

3202-16-2025 Rejoice in The Day

Luke 6: 17-26

Blessings and Woes

17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, **18** who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, **19** and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

20 Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

22 Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

24 "But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.

25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.

26 Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

Transition Narrative:

As we read the Scripture from Luke 6, we encounter a moment where Jesus speaks to the deep realities of our lives—blessing the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, poor in spirit, and those who face persecution for His sake. These words may feel both comforting and challenging, as they are not only a promise of God's favor but also a call to a radical transformation of how we see the world and our place in it.

Jesus' Beatitudes challenge the conventional wisdom of wealth, success, and comfort, turning our attention to what truly matters in God's eyes: humility, dependence on Him, and a willingness to stand for justice. But the message does not stop with blessings—there are also woes that call us to examine our hearts, our desires, and our actions. It is in this moment of both blessing and warning that Jesus leads us to a deeper understanding of how to live faithfully in His Kingdom.

As we continue in the passage, we hear Jesus speak words that seem counterintuitive—"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy." At first glance, these words may feel foreign to us, particularly when we consider the struggles and hardships mentioned earlier in the Beatitudes. How can we rejoice when we are poor, hungry, weeping, or persecuted? How can joy be found in moments of sorrow or hardship? Jesus' invitation to rejoice challenges the natural human response to suffering, offering a deeper perspective that comes from the certainty of God's ultimate purpose and His eternal promises.

The key to understanding this call to rejoice lies in the fact that Jesus is not only speaking about our present circumstances but is also pointing us toward the larger context of God's Kingdom. He encourages us to see beyond the immediate pain and hardship and to look forward to the great reward that awaits those who endure with faith and righteousness. In this passage, Jesus is teaching us about an eternal perspective—one that is not limited to the temporal and fleeting experiences of life but grounded in the assurance that our suffering is not in vain.

As we reflect on these words, it becomes clear that Jesus is urging us to cultivate a perspective of joy that is not dependent on our earthly circumstances. True joy, according to Jesus, is found in the confidence that we are aligned with God's will and that, even in moments of suffering, we are participating in something much greater than ourselves. This call to rejoice, therefore, is not just an emotional response; it is a deep, spiritual decision to embrace the hope and promise of the Kingdom of God, even when life does not make sense or feels overwhelming.

In today's sermon, we will explore the depth of what it means to "rejoice in that day" as Jesus invites us to live with joy rooted in the hope of His eternal Kingdom. We will learn how to shift our focus from the temporal to the eternal, trusting that the trials of this life will not define us, but that the joy of our heavenly reward will sustain us. Together, let us unpack what it means to rejoice not in spite of hardship, but because of the enduring hope that Jesus offers to all who follow Him.

Define Blessed - <https://www.gotquestions.org/mean-to-be-blessed.html>

The Story of Miriam

In the bustling town of Capernaum, nestled along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, lived a woman named Miriam. She was known in her community for her quiet strength and unwavering faith, though life had not been kind to her lately. Widowed at a young age, she now cared for her elderly mother and three young children, scraping by with the meager earnings from her small textile business.

On a warm morning, Miriam joined the crowd gathering at the foot of a gently sloping hillside. Rumors had spread like wildfire that a man named Jesus, known for healing the sick and speaking with authority, would be teaching there. Despite her exhaustion and the weight of her responsibilities, Miriam felt a pull in her heart to witness this renowned teacher firsthand.

The atmosphere was charged with anticipation as people from all walks of life gathered—fishermen with weathered faces, merchants in flowing robes, and families seeking solace in troubled times. Children played around the edges of the crowd, their laughter mingling with the hum of conversation.

Miriam found herself a spot among the throng, settling on a patch of grass with her youngest child cradled in her arms. She looked around, noticing the diversity of faces—some weary, some hopeful, all seeking something more than the daily struggles of survival.

As Jesus began to speak, his words carried a weight that resonated deeply with Miriam. He spoke of blessings for the poor in spirit, comfort for those who mourned, and hope for the oppressed. Tears welled up in Miriam's eyes as she listened intently, feeling as though Jesus spoke directly to her soul, offering reassurance in her moments of doubt.

Throughout the day, Miriam sat entranced by Jesus' teachings, feeling a renewed sense of strength and purpose. His words were not just words; they were a lifeline, offering her

a glimpse of a kingdom where the weary would find rest and the brokenhearted would be healed.

As the sun dipped low over the horizon, signaling the end of the sermon, Miriam rose to her feet, her heart full. She knew that this day, gathered on the plain with hundreds of others, would be etched into her memory forever. With a quiet resolve, she gathered her children and made her way home, carrying with her the profound teachings of Jesus and a newfound sense of hope for the days ahead.

So what had changed for her that day?

The Sermon on the Plain - Actually Luke 6: 17-49

During the time of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, which is recounted in Luke 6:17-49, Palestine was under Roman rule, a period marked by complex societal dynamics and significant religious and political tensions. The region was a crossroads of cultures, religions, and ideologies, influencing daily life and social structures.

1. Political Context: Palestine was under Roman occupation, with local governance heavily influenced by Roman authorities and their appointed leaders like Herod Antipas in Galilee. Roman rule brought taxation, military presence, and socio-political control, often causing unrest and discontent among the Jewish population.

2. Religious Landscape: Judaism was the dominant religion, characterized by a diversity of sects and religious leaders. The Pharisees and Sadducees held significant religious and political sway, alongside smaller groups like the Essenes and Zealots. Religious practices were central to daily life, influencing social norms and community interactions.

3. Social Structure: Society was hierarchically structured, with distinct social classes such as priests, merchants, laborers, and the marginalized including the poor, widows, and orphans. Patronage networks and familial ties played crucial roles in social mobility and economic survival.

4. Economic Realities: Economic disparities were pronounced, with wealthy elites enjoying considerable privilege while many struggled with poverty and economic hardship. Agricultural labor was fundamental to the economy, alongside trade routes that connected Palestine with wider Mediterranean commerce.

5. Cultural and Intellectual Milieu: Culturally, Palestine was influenced by Hellenistic thought and Roman administration, yet retained distinct Jewish cultural practices and beliefs. Intellectual discourse centered on religious interpretations, legal debates, and philosophical inquiries that shaped public opinion and moral frameworks.

Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Plain addressed these societal realities, advocating for justice, mercy, humility, and spiritual renewal amidst the challenges of Roman occupation and social inequality. His message resonated deeply within this complex socio-political landscape, challenging conventional wisdom and calling for a transformation of hearts and communities toward God's kingdom.

Sermon Title: "The Kingdom Upside Down: Living the Teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain"

Introduction: Today, we turn our hearts and minds to one of the most radical and transformative teachings of Jesus—the *Sermon on the Plain*. In this sermon, Jesus gives us a vision of God's Kingdom that flips the values of the world on their head. What we think of as success, happiness, and power are challenged by the words of Christ, calling us to live differently, with a deep reliance on God and a life characterized by love, mercy, and justice. As we explore these teachings, let us reflect on how they apply to our own lives today, and how God calls us to live as agents of His Kingdom.

1. Beatitudes and Woes: The Reversal of Values

Scripture: Luke 6:20-26

Expanded Narrative:

The Beatitudes are a declaration of blessings, not on those who are wealthy, powerful, or in control, but on those who are poor, hungry, mourning, and persecuted. Jesus pronounces blessings on the poor in spirit, the meek, and those who hunger for righteousness. At the same time, He gives woes to the rich, those who are full, and those who laugh in comfort. This radical reversal challenges societal norms and invites us to consider who truly possesses the Kingdom of God.

To be "poor in spirit," as Jesus describes in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3), signifies a state of humility and spiritual dependency before God. It goes beyond material poverty to encompass an attitude of recognizing our spiritual neediness and insufficiency apart from God's grace. Jesus emphasizes this state as foundational to receiving the kingdom of heaven, highlighting that those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty are open and receptive to God's transformative work in their lives. This condition fosters a deep reliance on God for spiritual nourishment, guidance, and fulfillment, rather than relying on one's own accomplishments or worldly possessions.

Jesus's teaching on being "poor in spirit" challenges conventional notions of strength and self-sufficiency by emphasizing a profound dependence on God's mercy and provision. It encourages a shift from pride and self-reliance to a posture of humility and openness to God's leading. This spiritual disposition enables individuals to experience the richness of God's kingdom, characterized by inner peace, spiritual growth, and a deeper intimacy with God. Ultimately, being poor in spirit aligns with Jesus's invitation to surrender our lives completely to God, trusting in His goodness and grace to sustain and transform us according to His will.

Lesson to be Learned:

Jesus teaches that the values of God's Kingdom are the opposite of the world's. God does not judge by outward appearances—wealth, status, and power—but by the heart, humility, and faithfulness. The poor and the oppressed are close to God's heart. His favor is not tied to material wealth or comfort but to spiritual dependence on Him.

Scripture in Other Books of the Bible:

James 2:5 says, "Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?" Similarly, in Matthew 5:3, we read in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Specific Meaning for Our Christian Faith:

As Christians, we are called to look beyond material wealth and societal success as measures of God's blessing. Instead, we must focus on humility, compassion, and a deep reliance on God's grace. Our lives should reflect the values of God's Kingdom, where the least among us are valued and uplifted.

Application for Christians for Life:

We are called to see the world through God's eyes, where the poor, the oppressed, and those who suffer are not overlooked but embraced. In a world that values power and wealth, we must advocate for justice, show mercy, and serve others selflessly. This requires humility, generosity, and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones to serve those in need.

2. Love and Forgiveness: A Radical Call to Love

Scripture: Luke 6:27-36

Expanded Narrative:

One of the most challenging aspects of Jesus' teachings is His call to love our enemies. Jesus says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." He goes further to teach that forgiveness and love should be offered even to those who have wronged us. This is not a love based on feelings or reciprocation but a love that reflects God's unconditional love for us.

Lesson to be Learned:

Jesus calls us to love in a way that is not natural to human nature. This kind of love seeks the good of others, even those who wish us harm. It is not a love that expects to be returned, but one that reflects the heart of God's grace. Forgiveness is not optional but central to living out the Christian faith.

Scripture in Other Books of the Bible:

In Matthew 5:44, Jesus says, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Paul echoes this in Romans 12:14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."

Specific Meaning for Our Christian Faith:

The radical love and forgiveness Jesus speaks of are at the core of the Christian faith. Just as God has forgiven us through Christ, we are to forgive others. This kind of love is the evidence of true discipleship and marks us as followers of Jesus.

Application for Christians for Life:

In our daily lives, we must practice radical forgiveness and unconditional love, even in the face of betrayal, hurt, or conflict. This might mean extending grace to someone who has wronged us, or choosing to pray for those who have mistreated us. Living this way will not always be easy, but it is the way of Christ.

3. Nonjudgmentalism and Mercy: Living with Compassion**Scripture: Luke 6:37-38****Expanded Narrative:**

Jesus teaches us not to judge others harshly, for in the same measure that we judge, we will be judged. He also encourages generosity—"Give, and it will be given to you." This teaching emphasizes that mercy should define our interactions with others, not criticism or condemnation. Jesus invites us to live with open hands, offering forgiveness, grace, and compassion freely.

Lesson to be Learned:

The Kingdom of God is a place where mercy reigns, not judgment. We are called to show the same mercy to others that God has shown to us. When we withhold mercy, we close ourselves off to the full measure of God's grace. We are to give freely, without expectation of return, reflecting God's generosity.

Scripture in Other Books of the Bible:

Matthew 7:1-2 warns, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." James 2:13 adds, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."

Specific Meaning for Our Christian Faith:

As Christians, we are not called to be the moral police or to judge others for their faults. Instead, we are to offer mercy and grace, creating a community where forgiveness and generosity flow freely. The mercy we extend to others is a reflection of the mercy God has extended to us in Christ.

Application for Christians for Life:

In our interactions with others, we should be quick to forgive, slow to criticize, and generous in all aspects of life. This may challenge us in difficult situations, but it is the calling of every believer to reflect Christ's love and mercy to a broken world.

4. Parables and Teachings on Spiritual Growth: Building on a Solid Foundation**Scripture: Luke 6:43-49****Expanded Narrative:**

Jesus compares those who hear His words and put them into practice to a wise builder who constructs a house on solid rock. When the storms of life come, this house stands firm. Conversely, those who hear His words but do not obey are like a man who builds his house on sand, and when the storms come, it is destroyed. This imagery emphasizes the importance of building our lives on the teachings of Jesus.

Lesson to be Learned:

True discipleship involves more than just hearing the words of Jesus; it involves living them out. Obedience to God's Word is the foundation for a life that can withstand the challenges and difficulties we face. We are called to not only listen but to act according to His teachings.

Scripture in Other Books of the Bible:

James 1:22 encourages, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says.” In Matthew 7:24, Jesus says, “Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Specific Meaning for Our Christian Faith:

As Christians, we must be people of action, living according to the teachings of Jesus. Our faith is not passive; it requires active engagement with God’s Word, shaping every aspect of our lives—our decisions, relationships, and priorities.

Application for Christians for Life:

In practical terms, this means that we need to integrate the teachings of Jesus into our daily lives. When we face temptations or trials, we can trust in His wisdom and seek to build our lives on the firm foundation of His truth.

5. Call to Action: Living Out the Kingdom of God

Scripture: Luke 6:46-49

Expanded Narrative:

The Sermon on the Plain is not just a collection of lofty ideals but a call to action. Jesus urges His followers to live out the principles He has taught—love, mercy, forgiveness, and justice. Our faith is meant to be active, impacting how we interact with the world around us. Jesus challenges us to not only profess our faith but to live it out in tangible ways that reflect the values of God’s Kingdom.

Lesson to be Learned:

Christianity is not just a set of beliefs to be held but a way of life to be lived. We are called to action—living out the teachings of Jesus in our relationships, work, and community involvement. The Kingdom of God is not just a future hope but a present reality that should shape everything we do.

Scripture in Other Books of the Bible:

James 2:26 reminds us, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” Jesus also says in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Specific Meaning for Our Christian Faith:

Our faith is meant to be a witness to the world. By living out the teachings of Jesus, we demonstrate what it means to be a citizen of God’s Kingdom. Our actions are a reflection of God’s glory and a testimony of His grace.

Application for Christians for Life:

Each day presents an opportunity to live out the Kingdom of God in practical ways. Whether it's serving others, forgiving those who have wronged us, or advocating for justice, we must let the values of Jesus' teachings shape how we live, work, and interact with others.

Conclusion: As we reflect on the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain, we are reminded of the radical call to live differently—marked by love, mercy, humility, and obedience to God's Word. May we, as followers of Christ, live out these teachings in our daily lives, embodying the values of God's Kingdom and becoming beacons of hope, justice, and grace in a world that desperately needs it.

Living out in Faith

Ellie had always been curious about faith. Growing up in a household where religion was discussed more as a tradition than a personal conviction, she never quite understood the depth of belief. But one summer, as a graduate student studying community leadership, something changed. She was introduced to a course that challenged her to rethink what true leadership meant—not in titles or accolades, but in service, humility, and love.

One afternoon, during a break between classes, Ellie took a walk by the river, reflecting on her readings from Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, which she had come across in her studies. She stopped to sit on a bench and found herself contemplating the words Jesus spoke: "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God... love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..."

Something clicked. The idea of a kingdom that didn't prioritize power, wealth, or status, but instead honored humility, mercy, and kindness, struck a deep chord in her. Ellie realized that her faith had always been just an idea—something she studied in academic terms, but not something she had ever truly lived out.

Determined to understand this faith more fully, Ellie began to dive deeper into the teachings of Jesus. She spent hours in the library, reading the gospels, and reflecting on how they could shape her life. She started volunteering at a local shelter, helping those who had nowhere to go, and offering kind words to strangers, especially those she once might have overlooked.

One day, while at the shelter, Ellie met a man named Greg, who had fallen on hard times and struggled with addiction. Greg was angry at the world, bitter about the hand life had dealt him. Most people avoided him, but Ellie, recalling Jesus' words to love one's enemies and pray for those who mistreat you, took a different approach. She sat with him, listened to his story, and offered help—not just in material ways, but by showing compassion and understanding.

Over time, Greg softened. He eventually enrolled in a rehabilitation program and began working toward rebuilding his life. Ellie had lived out her faith not by preaching, but by showing the love and mercy that Jesus had taught.

As Ellie continued to live out her faith, she found peace in knowing that her actions were reflecting the values of the Sermon on the Plain. Her discovery of faith wasn't just an intellectual pursuit—it was a transformation that led her to live humbly, serve others selflessly, and reflect the radical love that Jesus had exemplified.