

SERMON FOR FEBRUARY 13, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 6:17-26

THEME: LUKE'S BEATITUDES

17 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 seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, **18** who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. **19** And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all. **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.

In the name of Jesus:

There is an old adage in education that states that repetition is the mother of all learning. What it means is that if you want someone to learn something, you repeat the teaching over and over and over again.

It is a technique that I have used quite often in my ministry. When I am teaching Confirmation classes and ask a student to memorize sections of the Small Catechism, I explain that if one repeated the words of the text often

enough, you will learn what is written and memorize it more easily. It is something that I have practiced as I prepare to preach a sermon, I first write the sermon and then I spend time reviewing what I have written, over and over and over again so that I know what the sermon says so that I can hopefully communicate it effectively. Repetition is the mother of all learning.

Jesus uses this technique today in Luke's Beatitudes. If you compare what Luke writes to what Matthew writes, you will notice some similarities between Matthew's Beatitudes and Luke's Beatitudes. For, you see, Jesus preached and taught at different times in His ministry. So what we have in Matthew is recorded as the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus preached on a mountain side and in Luke we have the Sermon on the Plain, where Jesus preached on a flatter plain. Two sermons that contain similar Beatitudes. Today, we focus on Luke's Beatitudes.

Many think that in the Beatitudes that Jesus is teaching and giving some type of moral code for people to live by. That could not be further from the truth! Jesus isn't teaching a moral code to live by, rather, in both Matthew's Beatitudes and here in Luke, He is teaching us about Himself and how He works in our lives and world today.

In this passage, Jesus offers eight blessings and curses. Four each, evenly matched and closely related, and in the blessings listed, these are listed and reveal a lifestyle radically opposed to the ways of the world.

In the worldly way of looking at things, one would expect to be blessed when we have earthly riches, when we are recognized for what we do or have done, and when we experience good things in our lives. Just consider how many times someone will say that they are blessed when something good happens to them. Now, that isn't to say that they aren't blessed, it is just to recognize that we associate God's blessings when good things happen to us in our world.

But here Jesus tells us that God works in other ways, ways that are foreign to our way of understanding, and different than what we would expect. Jesus tells us that God works not in riches but in poverty, not in satisfaction but in hunger, not in joy but in weeping, and not in praise but in being rejected. Just listen to Jesus as He says: "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

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How odd, how different, this is. Jesus turns everything over on its head. The world measures blessings by success, by physical and material goods, the good things we receive. Please understand, it isn't a sin to be rich, to be physically blessed in this life. It isn't sinful to have food on our table, to have joy in our lives or to be praised by someone else. But Jesus is warning us that the world uses these standards in order to ascertain whether or not God loves you and if He is working in your life. To measure God's kingdom by the way someone dresses, or by the material things they possess limits God and limits His work, because it includes a certain type of people and rejects those who don't have such good fortune in their lives. When you are blinded by the standards the world uses to ascertain if God blesses you or not, you miss the point and you are missing the blessings the God really gives. If you measure God by the money you have in your bank account, then the lack of money must mean that God doesn't love you. But that isn't true at all. God loves you, no matter who you are.

His love is shown to you in Jesus. Remember, Jesus didn't come down from heaven to be glorified. He didn't come down from heaven in splendor and majesty. Jesus came as a baby, He came dressed in humility. Jesus, in His own words said that He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Or, as the Apostle Paul puts it: "Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

This is where true joy and blessings are to be found, in Jesus! Jesus came to make you His own, members of His Kingdom. He calls us not to seek the things of this world and to set our hearts on them, for these will all come to an end. Jesus says to store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, to seek first His kingdom and its righteousness. Jesus came to give you the Kingdom. He has already given you the Kingdom, in Baptism by washing away your sins and calling you His child, in His Word where He proclaims His forgiveness and love for you, and in His Supper where you receive not only the forgiveness of your sins but also a stronger faith and eternal life.

Dear friend, Jesus loves you. He loves you who are poor, who are feeble, who are anxious and afraid, who are tired and terrified, who are rejected and dejected, who are sad and lonely. Jesus came for sinners! He came for you! He came to bless you! He loves you with an everlasting love! And He and His love are with you always! Even to the end of time!

Amen