

Present Pain, Eternal Gain

Luke 6:17-26 - NCBC, November 5, 2017

Main Point: **Following Jesus requires present loss for eternal gain.**

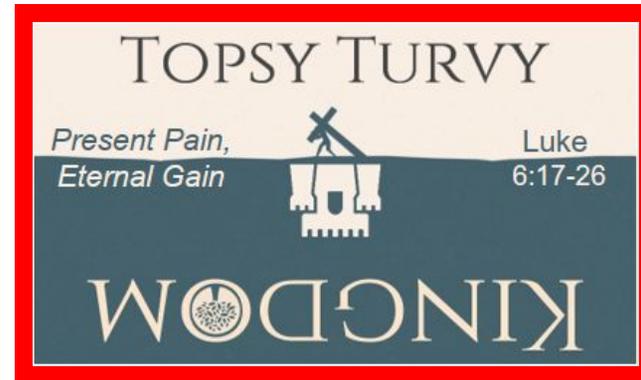
- Recognize the sovereign power of king Jesus (17-19)
- Recognize the kingdom reversals of eternity (20-26)
 - Presently humble, but eternally exalted (20b, 24)
 - Presently hungry, but eternally full (21a, 25a)
 - Presently heart-broken, but eternally delighted (21b, 25b)
 - Presently hated, but eternally accepted (22-23, 26)

Application: **Rejoice in your present suffering for Jesus**

Opening Announcements:

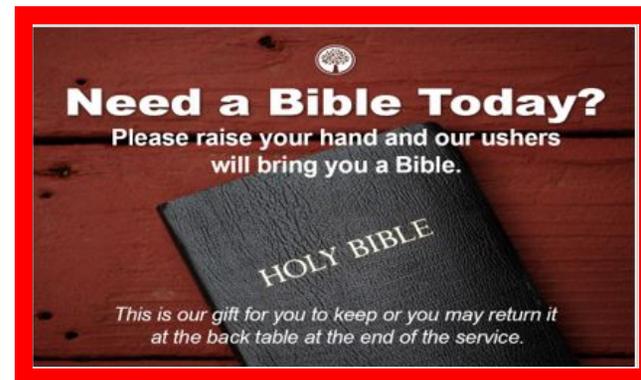
IDOP / Baptisms

<<Be Thou My Vision>>



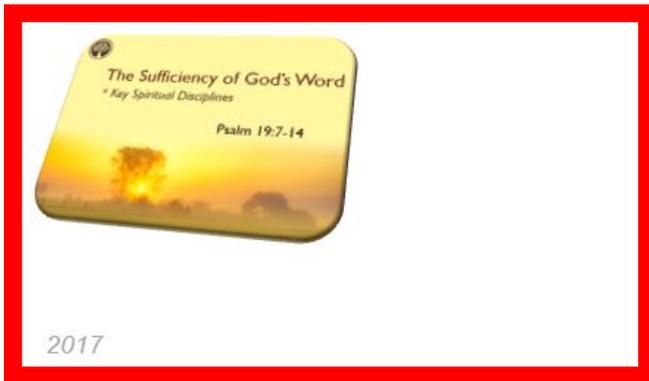
Thank you for singing that prayer of submission and worship together.

I invite you to continue your worship now by opening God's Word to **Luke chapter 6**. Today we start our new "Topsy-Turvy Kingdom" sermon series from Jesus' sermon on the plain in **Luke 6**, so you will definitely want to have your Bibles open.

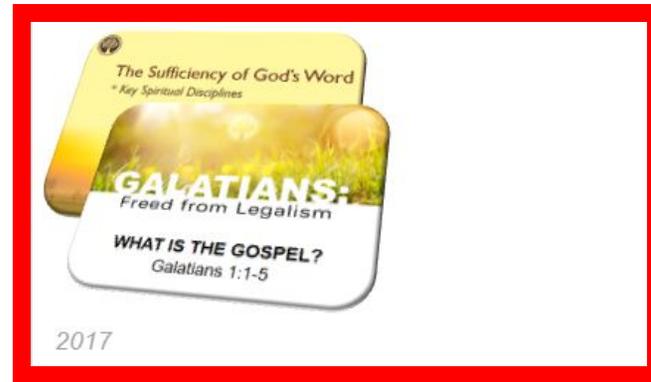


If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, please raise your hand as our men are coming to give you a Bible. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just simply return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room.

As we begin this new sermon series, it may be good to just quickly review our 2017 pulpit series thus far:



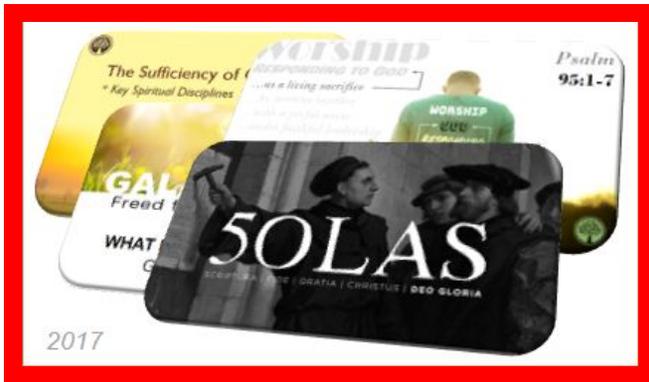
We started the year focused on key spiritual topics like the sufficiency of God's Word, romantic relationships, prayer, giving, suffering, and deaconing.



Then we took 23 weeks to study Paul's letter to the Galatian churches focusing on the freedom from legalism that can only be found by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

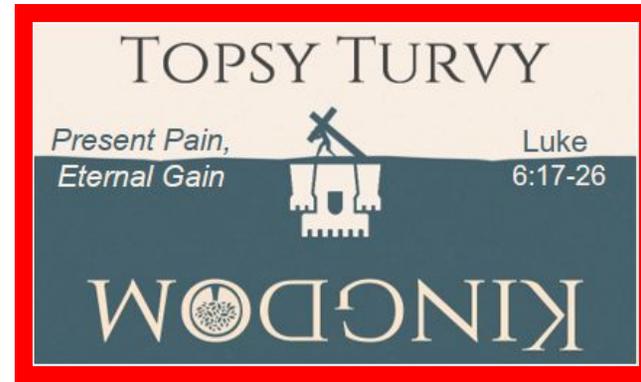


Next, we focused 4 weeks on God's design for our corporate worship together, and then the last two weeks



we've looked back 500 years to remember the faithfulness of our God in causing His people to rediscover the purity of His gospel in the Protestant Reformation. Rejoicing how God mercifully freed our forefathers from the legalistic corruption of Roman Catholicism.

It's been so good to partner together with 5 other churches in this 500-year anniversary celebration. I'm so thankful for Pastor Daniel Bennett's ministry here last week as he preached about how we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone. And I wholeheartedly recommend the other Reformation messages to you. I believe 4 of the 6 Reformation messages are now available on our website – and the last two should become available in the next couple of weeks.



Between now and Christmas then, I'd like to turn our attention on the earthly teaching of Jesus Christ. It's red-letter time for our Bibles as we open to **Luke 6** – and find the abbreviated version of Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* in **Matthew 5-7**.

In **Matthew 5:1**, the setting for this sermon is Jesus *seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him*. Here in **Luke**, Jesus comes down from praying on the mountain, and stands on a plateau with his disciples around him.¹

Most likely this was actually the same sermon that Matthew and Luke both recorded from their different vantage points. But even if the Sermon on the Plain was preached at a different time than the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew – what matters is that Jesus taught his disciples with Divine authority – and we will be blessed to hear and obey His teaching.

¹ Luke 6:12-17

Please stand with me in honor of God's Word as I read from **Luke chapter 6, verse 17**, from the **English Standard Translation**:

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.

These are the words of our Lord. You may be seated.

Let's Pray.

It is very fitting for us to begin our study of Jesus' sermon as we remember our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world this morning. Because following Jesus always requires suffering to our fleshly desires,² and occasionally requires physical suffering as well.³ This world who hated our Savior will also hate anyone who publicly identifies with Him and commits to following Him with their life.⁴

This sermon from Jesus is a bold warning against nominal discipleship. A warning to those who are followers of Christ by name only.

If you call yourself a Christian – you call yourself a disciple or follower of Christ – but you are not experiencing the sufferings of Christ in your spirit or your body – then this sermon is a strong warning for you.

But if you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ, then this sermon will encourage your faith, deepen your love, and perfect your obedience still more for the glory of Christ!

If we were to try to summarize the main point of Jesus' sermon in a sentence, we might say,

² Luke 9:23-24, 14:27, 17:33; Matthew 10:38-39; John 12:25; 1 Corinthians 15:31

³ John 15:18-21; 1 Peter 3:14, 4:12-16

⁴ 1 John 3:13; Isaiah 66:5

<i>The Sermon on the Plain</i>		
<i>To receive God's grace means to share it!</i>		
Faith	Love	Obedience
6:20-26	6:27-38	6:39-49
Christ's disciples are marked by different values	Christ's disciples are marked by superior love	Christ's disciples are marked by hearing & doing
The motivation & manners of Christ's disciples		

Jesus wants His disciples to know that to receive God's grace means to share it! To receive God's grace and become a disciple so changes your life – so that you treat others with grace and mercy and love. To be a Christian really means that your life will change – from being a taker– to becoming a giver! To receive God's grace means to share it!

As the chart illustrates, you can divide the sermon on the plain into 3 main sections:

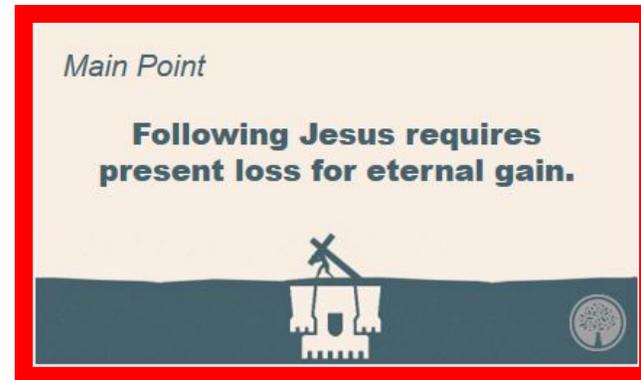
First, in **verses 20-26**—which will be our focus for today's message—Jesus offers 4 blessings and 4 woes to teach that His disciples are marked by different values than the world. His kingdom is topsy-turvy compared to all that this world holds dear. To believe on Jesus necessarily frees a person from the controlling values of this present age.

Then **verses 27-38** reveal that superior love is the chief mark of all true disciples. The essence of discipleship is supernatural love. To receive the love of God is to begin

to share the love of God with others. True disciples do not judge and condemn others, but rather give forgiveness and mercy.

Then in **verses 39-49**, Jesus ends his sermon by punctuating his main point – don't call yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ if your life isn't changing in some way to reflect more of Christ! You're not a Christian if you just like to hear God's word preached. Christ's true disciples are marked by both hearing and doing. To receive God's grace necessarily requires that you do something with it... and so these themes of faith, love, and obedience all combine in this brief sermon to reveal the motivation and manners of all true Christ-followers.

Today we focus on **verses 20-26** where we observe that,

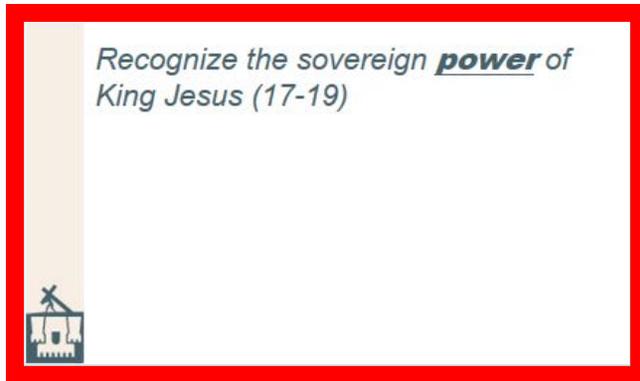


Following Jesus requires present loss for eternal gain.

Christians live by different values than the rest of the world. We carry crosses now while we wait for crowns

later. We joyfully lose our life on earth to gain eternal life with Christ forever.⁵

Starting in **verse 17**, let's quickly review the setting as we,



Recognize the sovereign power of King Jesus (17-19)

From the beginning of Luke's Gospel account he has been emphasizing Jesus' sovereign power as the very son of God.⁶

In **Luke 4** Jesus - full of the Spirit - overcomes every temptation Satan can throw at Him, returning afterwards *in the power of the Spirit to Galilee*.⁷ Then Jesus goes into a synagogue in Nazareth and boldly claims that He Himself is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy in **Isaiah 61:1-2**.⁸

⁵ Matthew 10:39; Luke 9:23-24, 17:33; John 12:25

⁶ Luke 1:35, 2:10

⁷ Luke 4:1-14

⁸ Luke 4:16-21

Luke's record of Jesus' life from that point forward aims to prove this claim – revealing Jesus' power to teach with divine authority,⁹ to cast out demons from people's lives,¹⁰ to heal people from physical diseases,¹¹ and even proving Jesus has authority to forgive sins!¹²

Then **Luke 6** declares that Jesus is *Lord of the Sabbath*¹³ – meaning Jesus has authority over all religion and worship as well!

We must recognize the sovereign power of King Jesus!

The all-powerful King Jesus is ushering in His kingdom on the earth – and yet... don't miss this amazing truth: this powerful King doesn't surround himself with the most successful, or the most popular, or the most religious.

Not at all. In **Luke 5:32** Jesus says – *I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance*.

God chose those who are foolish and weak and low and despised in this world to be his disciples¹⁴ – and isn't that good news for every one of us here this morning? The only requirement for becoming a disciple of Jesus and a citizen in His kingdom is that we hear and obey Jesus and receive the healing that is fully accomplished for us by God's power!

⁹ "proclaiming the good news" - Luke 4:32, 43-44

¹⁰ "proclaiming liberty to the captives" - Luke 4:34-36, 41

¹¹ "set at liberty those who are oppressed" - Luke 4:39-40; 5:12-14

¹² Luke 5:20-26

¹³ Luke 6:1-5, 6-11

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Recognize the sovereign **power** of King Jesus (17-19)

- **Hear & Obey** the teaching of Jesus
- **Be Healed** by the power of Jesus



In **Luke 5**, Jesus calls a fisherman named Simon to be his first disciple – for although he had toiled all night and caught nothing, his response to the Lord’s command was, *But at your word I will let down your nets.*¹⁵ Matthew likewise left everything at Jesus’ command, *rose, and followed him.*¹⁶

So, by the time we get to **verse 17 of Luke 6**, Luke has set the table well for us to hear this sermon on discipleship. We’ve already seen that a disciple is someone who follows the commands of Jesus immediately, without question, and at great personal sacrifice. All in response to Jesus the Messiah – our powerful Deliverer from sin, suffering, and Satan’s grip itself.

Verse 17 indicates there was a great crowd of both Jews and Gentiles from both near and far with Jesus as he

¹⁵ Luke 5:5-11

¹⁶ Luke 5:27-28

preached. **Verse 18** says that everyone was there to hear, and to be healed.

But this sermon argues that once you recognize the sovereign power of King Jesus – then you won’t just hear His teaching – but you will obey it as well.¹⁷

Verse 20 makes it clear that this sermon was primarily for Jesus’ disciples – and that’s an important point. Because Jesus is not teaching here about what a person must do to be saved.

All you must do to become one of Christ’s disciples is to believe His promises enough to obey them. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!*¹⁸ Healing from sin’s power only comes from faith in the finished work of Jesus.

This is not a sermon on how to enter God’s kingdom. Instead this is a sermon about what motivates a true disciple to live differently from the world – especially as it relates to how we treat one another in our personal relationships as Christ-followers.

With that introduction, let’s now,

¹⁷ This is the entire closing argument of Luke 6:46-49

¹⁸ Acts 16:31

Recognize the kingdom reversals of eternity (20-26)



Recognize the kingdom reversals of eternity (20-26)

An eternal perspective will bring encouragement to Christ's disciples who are now weak, hungry, grieving, and persecuted. Because the perspective of Christ's kingdom is completely topsy-turvy to the human thinking of those who are rich, full, triumphant, and popular here and now.

In **verses 20-26** Christ pairs 4 blessings with 4 corresponding woes.

When He says, "*Blessed are you*" Jesus is not making a wish, or a prayer, or expressing future hope for his followers. These are absolute statements of fact. The poor *are* blessed. The hungry *are* blessed. The weeping *are* blessed. The hated *are* blessed. It's present tense – not future.

Therefore, this blessing isn't referring to their present *circumstances* – but rather to their present *position* of favor in God's kingdom. Although their present circumstances are lacking – they are in the most favored

condition possible *as disciples of Christ*. To be blessed is to be deeply satisfied within – even while suffering great loss outwardly in this life.

Woe to you is not a threat, as much as it is a compassionate expression of pity and regret for those who will have their happy circumstances end in the final furor of God's wrath.

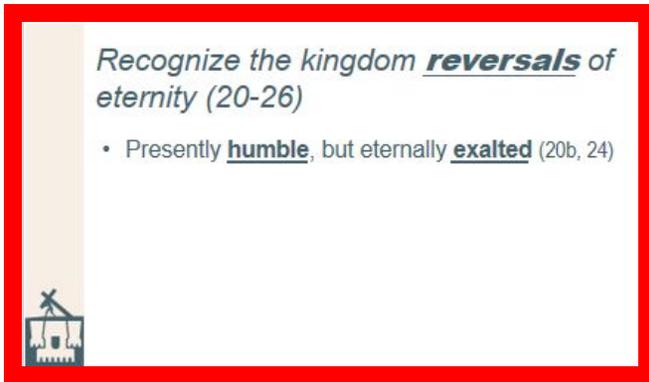
So look at **verse 20**,

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

Compare this with **verse 24**,

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Do you see the profound reversal here? Dear child of God – renew your mind this morning with this wonderful encouragement from our Savior:



Although you are presently humble, you will be eternally exalted (20b, 24)

Poor in **verse 20** is not limited to your financial status. It refers to an attitude of humility. **Matthew 5:3** puts it this way,

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This poverty is that spiritual bankruptness that no longer can afford any self-reliance or self-sufficiency. To be poor in spirit is to be humble – broken, surrendered, and fully dependent upon God alone for one’s spiritual condition.

It is the opposite of what is meant by rich in **verse 24**. The rich person here is not just financially well-endowed – but haughty, arrogant, self-sufficient – unable to acknowledge or receive help from anyone.

Note the regret of **verse 24** – *you have received your consolation*. Listen up dear ones – if you get what you

want here in this life - that’s all that you will ever get. Because you live your life for the now – and believe yourself sufficient and powerful – your earthly prestige and possession here on this earth are the only blessings you will experience –there will be no consolation left for you in eternal judgment.

Christ-follower – wake up to Christ’s warning. Do not be deceived by the temporary values of this present world’s riches. Have you become so near-sighted that you have forgotten that you can’t take any of this world with you when you die?

Christ’s kingdom – or all that comes by His salvation – is only for the humble. Those who are willing to receive undeserved and unmerited help and grace from their Holy Creator.

Which kingdom are you living for?

Verse 21 goes on,

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

Recognize the kingdom reversals of eternity (20-26)

- Presently humble, but eternally exalted (20b, 24)
- Presently hungry, but eternally full (21a, 25a)



Presently hungry, but eternally full (21a, 25a)

Contrast this with the first part of **verse 25**,

Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

Again hunger and fullness are primarily spiritual in nature – using physical language to describe spiritual realities.

Matthew 5:6 makes the spiritual connotation explicit:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

You must not be a slave to your present circumstances. Do you see that little word in **verses 21 and 25** – that word “now”? Here and now - Christ’s followers will suffer an intense longing and hunger to be free from sin. There is a holy discontentment and yearning that our souls experience on this side of our glorification.

Have you ever prayed, “O Lord, please come quickly.”? “Please just take me home... I want to see more of your glory. I fervently desire to get free from this sin...”

Yes, *Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.* There’s a heavenly banquet coming – and God Himself will satisfy your every hunger and thirst!

Then next look at the end of **verse 21**,

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

Recognize the kingdom reversals of eternity (20-26)

- Presently humble, but eternally exalted (20b, 24)
- Presently hungry, but eternally full (21a, 25a)
- Presently heart-broken, but eternally delighted (21b, 25b)



Presently the followers of Christ are heart-broken, but eternally they shall be delighted (21b, 25b)

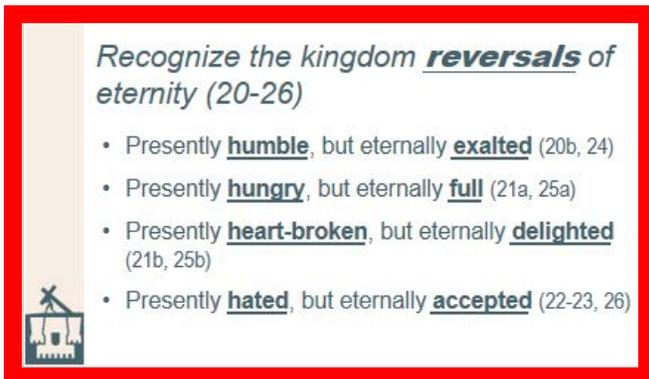
To laugh in **verse 21** refers to the joy of God’s people when their sorrow is removed. It means to be delighted and to rejoice in God’s final deliverance.

But the laughing at the end of **verse 25** is different. When Jesus says,

Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep He is talking about those who are laughing in self-sufficient scorn and carefree prosperity in their present life. They have no care in the world – and in fact look down on others who couldn't figure out life as well as they have been. Intense grief will be the end of such worldly self-confidence. And then finally this contrast between the now and later is demonstrated by Christ's teaching in **verses 22-23**:

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.

When you are excluded because of your obedience to the commands of Christ – be encouraged Christian. For while you are,



Recognize the kingdom **reversals** of eternity (20-26)

- Presently **humble**, but eternally **exalted** (20b, 24)
- Presently **hungry**, but eternally **full** (21a, 25a)
- Presently **heart-broken**, but eternally **delighted** (21b, 25b)
- Presently **hated**, but eternally **accepted** (22-23, 26)

Presently **hated**, you will be eternally **accepted** (22-23, 26)

But **verse 26** warns soberly,

Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Which matters more to you? Popularity – or truthfulness to God's Word?

Honestly consider these kingdom qualities this morning.

This world lives for power, comfort, success, and recognition. Our marketplace rewards such pursuits. These are the values of the kingdom of now!

So are you living in this world's instant gratification kingdom... or are you a citizen of Christ's kingdom – which requires present loss for eternal gain?

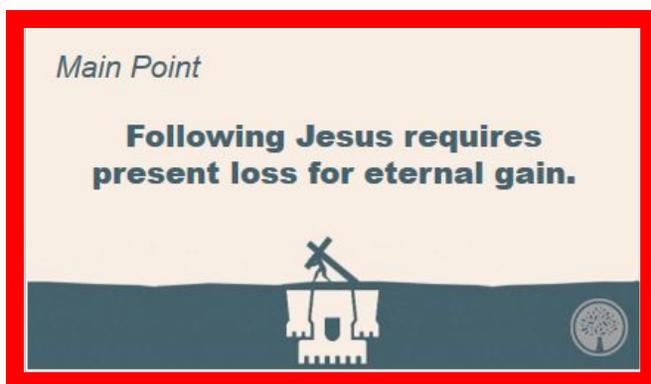
Here's the greatest reversal that you must see this morning. By the power of God – Jesus Christ took your place and traded places with you. He humbled Himself – so that grace could come to the humble. He knew the thirst of separation from God's presence – all so you could be fully satisfied and accepted by God. He wept and was rejected by men – all so that you could experience the glory of His victory forever with God.

You see – once God's power makes you a disciple and follower of Jesus – your worldview becomes completely topsy-turvy. You are no longer controlled by power, comfort, success, or recognition. If it comes – that's fine, but it has no power over you. If you get the promotion – or lose your job – now is not your identity. This world is not your home.

Listen - Christ's disciples don't love pain or loss any more than anyone else. We don't glory in self-harm. But here's the point – we glory in Jesus. And we value being identified with Jesus more than being identified with this passing world.

When we are poor in spirit – and our self-sufficiency has been broken – we actually value any present sacrifice or grief or exclusion that comes because of our connection with Christ. We are not surprised when the world hates us or treats us wrongly.

After all – because we are looking to Jesus – the author and *finisher* of our faith – we can appreciate that,



Following Jesus requires present loss for eternal gain.

But church – this week as I was studying this I was struck by something I read from Pastor Tim Keller. He talked about how many so-called Christians today are not poor in spirit – but rather they are middle-class in spirit. Meaning that they are thankful for Jesus when they get in

a bind – but for the most part they live their life based on the values of this present world – seeking power, comfort, success, and recognition however possible – all while believing that they are a follower of Jesus Christ.

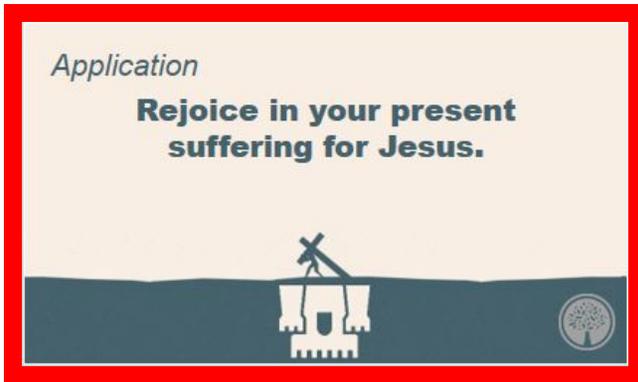
So how can you know if you're poor in spirit, or if you're middle-class in spirit?

First – consider what kind of people you surround yourself with. Do you surround yourself with people like you – of the same caliber, or with the broken, the despised, and the low? Do you enjoy being around the people of Christ's kingdom or those of the now kingdom?

Second, consider how you spend and invest your money. Those who are middle-class in spirit will give generously only *after* their own financial plans or goals are secured. Only the poor in spirit – the truly humble – who are part of the eternal kingdom will be joyfully eager to assume financial risk and present loss for the sake of eternal generosity.

And third – consider how you respond when your public identification with Christ ushers some form of suffering into your life.

Are you able to,



Rejoice in your present suffering for Jesus?

This is the only command found in the verses we've read:

Rejoice in that day – what day? – the very day when people hate you and exclude you and ruin your reputation for the sake of your obedience to Him – *Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!*

Why?



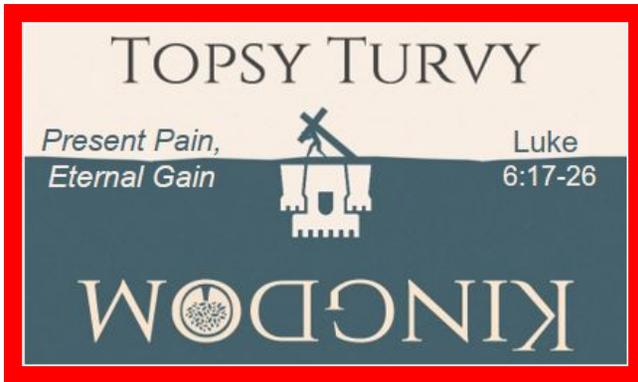
Because in **verse 23**, *your reward is great in heaven*. Before God's very presence you are even now receiving an eternal weight of glory that is far greater than this momentary light affliction!¹⁹



And persecution now assures you that you are indeed one of God's people! Exclusion from this world that hated Christ validates your identification with Christ!

There is no greater joy than the realization that you are in Christ Jesus!! So rejoice when you find yourself weak, hungry, grieving, and excluded here in the kingdom of now... for following our Suffering Servant will always mean present loss. But this present pain accomplishes eternal gain God's good and sovereign power.

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:17-18



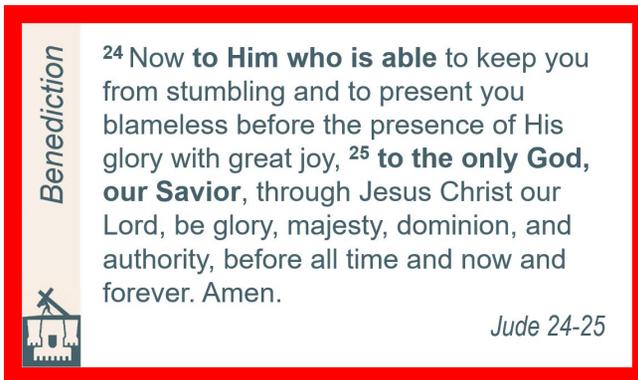
Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, ...according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!
Jude 24-25

Let's pray for His grace to trust Christ who humbled Himself, and took on all our weaknesses so that by His power – we might be forever healed and free!

<I'd Rather Have Jesus>

Let's pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,

Benediction



Recommended Resources on Present Pain, Eternal Gain:

- Luke 1:46-55
- Luke 4:17-21 (c.f. Isaiah 61:1-3)
- Luke 5:31-32
- Luke 9:21-27
- Luke 10:28
- Luke 12:4-7, 8-12, 13-21
- Luke 13:30
- Luke 14:15-24, 25-33
- Luke 16:14-15, 19-31
- Luke 18:9-14, 15-17, 29-30

- <http://www.newcityindy.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Upside-Down-Kingdom.Tim-Keller.pdf>
- <https://www.tvresources.net/resource-library/sermons/blessings-and-woes>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/slain-in-the-shadow-of-the-almighty>
- <https://www.persecution.com/>

- *Shadow of the Almighty*, Elizabeth Elliot
- *Foxe: Voices of the Martyrs*, John Foxe
- *The Triumphant Church*, Wurmbrand, Piper, & Martin

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Luke 6:20-49. Some have summarized the main point of Jesus' sermon as, "love is the chief mark of Christian discipleship." How would you summarize the main themes and argument of Jesus' sermon?
2. Review the 4 blessings and 4 woes in Luke 6:20-26. Why is God's kingdom so counter-cultural, and anti-worldly? How come Christ-followers are no longer controlled by the values of the world?
3. Note how often Luke uses the word "now" in Luke 6:20-26. Contrast the power of the "now" kingdom, and the power of the "then" kingdom in this text. Which kingdom are you living for? How does your money and time with other people evidence your true kingdom loyalty?
4. Read Luke 6:23. What day is meant by "in that day"? Discuss the only command that appears in verse 23, as it relates to this phrase. How is this possible considering the immediate context of vv. 17-19?
5. Read Matthew 5:3. Are you "poor in spirit" or "middle-class in spirit"? What cost would be too much for you to pay for your identification as a disciple of Jesus? Where is your true treasure found?
6. Read Hebrews 13:3 and 1 Peter 4:12-14. Spend time praying together for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.