

Seeing Jesus: Blessing and Cursing
Luke 6:12-36
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Jesus' description of the happy life is shocking and subversive: poverty, hunger, weeping, and rejection. What is he saying, why should we believe him, and what should we do about it?

I) What is Jesus saying?

A) What he is not saying

- That poverty, etc., re good in themselves
- Why we know this

B) What then is Jesus saying?

- Put positively: vv. 20-23
- Put negatively: vv. 24-26

II) Why should we believe Jesus?

A) He wouldn't lie to us

- The beatitudes describe his own life.
- *V. 20: ...he lifted up his eyes on his disciples*

B) Our own experience

- 1) We cannot rely on riches, etc., to deliver sustained happiness.
- 2) Intimations of a deeper reality of which Jesus is also speaking
- 3) The good things in life can deceive us

C) Jesus has proven the beatitudes by emerging from the other side

v. 21a, 21b, 23: ...for you shall be satisfied...you shall laugh...your reward is great

III) How do we embrace the happy life? What do we do?

A) Subvert the world by loving your enemies

v. 27: ...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...

B) Not a vindictive "kindness trick"

Conclusion: Love. Then laugh (*v.21b*)

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) How do we know from the beatitudes and from Jesus' actual ministry that he does not view poverty, hunger, sorrow, and rejection as good things in themselves?
- 2) Discuss the following: "The truly happy life is the life that identifies with Jesus and follows him, even it, for a time, that life suffers. And the cursed life is the life that ignores Jesus in the pursuit of present wealth, pleasure, happiness or popularity."
- 3) With what tone do you imagine Jesus said vv. 24-26? Why? How does Jesus' tone challenge us?
- 4) People speak of the law of diminishing returns when it comes to centering one's life on riches or pleasure. The more you have, the less satisfying they become, and therefore the more you need. Do you agree?
- 5) It is easy to make being happy the most important thing in life. We see it, for example, when people get divorced because they no longer feel fulfilled with each other. In what other ways do we see people allowing the pursuit of happiness to control their decisions? Jesus says that that we are cursed when we do this. Why?
- 6) Discuss the following: "Could it be that physical hunger, as terrible as it can be, is only a partial taste of the far more devastating experience of being starved for God—utterly abandoned—because you have ignored Jesus and decided to carry your sins with you into eternity? Could it be that a person's regret over marrying the wrong person or not marrying the right person, as hard as it can be, is only a partial taste of the regret that will arise one day if she has let Jesus the heavenly groom go?"
- 7) The good things in life can be a curse because they can deceive us into thinking we do not need God. Do you agree? Can you illustrate?
- 8) How does Jesus' resurrection prove that the blessings and curses in Luke 6 are true?
- 9) Reflect on the following: "Jesus means us to subvert our enemies by being kind to them. Our decision to do so is good, but it is inadequate unless our own hearts have been deeply subverted by Jesus' love for us, so that we genuinely and deeply want the best for our enemies. We can 'kill 'em with kindness' but our hearts' deep aim should never be to 'kill'."
- 10) Make a plan to love an enemy and pray over it.