in fact Luke gives us and I don't think this negates what Matthew is sharing I think it illustrates in a very good way part of even what Matthew is sharing Luke includes not only the positive but the negative if you go through verses 20 through 23 you're going to see all the blessed blessed blessed blessed but then you go through 24 to 26 and you're going to see woe woe woe woe woe where those curses prophets would often say woe to this city saying God's judgments upon them it's it's a bad situation you're not you're not going to be in a very good situation pretty soon here and he begins by saying blessed are you who are poor is

[25 : 40] Jesus calling a blessing on all the people in all the world who are poor no remember he's talking disciples he's speaking to his disciples he's not saying that there will not be those who follow Christ who don't have means so because there were many who followed Christ who had a lot of money and God used it Lydia the seller of purple had a lot of money others had a lot of money and God used those situations he's not saying oh it's good to be poor in the sense that we just need to have nothing but if you contrast this verse to verse 24 you're going to see it is speaking of those who have nothing to trust in nothing to trust in that's the difference and that aligns pretty well with what Matthew says the poor in spirit he's not talking about those who just have no money he's talking about those who are poor in spirit they have no earthly riches to trust in they have no spiritual riches riches that they themselves have earned to trust in they have nothing to trust in but

Christ blessed are those who have nothing to trust in but Christ Jesus says that these people are blessed by possessing the kingdom what's the kingdom of God well there's a lot that we can say about that but it's all that Christ has come in the flesh to earn for his people Jesus has come and those who recognize that they don't have anything to make themselves acceptable before God they have nothing they can trust in Jesus says those people who trust me have everything that I provided for them all that Christ came to earn as the God man taking on human flesh everything he has earned God is for those who know they have nothing else to trust in even included in this idea as being included in

Christ's rule and reign someday you who have nothing else to trust in will someday rule and reign with Christ Bible says that we're heirs of God joint heirs with Christ part of what Christ has earned for us so those who go through life and maybe they're poor because of their circumstance in serving the Lord maybe they're not but they recognize that they have nothing that they can trust in and have to trust Christ alone those possess the kingdom so if you think about Elijah running through that desert so discouraged nobody's listening to me what good is it what do I rest in well I rest in the fact that since I don't have anything that

I can trust in I have what Christ has earned for me he goes on to say blessed are you who are hungry now for you shall be satisfied who are the hungry those who have a need and know it let me read two verses that three verses that point to that psalm 42 1 and 2!

as the! pants for flowing springs or streams so pants my soul for you oh god my soul thirsts for god for the living god when shall I come and appear before god and then psalm 63 1 oh god you are my god earnestly i seek you my soul thirsts for you my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary!

[30 : 04] land where there is no water nothing in this life satisfies we long for something those who thirst those who are hungry need something and those who know they have nothing in this life that can satisfy that hunger they will be satisfied they may not have enough to eat or be as comfortable as they might wish but they know they have a satisfaction in Christ they are satisfied with Christ and they are satisfied before God because of Christ he goes on to say those who experience weeping will be blessed to laugh in verse 22 who are those who are weeping it's those of you who know that things are not right you're not content with the way things are you're not content with your spiritual condition you're not content with the fact that the lost in your family will go to hell or the world around you who don't know

Christ will go to hell those people all their heartache and all their pain will be turned to laughter you will be complete in Christ and all of God's people will be gathered in and those who weep shall laugh and then he goes on to say those who experience persecution for following the son of man and the disciples were beginning to see that he says those people should rejoice as they suffer persecution he says for you will be blessed with a great reward in heaven just like the prophets who experienced persecution let me read James 5 10 and 11 as an example of suffering and patience brothers take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord behold we consider those blessed who remained steadfast

I'll stop there for just a second don't we look at the prophets! Isaiah was a great man why? because he trusted in the Lord but if you look at Isaiah's life Isaiah's life was miserable as he preached they kept mocking him he was thrown in a pit where he sunk down in the mud to his armpits and stayed there for a while and he was afraid he would die there and he called out to the Lord and he was delivered but then being pulled up out of the pit we say a dry well or well without water and it just had mud he was pulled up out of that pit and things were great because then he was taken to the king's stockade and fed bread and water his life was difficult and I'm sure as he's in the midst of it he's going I don't understand I'm speaking the Lord's word why aren't these people responding why aren't they honoring it why won't they leave me alone things are hard and we look at

Isaiah and say what a great man of God we look at Ezekiel and say what a great man of God! we look at Jeremiah and say what a great man of God and God rewarded them and God blessed them now he Luke goes into verses 24 to 26 and he shows the opposite those who do not see their need will have God's woe on them those who consider themselves rich and able to take care of themselves and have everything they need they will have God's judgment of no future reward called down on them those who feel they have something to trust in I'm alright I got money in the bank I'm alright because I've done all these works and God should be pleased with me those people will know

God's woe those who are full think they have all of the blessings that could ever happen and don't concern themselves with knowing the Lord and trusting the Lord will have the judgment of hunger called down on those those who laugh who have no care for themselves or those around them who know no pain in this life will have God's judgment to cause them mourning and weeping called down on them they're trusting in who they are what they are those who persecute the ones following the son of man they also will have God's judgment called down on them so what's the point I think the point of this message is or this passage of scripture is Christian if in your life if your life is difficult now take courage in what you have in

[35 : 24] Christ because as you see you have you may not have two pennies to rub together and that points you to the fact that you can't depend on yourself and now you're trusting in Christ then you have it all Christian are you discouraged with your situation are you like I keep praying for my family and nobody's turning to the Lord I keep praying for my neighbors and nobody's turning to the Lord and it causes you to weep and mourn for this kind of situation you will laugh you will have joy the judge of all the earth will do right are you tired of the hardship of your life are you tired that everybody makes fun of you for your stand for Christ the fact that you want to honor the Lord on the Lord day or you want to serve the Lord and give your tithe or you want to do!

whatever and sharing the gospel are you tired of people making fun of you are you tired of them saying oh you should go out with us on Saturday night and have that big old time Jesus here reminds those who are trusting in him to remember that what he has done to remember what he has done for them and that the reward is coming he tells those who are being persecuted to rejoice right now because there's a great reward coming and those who choose not to or choose to persecute folks they will see God's will quickly just two other applications one relates to this situation but I wanted to be careful to mention it and that is that in our sufferings we ought to rejoice for poor for hungry for weeping and for being persecuted

James 1 2 1 verses 2 and 3 says count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness not only is there a reward all that Christ has earned but God is working in your heart 1 Peter 4 12 through 18 beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed if you were insulted for the name of Christ you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests!

God is but let none of you suffer as a murderer! as a thief or as an evildoer or meddler yet if anyone suffers as a Christian let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in that name for it is time for the judgment to begin at the household of God and if it begins!

with us what will be the! outcome for those sufferings God is doing good things through sufferings and there is a reward to come friend do you see the warning Jesus built into this passage if you're here and you don't know Christ unless you choose to know that only he is the one who can meet your need those warnings are towards you be warned that what you're trusting if it is not Christ be warned that what you're trusting has everything to do with your destiny you can trust a whole lot of things that will do you no good in the end and there's only one thing the work of

[39 : 44] Christ that can bring you into the kingdom of God let's pray thank you father for your encouragement to the disciples here help us to be people to know that what we go through is not what we will inherit we will inherit what Christ has done for us help us to rest in you in the midst of poorness or in the midst of hunger or weeping or persecution or I pray that you would help us Lord help us to be faithful to you by your grace in Jesus name amen I'd like for you to take your hymn book and turn to 472 472 come ye sinners poor and wretched now you might think oh

I'm just we're just singing this to those who don't know Christ but no this is a hymn to all we're singing it to the tune out of the blue hymnal so it'll sound different but