

*Sermon on Luke 6:17-26 prepared by Jonathan Shradar*

**Luke 6:17-26** (John Zaal)

**Jesus is for those who have nothing but him.**

“One day the sky won’t be stained with bombs or the earth with blood, because the glory of the Lamb will illumine creation forever.” Jonathan Dodson

Headlines and hope - We have spent the last few years grasping at hope and the images we see across the screens of our lives each day this week can’t be described as hopeful. Not that war or sickness, life or death, are new, but in some seasons they speak with a megaphone and we are left grasping...

We need something to hold onto, something secure. To keep us.

Most often we look for that security in things we can control; my opinion, my diet, my retirement accounts... but most of us have lived long enough to realize those things don’t cut it. At the deepest part of who we are, we long for something bigger. Something more, real.

Most of us are here today because we’ve come to realize there IS something to hold onto that lasts, that perseveres, or better, someone who holds us. Jesus.

But this hope works differently. We look to little things for immediate relief, but hope in Jesus looks from something huge, something already done, with relief eternally experienced but at times, seemingly far off. And that is good.

Maturity in our journey with Jesus means increasingly finding reliance in that; what can feel far off but is a Kingdom made ours.

We see it in the Sermon on the Plain (level place).

Following Jesus gives us hope to persevere - but it is a hope that widdles away lesser things. The Kingdom, the Way of Jesus, is for those that have nothing but Him.

Situation: Jesus has called the twelve, the Apostles that will be the “lieutenants” of his ministry and as he and they come off of a mountain, there must have been a level of excitement among the crowd of disciples, people that had heard the call to follow Jesus.

But the audience has swollen beyond just the faithful. “A great number of people from near and far.” All of Judea, Jerusalem, the coastal cities. The masses have come to hear Jesus and be healed of their diseases.

And then he preaches.

This is a sermon similar to Matthew’s sermon on the mount, but given some of the distinctive differences and locations it is not likely the same sermon. More likely that Jesus preached these things often.

Dave Hansen will occasionally rib me that I only have one sermon... and that is me just trying to be like Jesus! Same thing at play here.

On this level place Jesus contrasts sources of hope. It’s the ongoing struggle of humanity and will be through the rest of his ministry, “look here not there...”

In hearing this contrast however, we gain important clues about the life that follows Jesus...

## **Kingdom Hope**

This sermon is personal proclamation. “Looking up at his disciples...” Here, Jesus does what he promised to do.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” -- **Luke 4:18-19** (CSB)

Blessed are you who are poor... the Kingdom of God is yours.  
Blessed are you who are now hungry... because you will be filled.  
Blessed are you who weep now... because you will laugh.

Usually in preaching we would take these in turn and unpack each - but I think it is the overarching reality that serves us today. Hope in Jesus doesn't look like we expect.

They have all followed him for his teaching and healing. His restoring of what was broken. And he says the thing that makes the real difference is just being part of his Kingdom - nothing else. Being his.

These people have nothing else. And Jesus calls them blessed.

American caveats. Usually in these types of sermons we have to provide a bunch of caveats to make sure we stay comfortable in our relative comfort. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount says "poor in Spirit" so we make it less a condition of life and more of a spiritual feeling. Which isn't all wrong.

But these people are actually poor. They are actually hungry. They are actually weeping.

All the things we are marketed and told are bad - no one wants to be poor, hungry and sad - this is their life.

Jesus says it is better than okay because you are blessed when you have nothing but me - and eternal Kingdom, satisfaction, joy, will be yours. All they bring is their need.

Not a new concept in Scripture.

"*Ptōchos*" frequently referred to the pious poor who looked to and depended on God. Jesus is not saying that poverty in itself is a state of happiness or blessing; it is a blessing only when accompanied by trust in God.

...people who feel dissatisfied with the present world and their lot in it and who long for what God has to give them... hungry.

The psalmists knew this hunger. "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:1, 2). And, "O God, you are my God;

earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1).

The thing is, we don't always have good ways of describing it, but there is a longing in all of us, a sense that things aren't right, and an ache for renewal. We try to find it in all sorts of things, identity, material, fame, anonymity. But it is only resolved, renewal is only found, in Jesus.

This Kingdom that is yours, that is where you find what you have been looking for.

“In Christ alone my hope is found  
He is my light, my strength, my song  
This cornerstone, this solid ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
What heights of love, what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease  
My comforter, my all in all  
Here in the love of Christ I stand”

Blessed are you...

We then live holding things loosely. This is a life in the way of Jesus.

We work, save, plan, but don't make these things ultimate and fight the impulse to find hope in them daily. We raise our eyes beyond ourselves to our source of hope and in order to see other souls in need.

We feel the brokenness. Images of war. Fear of more. We have had our share of death these last three years, even if we try to deny it.

Feeling this mourning this week as dear friends essentially say goodbye to a mother with terminal cancer. When weeping becomes wailing...

“We are called to weep over lost souls, over people who will go into eternal darkness without Christ. We are to weep over the world's misery, over the injustice that falls on so many helpless people, over the unfairness that victimizes the weak, over child abuse, over battered women, over adultery, over divorce,

over betrayals, over rejection, over loneliness, over those who now laugh but who, unless they turn to Christ, will suffer God's condemnation forever... We weep now but look forward to the eternal joy that will be ours in Heaven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

We feel the ache, the hunger for our Creator and we endeavor to never neglect it, the wild sense in us to follow him. This hunger is for and will be satisfied in Jesus.

I have everything when Jesus is all I have.

For those in the Kingdom, this is meant to be our heart posture, our approach to life.

"Just the opposite of our natural valuations, God's blessings rest upon the poor, not the rich; the hungry, not the full; the weeping, not the laughing; the persecuted, not the popular...The gospel of Jesus truly brings blessedness and wholeness. But in this fallen, sin-ravaged world this blessedness will often look like poverty, hunger, weeping, and persecution." GTB

Upside down. It is going to rile people.

"Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man." -- **Luke 6:22** (CSB)

Not because of my bad opinions but because my hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

His disciples do not compromise with fallen culture. Their belief system is firmly rooted in Christ and his divine Word. They believe that Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world, that he is the only way to the Father.

"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note — your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets." -- **Luke 6:23** (CSB)

Glenn Pearson: faithful, reliant on God, successful by these standards. He has stepped into his reward.

When we follow, knowing our need, hungry for more of Jesus, and facing a hopeless world, we are in the company of prophets.

This way is contrasted with those in woe.

### **Selfish Nope**

“The other group of people have what the present time can offer -satisfaction of their desire for material goods, happiness and a good reputation in the world - and want nothing more. No need for them to cry out to God in prayer, for they think they have enough!”

Woe to you who have a false hope in self-satisfaction. This is great sorrow and distress.

Woe to you who are rich, for you have your comfort. Now but not lasting.

Woe to you who are full, hunger is coming, what you have won't keep you satisfied.

Woe to you who are laughing, who cackle now, mourning and weeping, gnashing of teeth will come.

This is woe to those trusting in themselves. That they can be justified. That they can be complete. That they can strive their way into happiness and wholeness but try as they might, are left empty.

Looking for hope in all the wrong places - self. We know these well. Just finish the sentence, “things would be better if \_\_\_\_\_” or “I would finally be happy if \_\_\_\_\_”

They might be good things, things Jesus even wants us to have, but when we view them as ultimate, when they erase our soul poverty and need for God, they ruin us. Sometimes it hits all at once, other times it is a slow fade away from what we are meant for.

“A duck was flying with his flock in the springtime northward across Europe. During the flight he came down in a Danish barnyard where there were tame

ducks. He enjoyed some of their corn. He stayed, for an hour, then for a day, then for a week, then for a month, and finally, because he relished the good fare and the safety of the barnyard, he stayed all summer. But one autumn day when the flock of wild ducks were winging their way southward again, they passed over the barnyard, and their mate heard their cries. He was stirred with a strange thrill of joy and delight, and with a great flapping of wings he rose in the air to join his old comrades in their flight. But he found that his good fare had made him so soft and heavy that he could rise no higher than the eaves of the barn. So he dropped back again to the barnyard, and said to himself, "Oh well, my life is safe here and the food is good." Every spring and autumn when he heard the wild ducks calling, his eyes would gleam for a moment and he would begin to flap his wings. But finally the day came when the wild ducks flew over him and uttered their cry, but he paid not the slightest attention to them." Soren Kierkegaard

The countless voices that have gone before to tell us there must be something more...

"I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it's not the answer." Jim Carey

He didn't give the answer... fascinating subculture on the internet full of articles about what he actually meant! Russell Brandt, Tom Brady, and others... World applauds because we sense it too - that something is off but we refuse to give it up for true satisfaction.

Self above everything and everyone. To be a god ourselves. What all these things promise and none can give.

Leaves us apart from God. Uncomfortable. Hungry. Mourning and weeping. Hopeless.

There may be an audience for it. But it is death.

"Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the false prophets." -- **Luke 6:26** (CSB)

To have a reputation of self-satisfaction is nothing more than pain.

## Get Hope

Power was coming out from him, healing them all. The preacher will keep going. From these lines about our hearts and hopes, he will move on to our hands and show how citizens of His Kingdom act.

But he will also live all of it for us.

The One with nowhere to rest his head. The man of sorrows. Who will weep in a garden. Who thirsts on the cross.

The rescuer that was reviled by those that thought they were enough...

Giving himself so that we would be healed. That we would be saved. Given life and the Kingdom.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” -- **2**

**Corinthians 8:9** (CSB)

“who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even to death on a cross. 9 For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” -- **Philippians 2:6-11** (CSB)

That in him we might become the righteousness of God... the people of hope, satisfaction, and joy.

What you live for matters; what you live from matters more.

We live from his finished work. From his promises to us. From the gift of His Spirit to comfort and guide us. From the day that is already decided.



“This is a remarkable reversal of values. They will prize what the world calls pitiable, and suspect what the world thinks desirable. Values which are taken for granted by other men are questioned by them, and are considered in the searching light of spiritual truth, hidden reality, and a future life.” Michael Wilcock

**Jesus is for those who have nothing but him.**

Believe in him. What's more, live like he is all you've got. Let it shape your resiliency, relationships, work, school, all of life. Have unwavering trust in Jesus and a hope that sees where it is headed - to being filled, laughing, rejoicing with him!

Many things clamor for your devotion... only One provides what you are longing for.

Blessed are you who cling to nothing but Jesus... for you are His!