

Poor, Hungry, Weeping - Yet Blessed

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6 and at verse 20, verses 20 to 23, just for a little.

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

Blessed are you who are hungry, 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. Many people wonder whether these Beatitudes that we find here in Luke chapter 6, verses 20 to 23, is a condensed version of the more famous Beatitudes that we have in Matthew chapter 5.

You know, we have these 10 verses. So these verses, verses 5 through to 10. Whether this is the same occasion or not, we're not 100% sure.

[1 : 2 9] There's a strong possibility that it is. And this is often the case. Gospel writers viewing the same thing. One will highlight one aspect and another will highlight another.

But what we see here that these are wonderful truths that Jesus taught. And if we were going to go on and look at the next few verses, we might, at a human level, find these verses to be very strange.

We're not going to look at verses 24 onwards. But we find that in verses 20 to 23, we have blessings on a certain group of people. And then from verse 24 on, we have woes pronounced against certain people.

And when you look at them, you would say that this doesn't really make sense. Because from a human point of view, you see that those that have the woes pronounced upon them, that they are rich, they're full, they laugh, and they're well spoken of.

So as I say, at a human level, this just doesn't make sense. Nor does it make sense to say that those are blessed, who are poor and hungry, and weeping and persecuted.

[2 : 5 0] But of course, we know that so much of what Jesus taught, that it had spiritual meaning above all else. And of course, that's what's true here. And again, in order that we fully understand what Jesus is saying, we have to take what he said in Matthew chapter 5, because there we have a fuller indication given to us of what is just being said.

So just look at these very briefly. And we see these four blessings. And the first of them is, Blessed are you. Blessed are you who are poor.

Now, what we do know is that if we go to Matthew's gospel, it says, Blessed are the poor in spirit. And there's a big difference between simply having no money in your pocket and being poor in spirit.

Because we know that there are many people with no money in their pocket and they're not blessed. But we know that poverty of spirit is definitely a place of blessing.

And in fact, the poor in spirit, being poor in spirit, is one of the clear dividing marks of a person, whether they're converted or not.

[4 : 0 4] Because you see, this goes straight against what the world teaches and the world preaches. The world tells us that we are to be sort of self-reliant and that we are to be masters of our own destiny, that we are to carve out everything in our shells, that we are to be strong in our shells.

Now, of course, at one level, we do try and do these things. But the Christian is somebody, no matter what we do, who is always dependent upon the Lord as well.

And we are dependent upon the Lord because we are aware of the poverty of spirit that's within us. That we are genuinely poor in spirit.

We have come to discover that within ourselves there's no good thing. That I have nothing that I can commend in the presence of God and say to the Lord, you know this, Lord, I'm a decent person and I deserve heaven.

We don't have that. Nobody has it. Irrespective of how good a person may appear in this world, we don't have that in and of our shells.

[5 : 15] And so there is this discovery. And of course, we know that the answer to that is found in Jesus Christ. But that is the poverty of spirit that Jesus is talking about.

And he says to such all those who are poor in spirit, it's the attitude of the beggar with the begging bowl. That's how we are before the Lord. We see his riches.

We realize we have none. And we come and we say, Lord, please provide. Please help. Please give me. Because I've got nothing in and of myself.

And we see here the great blessing that is given because we're told here yours is the kingdom of God. And already we have started to discover the kingdom of God.

It's very interesting. In the Bible, Jesus says that the kingdom of God is within you. And you see, that's what happens when a person is born again. That the kingdom, all the kingdom blessings come within us through the Holy Spirit who communicates the riches of God's grace.

[6 : 20] And all the kingly blessings that are found in Jesus Christ. They are already conveyed to us. We are recipients of them. Now, you and I know that we don't enjoy it in its fullness.

Because we're sinners in a sinful world. But we have begun to enjoy. Every Christian knows something of the joy of the Lord.

Every Christian knows something of the peace of God. Every Christian knows something of God's goodness and is able to experience, experienced at different levels, sees things at different times. First fruits of the Spirit. But while the kingdom of God is within us, there's going to come a day when we will be in the kingdom of God.

We have started to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom here and now. But soon we will be in the presence of the king in the kingdom. And there we will enjoy the kingdom blessings without anything to hinder our full enjoyment of them.

[7 : 28] So the poverty of spirit that we experience here brings with it kingdom blessings. And then the next one is, Blessed are you who are hungry, for you shall be satisfied.

Now, again, when we go to Matthew, it tells us that the hunger that is spoken of here is a hunger for righteousness. And that follows straight on from the poverty of spirit, recognizing that in of ourselves we have nothing.

And we know that our righteousness are in God's sight as filthy rags. And we know that no righteousness will satisfy God the Father as he looks upon us apart from the righteousness of his Son.

And that's the deal that was done on Calvary, where our sin was given to the Son and his perfect righteousness made over to us.

And now, of course, we know now that this is how it is. And so having received this and accepted this, nothing else satisfies us really in this world.

[8 : 39] And so a spiritual hunger has been created within our heart. A spiritual hunger has developed where we hunger after the word of God. That's what we do.

That's why we're here tonight. A time where we come around the world and we pray. Because this is what we want. And every Christian has a hunger for the word.

You know, sometimes Christians really struggle with the whole concept of not loving the Lord Jesus properly.

And maybe tonight you're somebody and you say, you know, I believe that every other Christian sees Jesus better than me. I hear people waxing lyrical about their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And I'm trying to visualize Jesus. And I just can't see him properly. And sometimes I feel I'm just stumbling in the dark. And I really don't know where I am or what's happening.

[9 : 44] Well, what we've got to remember is that the word, the word is Christ. Because remember what it tells us in John. That the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

So when we have a hunger for the word, we're hungering for Christ. And that helps us to understand sometimes when we're in this kind of dark and maybe not grasping fully what it is to

really hunger for Christ.

When we find that we're actually hungering for the word and the word is a delight to our soul. We're finding our delight in Christ and the things of Christ.

He is the word. And we've got to remember that that's how it is. And of course, this is such that tonight I believe that every single one of us here, we have a hunger for this word.

We thirst for Christ. We hunger for Christ. And so if you ever doubt and say to yourself, you know, I don't really know if I'm a Christian or not.

[10:53] But you have a genuine delight in God's word. It's precious to you. You say to yourself, you know this, I need God's word. It's my guide in the day.

It's that which I get so much from. It feeds my soul. I need God's word. That's because you're feeding upon Christ. Christ. And it's his righteousness.

This is what satisfies you. But, you know, when you feed in the world, when people feed in the world and they get their satisfaction from the world, they don't get a satisfaction from Christ.

I'm sure with all I, it's happened to me on two or three occasions. I remember one in particular. And I was going to a house.

I was going to visit. It's a way of years ago. And when I arrived, they had prepared a meal. And I got real shock because I'd eaten on the way.

[11:52] I didn't expect a meal. And I found it really difficult. I didn't like to say. And even although I, back in the day, I had a ferocious appetite, even, I was even struggling.

And I was saying to myself, I can't tell them. But I was kind of wishing I was somewhere else at that moment. Because if you've eaten and you're quite full, and then this beautiful meal is put in front of you, which normally you would say, oh, this is brilliant.

I wasn't enjoyed. I was struggling to eat it. Because I had eaten other stuff. And, you know, that is true at a spiritual level as well.

Because particularly for the Christian, if they find that they've lost their appetite, that they're struggling with the word of God, it is very often. In other words, if they're not wanting to pick up God's word.

If a Christian will find that days are going by and they're not really looking at God's word or delighting in God's word, it's inevitable. But that the husks of this world, that the food of this world, that they're eating too much of that, that they're taking too much on board.

[13:04] Because it's curbing their appetite for spiritual things. And even when there are maybe times when that happens, we're always wanting to get back to get the appetite.

But we see the beauty of it is, the great promise that's given. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. The Lord will keep on satisfying you.

It doesn't matter what the spiritual climate, it doesn't matter what the natural climate around you is. Remember what it says, that even in the drought, even in the famine, he will make your bones fat. In other words, that even when it might be dark days spiritually, and people are saying, oh man, these are dark days.

Yet the Lord is able to give you, when you have a hunger and a thirst for his righteousness in his word, then he will satisfy you.

[14:06] That is his great promise. And then it says, blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Present sorrow, future laughter.

The darkness, as we know so often here, troubles that afflicted just in number many be. Being a Christian, you and I know, is guaranteed at some points or other to bring with it some form of trouble.

Now as we know in life, everybody in this world, everybody has tears in this world. That's the nature of this world. It's a, this world is, as we were saying, it's a broken world.

And the breakage of this world affects everybody one way or another. But for the Christian, there's a particular weeping that is part and partial of us.

We weep for our own sin. And we weep for the sin of the world. We weep within and we weep without. It's part of, part of what we are as Christians.

[15:11] We can't, we can't help it. It's the very nature of, of, of what's going on. And you see, we, we weep over our, our own failings, our own failures.

We can identify with Peter. Peter went out and he wept bitterly. Why? Because of his denial of his Lord.

And there have been times that you and I can say, Peter, I know what you are experiencing. I know why you wept. I can understand that, Peter.

Because my heart has been broken too because of my sin, because of my failings. But the great promise that we have here is, if we are weeping over who we are and weeping over our sin, there'll come a day when, when we're going to laugh as well.

Weeping may for our night endure and mourn doth joy arise. And that's a beauty. Yes, yes, we mourn in this world. And I believe as Christians, we, we have laughter as well in this, in this world.

[16:14] There are times of joy. And it's very obvious, even when you go through the Bible, you see times when, when God's people have been rejoicing and full of joy and expressing that joy.

It's not just in glory, but in glory, it's going to be a world of perpetual joy and bridal joy. At thy right hand are our pleasures forevermore.

That's a beauty. This is what we have to look forward to. And then we see finally that the blessed, 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.

I'm sure we, we can't understand just at what level the Christian has suffered in this world.

I don't think any, any group of people, any creed or any group anywhere has suffered in the history of this world like the Christian. There seems to be this inbuilt again the Christian.

[17:24] And it's, it's always to the fore. Or the only times maybe when, when there's a relief from it, maybe at revival times. Where the impact of a revival has, has affected the whole of a community.

So that even those who, who don't become Christians, they, there's a, there's, there's siding, as it were, with the Christian. But by and large, there's an inbuilt opposition in the heart of people towards the Christian.

And it's irrational. It's unreasonable. And you know, there are people later on who will, who will sometimes as they grow older and more mature in life.

And they look back and they, they look back at how they, they were nasty to Christians and bullied Christians. And they recognize that they, it was the only reason that they were nasty to them was simply because they loved Jesus.

And they recognize themselves that, that irrational streak. But it happens. And as was mentioned in the, years of level.

[18:40] Ordinary. And he sees rejoice in that day and leap for joy. I'm sure if you were getting a hard time from any person for being a Christian.

And you started leaping and sort of full of joy that that would kind of, I suppose, throw them a bit. And they'd say, well, I don't get it. But what Jesus is pointing to here, of course, is what's beyond. And really, Jesus is saying, if you could see the glory that awaits you. If you could see just the weight of glory. And I believe part of the reason that the Lord doesn't show us any more than he does of what glory is actually like is that if we were able to get a glimpse tonight into, into heaven, if our mind and our frame could take it.

Which it couldn't.

And he was given this to bring him down. And you see, the Lord is saying to us, accept what I'm saying. You have the greatest glory awaiting you.

[20:14] You might suffer in this world for my cause. But let me tell you, it's worth it all when you experience the glory that awaits you. Let us pray. Lord, we give thanks that although sometimes we find being Christians can be very difficult.

And sometimes in some homes and some families, sometimes at places of work, in various parts of the communities, can find it difficult.

Maybe tonight somebody is going through a hard time because they love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, grant them your strength and your grace. And help them to see that you're with them in a very special way.

Give them even in the face of the persecution, your sense of joy and peace and contentment. And grant them the faith to see beyond.

And a wee glimpse of the glory that shall be. And so we pray that you will be with every single one of us. Take us to our home safely. Do us good. And forgive us all our sin, we pray in Jesus' name.

[21:23] Amen.