

The Gospel According to Luke- Part 2

BLESSED

PART 8

The difference between woe

READ LUKE 6:17-26

INTRODUCTION

When we look at this passage, we see Jesus preaching to the people about things that will bless and things that will cause woe. Once again, there is a counter-cultural stance that Jesus takes when pronouncing these blessings and woes because He is often counter-cultural in His teachings. Most poor people would not consider themselves to be blessed and yet, Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Not many people feel blessed when others hate them but Jesus expresses that, when that hate comes at them because of the Son of God, they will be rewarded in Heaven.

The word “blessed” here means, “Oh how happy”. And so, when we read this passage, it is good to think about how that sounds in difference to what we think of as blessed. There are times when we think of being blessed as being given a gift. This is not totally wrong but when we read it as, “Oh how happy”, we see that it is a heart position more than a gift that we are given. We can consider ourselves to be blessed or, happy, that we experience the trials that we go through because we will be rewarded in Heaven due to our faithfulness here on earth.

In Matthew chapter 5 we see Jesus give this same message and in verse 12 there is the same ending that we see here in Luke. We are to rejoice and be exceedingly glad that we have the honor of experiencing rejection in the name of Christ because it means that we are part of Him and we have been given the opportunity to be blessed (or happy) through persecution. This is not only counter-cultural but also counter to our very nature as humans. We desire to flee from persecution and trials. We can certainly run from it but, if it catches us, we need to remember the blessing of opportunity we have to glorify God in all things and experience His reward in eternity.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think the major difference between “blessed” and “woe” are based on what Jesus says in this passage? How can we sometimes reverse the two?
2. Why does God work with counter-cultural thinking so much? What does that mean for us living in the modern world?
3. What are some ways that we can live a more blessed or “happy” life? What part does our faith and walk with Jesus play in that blessed life?
4. Is God more concerned with holiness or happiness? Why?
5. What do you think being exceedingly glad through persecution means? How do we interact with that today, given that we don’t experience the same kinds of persecution they did?

WRAP UP

We can be blessed even when we feel we are being broken. In fact, Jesus’ mercy extends out to us in our most desperate times. It shows us that He cares for things that the world treats as weaknesses and desires to see us take refuge and comfort in Him. This is so important as we continue to walk forward knowing that the path is narrow and there are few who find it.