

# The World Turned Upside Down

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] May God bless to us that reading from his word as we consider this evening the theme of the world turned upside down as we hear again Jesus speak to us from that sermon, that sermon on the plain.

Just two points to follow this evening as we saw in the passage the blessedness of the saved, those whom Jesus addresses as blessed, but then secondly the sorrow, the sorrow of the lost, those whom Jesus pronounced, woe, the world turned upside down.

Can you believe it? It's almost a year, almost a year since certainly our worlds were turned upside down, upside down in response to the pandemic still raging in our land.

We've seen patterns of human life changed, patterns of family life changed, we've seen work patterns changed, we've seen church life changed and changed we might say or almost say beyond recognition.

Who'd have thought that we'd still be worshipping even in this manner by which we're gathered together? Who'd have thought we'd be in this situation almost a year hence from when lockdown first started?

[ 1 : 2 4 ] And yet God has turned our world upside down and he's done this for a purpose, for many purposes. But surely some of the purposes that God has shown in turning our worlds upside down is to draw us back to himself and to teach us priorities in our life.

So it happens that the young people later will be considering priorities. Well, surely this pandemic itself has taught us where our priorities truly lie.

They truly lie in the Lord Jesus, following him, putting him first, first in our lives. And to truly recognise that God is sovereign, that he truly is Lord and that truly all things do work together for good.

To those who love him, to those who are called according to his purpose. And yes, we do thank God that, well, yes, our lives have been turned upside down and well, certainly in terms of the patterns of our way of life, our living.

And yes, we pray that in bringing us back to himself that we have a firmer faith, a greater holiness and a surer walk with the Lord.

[ 2 : 4 7 ] But what of the ultimate turning of our world upside down? What of the transformation of grace that turns a person around and turns that person to know God through faith in the Lord Jesus?

What of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who turns lives completely around when he came from heaven to earth, when he came to bring in his kingdom? And he came to bring his own, those who are his, into the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven?

That kingdom has turned the world upside down. And as we think on the Lord Jesus, as we think on what he's done to truly turn our world upside down by bringing his people into that kingdom, you continue to follow Jesus.

How do you show that your life has been turned upside down for good? How do you show that in your life? How do you show that you're following Jesus?

How do you show that you are truly a disciple of the Lord Jesus? And how do you show and seek for others to the same Saviour, the same Lord Jesus?

[ 4 : 05 ] How do you show that in your life?

I'm going to go into the passage that we read and really try and picture in your mind's eye, really the scene that we've been presented with here by Luke. What have we seen?

Well, we've seen Jesus there with his 12 particular disciples. He's with them on a mountainside. And then as we read there, he comes down from that mountain. And it would appear that he comes to a level part of that mountain, presumably at the base of that mountain.

And certainly that base, that level part is large enough for a crowd of people to gather around Jesus and the disciples. Because they want to hear what Jesus is going to say to them.

In fact, as we read there, we see that the crowd that does gather around Jesus, they're from all over Israel and beyond. I mean, this is so early in Jesus' ministry. And yet, Jesus has already gained a popularity and a fame.

[ 5 : 31 ] And as we read there, Jesus doesn't disappoint. He heals all those who came to him for healing. We've already seen there in the miracle of healing or the miracles of healing.

These miracles pointing to the ultimate healing that Jesus gives and brings to all who come to him in faith. But these works of healing, these acts of healing there at that mountain, these acts end.

And then as Jesus turns, in the first instance, to his own disciples that we read there in verse 20, and Jesus turns to them particularly, what he has to say is of special attention, special consideration, not just for these 12 immediate disciples, but for all who gather around Jesus to hear him speak and to hear him preach.

And so Jesus begins in that sermon. And as we read in the words there, there's nothing complicated in the sermon. There are no big theological words to try and digest.

There's nothing that's frivolous, nothing that's excess. Jesus is stating the simple truth in the contrast between the person who knows Jesus, the person who's in Christ, and the person who's outside of Jesus.

[ 7 : 02 ] And in this, we might say this simple but very powerful way, Jesus is teaching what it means to be his disciple. And in contrast, what it means for someone not to be Jesus' disciple.

So what we read there, we've read of contrast. We might even say an unexpected contrast between those whom the world considers, well, should be pitied.

And in fact, the same ones who are considered to be pitied are greatly blessed of God. And when the world considers those who are successful and strong and worthy to be admired, and yet in God's eyes have no blessing, no approval, only that pronouncement of woe, that pronouncement of, we might say, God's pity, God's pity, and those who will be judged and judged severely because of pride and godlessness.

So let's then take a more close look at this passage then, and see first of all the blessedness of the saved, those who know the Lord Jesus, those who are blessed, blessed in Christ.

The blessedness of the saved. Well, we have a reality here, the reality of two sides.

[ 8 : 32 ] We've got two groups, two groups that speak of the division of humanity. And it's seen here clearly as Jesus states that division. It's a division that we see right through Scripture.

You see it in the book of Genesis, and you see it right through to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. Even from the very start, if you like, from the fall of man, God pronounced that there would be that division, that division in humanity between those who are of Satan and those who are of God.

And you see that right through the Bible, even as I said to the very end, even the book of Revelation, where we read God's pronounced judgment, judgment on humanity.

Judgment expressed in, well, we might say, as we were thinking this morning, mercy on those who are in Christ, who know the Lord Jesus as Savior. And yet, we see that judgment, condemnation on those who are not in Christ, condemned to eternal destruction.

And here in the Sermon on the Plain here, we see Jesus identifying two sides, two sides that are marked out, well, on the one hand, by God's blessing or the blessing of God.

[ 9 : 56 ] And on the other hand, the blessing or the pronouncement of woe. So what do we see, first of all, then? Those who are deemed to be blessed.

In other words, those who are given the verdict that they are blessed of God. And in contrast, the verdict of woe. Think of the first group, those who are blessed, are God's people, God's children, those who are in the kingdom of grace to being saved.

You who know him as Lord, as Savior, you are blessed. You have that true blessedness, that truly, that true happiness, that true contentment.

We might say in the best sense of the word. And it's a happiness that's, you know, no mere outward happiness. It's not some kind of here today, gone tomorrow sort of emotion.

No, it's a joy. It's an inner joy that lodges in your heart because God's given you the blessing of his favour. He's given you the blessing of his love.

[ 11 : 08 ] He's given you the blessing of his grace. He's given you the blessing of his peace. It's that joy in the Lord, that joy that you know through a saving relationship with the one true Lord, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, there'll be times, and there'll be many times, when the person who knows joy in the Lord doesn't always know joy from the Lord.

But yes, there are the reality of the trials that the believer goes through, the sufferings, the testing, these things that God permits, and that the believer endures.

But even still in these times of difficulty, the believer still knows a blessedness in God, still knows a joy in the Saviour.

He knows a relationship, a relationship that can never be severed. And it's that blessedness in God that's spoken of here by Jesus, and that he speaks of throughout this first part of the sermon.

[ 12 : 12 ] Notice, four times, four times Jesus uses the expression, blessed are you. Every believer, every believer since, you might say, since the beginning of time, every believer has had his, has had her world turned upside down, for his or her eternal good, because of being blessed of God.

And you who know him, you who know the Saviour, you who know the Lord Jesus, remember, this is your status before God. You're blessed, blessed with salvation, because you are in Christ, and you are in that relationship because of Christ.

Just dwell on that truth, just absorb it in your heart. Meditate upon it. You are blessed. And blessed abundantly. Now, ask yourself, do you truly know that?

But in the, before God, you are blessed. That's the present condition of your life. It's what you are before God, blessed because of what Jesus has done for you in the, yes, in the cross, what he's done for you in his, in his life of perfect obedience.

What Jesus did for you, yes, 2000 years ago, and what he continues to do for you. He's like, you do know, and will know, and eternally know, the blessing of God, because you are in the eternal kingdom of God.

- [ 13 : 48 ] It's what the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 34, verse 8. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. And it's a blessedness that, well, the world knows nothing of.

In my bookcase, I've got a book whose title is Blessed. It was written by a famous sportsman whose life, whose life, whose whole lifestyle, well, we have to say, was anything but blessed.

Certainly not blessed in the true sense of the word. And yet, when he was alive, he considered that his life was blessed because of the rewards that he got from his, from his playing days.

The rewards of money, the rewards of fame, success, all these things that tragically destroyed that man. But being truly blessed, it's got nothing to do with earthly gain.

It's got everything to do with the gain of salvation that's made possible by the Lord Jesus for you who are blessed in him.

- [ 14 : 59 ] What of the state of being blessed? What is Jesus teaching us here? Well, we might call it the great reversal, the reverse of what the world considers to be happy.

Look again at the start of the teaching of Jesus here in verse 20, Luke 6:20. Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

What's Jesus saying here? He's saying that, you know, Christians are poor, yes, poor in the sight of the world, the world that so marginalizes believers, saying you're just of little worth.

But of course, when Jesus speaks of those who are poor, he's telling of those who are poor in spirit, having nothing of your own to rely on for your salvation.

Yes, you are poor and needy. You're needy in the sense that you need the Lord Jesus, you need him, you need the wisdom of God each day of your life, you need him to live for him and to serve him.

- [ 16 : 06 ] So yes, I'm poor, you're poor, poor, yes, poor in the world's eyes. But we can also say this, poor in and of ourselves because there's nothing we can rely on for our salvation.

Jesus is saying, yes, you're poor in these senses, that you're blessed because you have a kingdom, a kingdom that endures forever. You have a kingdom and are in a kingdom whose riches are beyond the greatest riches of the world.

And it's that great reversal made possible because of the Lord Jesus, because he's turned your life upside down and he's done it for your eternal good. You who are in him by faith.

Do you recognize yourself in these great words of Jesus? Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. But then there are further reversals that we see here in the sermon.

Verse 21, or verse, yes, verse 21, blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. You can see what Jesus is saying here. Those who know that they need more and more of the Savior, well, you're hungering for him.

- [ 17 : 26 ] You're striving each day to be fed and to be fed and nurtured by him through his word. And the only way that you can seek to alleviate that hunger is to be nourished, nourished in Christ, nourished by his word.

You know that you depend on God for that spiritual feeding. And you know that you need him for every aspect of your life. You're hungering for him each day of your life.

You know that you depend on him for all things. And again, is that you? Can you recognize yourself in what Jesus is saying? Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

Satisfied in him, satisfied so that nothing else it can give what only the Lord can give. And then Jesus says, blessed are you who weep now, for you shall lie.

And yes, Christians do weep. I weep, you weep over our sins. We weep over the state of our heart that we know so often falls and stumbles and sins against our Saviour.

[ 18 : 42 ] Yes, we weep too. We weep over the state of the world. We weep when we see what's happening, even in our own land, it seeks to call good evil and evil good. We weep from a heart that truly desires the goodness of God to be seen in our land.

and yet we see so much evil, so much that's contrary to God's truth and God's word. Jesus says, there will be that great reversal.

You, blessed are you who weep now, you shall laugh, you shall rejoice. In fact, as Jesus continues in that sermon, he speaks of those who are blessed 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.

He says, rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for so their fathers did to the prophets. Jesus is saying here, you who are being persecuted for righteousness sake, whether you have been persecuted through the words of another or through actions of others, Jesus is saying you're blessed.

You're blessed when you're hated by other people because of Jesus, because of your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. Just as the prophets of God were hated because they trusted in the one true God, so the followers of the Lord Jesus are going to be hated for your faith.

[ 20 : 22 ] and yet, of course, as we know, there are those in the world who are applauded for that hatred, applauded for the mockery against the Lord's people, applauded as modern day prophets who even proclaim God's word, and yet know nothing of the one true God.

and you who are hated and reviled and spurned, whether it be from family members or neighbours or even friends or former friends, you can rejoice and do rejoice in your suffering, your suffering for the sake of the Saviour, your Saviour who was hated and reviled and rejected.

remember this, Jesus now rejoices, he's rejoicing in glory, and you even on this side of eternity, you know you're rejoicing when you're hated for being in Christ.

And that rejection that you know as the Lord's people know, remember this, even when you are being rejected, see that as a testimony to your being with Christ and in Christ and he in you.

When you are rejected, you might say that in itself is an identity mark, that you are a believer, that you know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

[ 22 : 00 ] But then as we saw in the passage in the sermon, not everyone's called blessed, there's a pronouncement of woe on those who will not enter the kingdom of God.

We saw that in verses 24 to 26. Because if there's a great reversal from what the world considers to be truly happy, truly blessed, well, there's that great reversal on the other side, as it were.

What the world considers blessed, in fact, will condemn the world. As we see there, the sorrow, the sorrow of the lost, verse 24 to 26.

And you see how Jesus shows this great reversal. I mean, he's just called the poor blessed, but in contrast, he's now proclaiming woe on those whose gods are their riches.

He's pronounced, on the one hand, the hungry to be blessed, blessed. But in contrast, he's pronounced woe on those who feel themselves to be truly filled, truly filled by their own means.

[ 23 : 13 ] Jesus has said, blessed are those who weep. But in contrast, he's condemned those who laugh. Jesus has commanded those who are hated on account of him, he's commended them, commended you, who are hated on account of Jesus.

But now in contrast, he proclaims woe on those who, well, who speak nice sounding words that betray themselves as false prophets. Truly we're seeing here a great reversal.

The Christian may well be mocked and ostracized and considered of no repute in a world that, well, as we've seen, just seems to value riches and a world that reckons that the fullness of having the so-called good things of life are somehow the measure of success and acceptability.

A world that takes no concern for the soul but laughs, laughs at the believer, mocking the person of true faith. A world that sneers at the things of God.

You see, a world where false prophets of Christless religion, well, listened to with so much acceptance. And in fact, theirs is no blessing but curse.

[ 24 : 39 ] The question that I ask you this evening is this, which side are you on? Are you with those whom Jesus calls blessed? or are you with those whom Jesus pronounces woe upon?

Are you amongst those who walk the narrow way of the kingdom, that narrow way that leads to heaven itself? Or are you still with those who walk that broad path, that broad road that Jesus tells us leads to destruction?

Well, if you know in your heart that you're on that broad road, that you're not yet amongst those who are blessed, blessed in the kingdom of God, well, I appeal to you, plead with you, consider your soul, consider your life, and while there's yet time, give your life to the Lord Jesus.

I know the blessedness of being found in him of being in Christ, and don't delay, surrender, even this night, surrender your life, give yourself to the saviour, and you'll know the blessedness of being found in him.

You see, Jesus came, he came to turn the world upside down, he came to overturn the values of the world, these values that look to man-centred power, and man-centred popularity, and wealth as the be-all and end-all of life.

[ 26 : 15 ] Jesus came to bring in, you might say, a new eternal value, a value found not in those things that will perish, but in that which is of true worth, true value, worth that can't be measured on a scale of success, but worth that's measured in the person of the Lord Jesus.

see, Jesus came to reverse the values of man-centred pride, man-centred selfishness. Jesus came to bring in that great reversal so that lives are changed, and lives centred in the Lord Jesus, and lives lived in all humility, and lives lived, practiced in all humility, because it's the humble who know that there's no merit of their own that brings salvation, that's going to give true satisfaction in life.

It's not those who know true poverty of spirit. It's the humble in Christ who know that your hunger is satisfied in the Lord Jesus, because he is the bread of life who truly satisfies.

And it's only the humble believer who will weep, who will mourn over his sins, and not be ashamed of these tears of grief, and you weep over the sin within your own heart.

And it's only the follower of Jesus who isn't ashamed of the Lord Jesus, even though following the Saviour will mean hatred and exclusion and reviling and rejection, and that rejection from those around who don't want you around because you believe in the Lord Jesus, your Saviour.

[ 28 : 12 ] Is that you, even this evening, who follow the Lord Jesus and are not ashamed of him? Well, if that is you, then rejoice.

Rejoice that yours is the kingdom of God. And even now the Lord Jesus is reigning in your heart. That in itself is a cause of rejoicing because you know the blessedness that's yours and being found in the living Lord Jesus.

You in him have a wonderful life in Christ and you have that wonderful prospect of the glory of heaven when you depart this world. But woe to anyone, anyone who won't receive the Lord Jesus, us, who prefer the ways of the world to the ways of the cross.

And I say this from the bottom of my heart, no minister, no preacher takes any pleasure in pronouncing these words of judgment. Just as we were thinking this morning on the theme of judgment, well, again we see Jesus' words of judgment here as he speaks of woe to those who will not receive him as saviour.

And so it's for you and for me to take heed to these words that Jesus preached there in that, down at the bottom of that mountain and that plain, that plain, that level, level ground.

[ 29 : 42 ] And here as Jesus speaks again to us through that word and know that Jesus cannot lie, the saviour cannot lie. And with that before you, and I pray that you will give your life to him, that you'll be found, that each one of you will be found in the kingdom, that kingdom that never ends, because it is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ.

And so may God bless to us his word this evening. Amen. Amen. our heavenly father, you teach us by your word of the necessity of knowing the Lord Jesus as our saviour, of being blessed in him, of having our world turned upside down in knowing the saviour as Lord, as saviour, as redeemer.

Lord, speak to the hearts of each one gathered this evening. May there be none for whom the lust of the world is still so attractive that they will not look to the saviour.

Lord, open their hearts to receive the Lord Jesus. Lord, continue with us, come before us, and be with us even in our closing words of praise, that you will have the glory.

Hear us, Lord, as we continue in worship before you now. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.