

“Put the Kingdom First”
(Luke 6:17-26)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Last week:

We saw how Jesus lifted the Sabbath

Back to where the Lord intended

As He did with other commandments

In His Sermon on the Mount:

God originally made the Sabbath *for* man –

He worked six days and rested on seventh,

And He blessed this day *for our good* –

He gave us a day off.

He gave us the day off

So that we could do

What we want to do most:

Spend time with Him

And with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Pharisees turned the day

From one of blessing to that of suffering:

They wouldn't allow the Jews

Either to take care of their own needs

Or the needs of others;

But when they accused the disciples

Of breaking the Sabbath

Because they were picking and eating grain

To take care of their needs,

Jesus defended them.

And when Jesus saw the man on the Sabbath

Whose life was hard because his hand was crippled,

He mercifully healed him –

Jesus has the right to say

What can and can't be done

On the Sabbath Day

Because, as God,

He has authority over the Sabbath.

Second, we saw Jesus choose the twelve

From among all the disciples –

He saved eleven of them

That they might carry on His work;

But one of them He passed over in mercy

That he might betray Him –

Jesus has authority to give life or withhold it:

As He said to His Father in His high priestly prayer:

“You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him,
He may give eternal life” (John 17:2).

B. Preview.

Now we see Him come down from the mountain –

The mountain on which He prayed through the night,

When He asked for wisdom to single out the twelve (Luke 6:12-13).

As He descended,
He found a level place –
Either ground level
Or on the side of the mountain;

(Some believe this is Luke's abbreviation
Of the Sermon the Mount,
While others see it as a similar,
But different sermon) –

His disciples had gathered there –
As well as a large crowd of people
From Judea and Jerusalem,
And from Tyre and Sidon (v. 17),
Who had come to hear Him teach,
To be healed of their diseases,
And freed from demonic oppression (v. 18).

Everyone was trying to touch Him,
Because power was coming from Him
And they were all being healed (v. 19).

Jesus then turns to His disciples
And begins to teach them,
As well as all who would follow Him.

This morning,
Let's consider the first part

Of this “Sermon on the Plain,”

Where Jesus tells us:

Only those who put the kingdom first

Will enter and receive its benefits.

II. Sermon.

A. First, Jesus pronounces blessings

On those who now experience difficulties

Because they have put the kingdom first.

1. He begins, “Blessed *are* you *who are* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (v. 20).

Blessed are you who are poor *now*,

Because you are rich.

What does Jesus mean by *poor*?

He could mean *actually* poor:

James writes, “Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (2:5).

It’s not just that they’re poor,

But that in their poverty,

They look to the Lord alone

To meet their needs –

This is one of the benefits

Of not having very much.

He could mean poor *in spirit* –

Or humble –

As He tells us in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3) -

We can't enter the kingdom
Unless we first humble ourselves,
Confess our sins,
And trust in Jesus alone to save us.

Or He could mean
Those who have become poor
For the sake of gaining the kingdom.

As Jesus tells us in the kingdom parables, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matt. 13:44).

And as He says in Luke 14:33, "None of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

It's really a combination of all of these ideas:

We need to have done
What the rich young ruler failed to do:
Let go of our possessions –
We need to take our eyes off
What the world has to offer,
And put on Jesus' yoke of discipleship.

We need to follow Him,
Using whatever He's given,
Or will give us,
To serve Him.

If we've done this –
And we only can

By the power of His Spirit –

Then we are rich:

The kingdom already belongs to us

Through faith in Jesus.

2. He says second, “Blessed *are* you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied” (6:21).

We’re blessed if we’re hungry,

But rich in faith –

As we’ve seen;

We’re also blessed, if in serving Him,

We’ve been placed in situations

Where we don’t have enough –

If we suffer for Him.

And we’re blessed, if –

As in the Sermon the Mount –

We’re hungry because

We’re not as much like Jesus

As we’d like to be –

If we’re hungering and thirsting after righteousness –

If these are true of us,

Jesus says we will be satisfied:

He will provide for us here –

Jesus, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness,

And all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

And we will feast in heaven,
Where we will finally be perfect.

3. He says third, “Blessed *are* you who weep now, for you shall laugh” (Luke 6:21).

If we’re weeping over our sins –
Because we want to be more like Jesus –

If what this world does against God
Grieves our spirit –
As Lot’s when he lived in Sodom –

Then we’re blessed:
We really do love righteousness;
One day we will enter heaven;
And the new heavens and earth;
Where we will laugh with joy
Because there will no longer be any sin.

4. Finally, He says, “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets” (vv. 22-23).

Why would anyone hate us,
Treat us like this,
Or call us evil,
For living as Jesus calls us to?

Why should anyone get upset
If we try to save the life of an unborn child?

Or if we believe that Intelligent design/Creationism

Should be taught in public schools?

Or for believing that physical intimacy

Should be reserved for marriage?

Or for saying that marriage is only between one man and one woman?

Or for standing up for anything God says is right?

It's because they have a heart problem.

Paul writes, "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES"
(Rom. 3:18).

That's why he writes in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly
in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

If we put the kingdom first

And are treated this way,

Jesus tells us we should leap for joy –

This is how the prophets were treated

When God sent them to speak to His rebellious people –

And He gave them a great reward –

He will do the same for us.

B. What happens if we go the other way?

1. Jesus says, "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full" (Luke 6:24).

Woe is the opposite of blessed:

It means, "How horrible it will be."

How horrible would it be

To gain everything this world has to offer,

Only to spend eternity in hell?

Jesus said to His disciples, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26).

Remember the Rich Man and Lazarus.

2. He says, “Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry” (v. 25).

How horrible would it be

To be full and satisfied now,

Only to hunger and thirst for an eternity

In a place where all will be denied

Even a drop of water to ease their suffering?

3. Jesus says, “Woe *to you* who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep” (v. 25).

How horrible would it be

To laugh at what God says here –

Or to eat, drink, and be merry in this world –

Only to agonize in the next?

Jesus tells us at the end of the age,

“The angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:49-50).

4. And He says, “Woe *to you* when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way” (Luke 6:26).

How horrible would it be

To avoid offending anyone
With the Gospel,
To blend in,
So that others will like us;
And in the end be destroyed with them?

5. Now why did Jesus say these things?

Was He trying to scare His disciples?

Yes, He wanted them to know

Who things really are:

He wanted those who were following Him –

He wants us –

To take a good look at our lives,

So we can do the right thing now.

He wants us to know –

If the things that describe the blessed

Are true of us now –

Which they are –

Not perfectly, but really –

If we've trusted Him –

Then the blessings will also be ours.

That's what the Table also reminds us this morning:

Jesus gave His life,

To give us life –

That He might change us here,

To prepare us to enter His kingdom.

He also wants us to know

If these things aren't true of us –

But the other things are –

Then we will receive the curse.

If that's what you see in yourself:

Then look to Jesus,

Ask Him for His mercy

To turn from your sins,

And trust Him to save you. Amen.

<http://www.gcmoesto.org>