

## Luke 6:20-26 ESV

### Kingdom Life

#### **Intro:**

Reflection on the last 3 months. The phrase ‘the quality of life’ can be easily misunderstood. Some would consider the quality of life to be about the luxuries that are afforded through hard work, investments, and material success. However, this material life will one day pass away, just like each of our physical bodies. True life in Jesus Christ has a quality that goes beyond this material world; it’s afforded through His blood shed on the cross of calvary; it’s security rests on His resurrection and future return; it’s success rests on a victory has already been won. This life, in Christ, is experienced by those who have a share in the kingdom of heaven. Many of Jesus’ teachings are given to help us understand what the kingdom of heaven is like. But here, He helps us to understand what the quality of life is like for those who are co-heirs in His kingdom and the quality of life for those who are not.

#### **Passage:**

Luke 6:20-26 ESV – Stand as we read God’s Word

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup> “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

<sup>22</sup> “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! <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

<sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

<sup>26</sup> “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.” – you may be seated

### **Chronology & Parallel Passages:**

The passage this week is the opening of what has become known as the Sermon on the Plain. Its parallel is Matthew 5:1-12 which is the opening of the Sermon on the Mount. In the opening of these two famous sermons, Jesus provides some rich and historically meaningful teachings, often called the Beatitudes. Scholars have written libraries full of books on these two passages and I am sure that many of you have heard your fair share of messages on these passages. We will see how the thread of blessings and woes have been spoken through the prophets and psalms. A quick look at the structure of the passage reveals that there are four “blessings” in verses 20-23 each with a corresponding “woe” in verses 24-26. This is called a step parallelism.

It’s worth noting that there are two words that translate into English as “blessed” from Hebrew, and they both have a counterpart in the Greek. Let’s look at both sets to see the distinction that is made and how that can lead to misunderstandings in this teaching. The first set of words that translate “blessed” are ‘eulogia’ in the Greek and ‘baraka’ in Hebrew. This word is used in prayer when asking God for some blessing related to healing, health, prosperity, victory in battle, or other such physical elements. The other word that translates into “blessed” is ‘asir’ in Hebrew and ‘makarios’ in the Greek. These words do not invoke a wish of some physical blessing, but rather recognize an existing state of

happiness or good fortune. In other words, they represent a quality of spirituality that is already present. In the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, it is noted that, when used in the New Testament, 'makarios' overwhelmingly refers to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. The son or daughter of a King doesn't inherit the kingdom because of what they have or from what they have done, but by who they are. The characteristics of God are active in the lives of those who live in His kingdom as sons and daughters. There is a separate birth, through the Holy Spirit, into God's family.

John 3:1-6, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>This man came to Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again<sup>[b]</sup> he cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."<sup>[c]</sup> "

In the previous passage, Luke 6:12-19, we read that Jesus went up a mountain to pray all night about who he would choose as the twelve apostles. After choosing them He came down with a multitude of other disciples who were following Him and many others from all over Jerusalem, Judea, even as far as Tyre and Sidon. In these moments, Jesus healed and cured all those who were sick and cleansed any who had unclean spirits as power was coming out from Him. After all this, He began to teach.

**Passage:**

Luke 6:20-23, “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

1. He lifted up His eyes on His disciples.
  - a. This teaching seems to be directed at the multitude of disciples rather than just the twelve chosen to be apostles.
  - b. In Luke 10, Jesus sent out 72 disciples, two by two to take the Gospel into every town He was about to go and speak about the kingdom of God and perform miracles. Upon their return, they rejoiced that even the demons submitted to them in Jesus’ name. Jesus says in Luke 10:20 “However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” And in Luke 10:23 “Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.”
  - c. Along with forming a renewed nation, Jesus is also reforming the teachings of this new nation. In Jesus time, the phrase ‘the kingdom of God’ was used to describe a future Jewish nation state where God alone would rule as King. Jesus is declaring that the kingdom of God is already present. The disciples had to unlearn what they knew and allow Jesus to teach them about this new kingdom.
2. Blessed are the poor, or poor in spirit as recorded in Matthew. Those familiar with the prophets would understand that ‘the poor’ are often associated with the pious and humble who seek God.
  - a. Isaiah 66:1-2 “Thus says the LORD:  
“Heaven is my throne,  
and the earth is my footstool;  
what is the house that you would build for me,

and what is the place of my rest?  
<sup>2</sup>All these things my hand has made,  
and so all these things came to be,  
declares the LORD.

But this is the one to whom I will look:  
he who is humble and contrite in spirit  
and trembles at my word.”

- b. Jesus tells them and us that the kingdom of God is already present in ‘the poor’.

Luke 6:21 ““Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

1. Blessed are you who are hungry now. Hunger and thirst are some of the most primal desires in a human. They can consume a person’s being when faced with starvation. Each one of us has a spiritual hunger and thirst that also must be met. Jesus is the bread of life and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied.

- a. In John 6, Jesus feeds the 5000 with 5 loaves of bread and two fish. The next day the crowd searched after Him and when they found Him, they asked why He left. In John 6:26-27, “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.””
- b. After this, Jesus says something both amazing a difficult. John 6:53-54 “So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink

his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” and in verse 66 we read that after this many disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.

- c. The heart of this Beatitude is found in Jeremiah 15:16 “Your words were found, and I ate them,  
and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart,  
for I am called by your name,  
O LORD, God of hosts.”
2. Blessed are you who weep now. Weeping is associated with those who are low and in a needy condition. Weeping for others also requires compassion and a softened heart to their needs. True weeping occurs as one becomes aware that all are low and needy because of sin and its effects.
  - a. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul speaks about the grief that his first letter had caused them. 2 Cor 7:9-10, “As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. <sup>10</sup>For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”
    - i. The residents of Nineveh knew a form of this grief and mourned their sin in sackcloth and ashes and repented at the words of the Lord spoken through Jonah. In response, Lord held back the impending destruction and had compassion on the residents of Nineveh.
  - b. The one who is actively grieving the sin of the world will laugh, joyfully, when God makes all things right.

- i. Listen to the words of King David in Psalm 30:4-5 “Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,  
and give thanks to his holy name.<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>For his anger is but for a moment,  
and his favor is for a lifetime.<sup>[c]</sup>  
Weeping may tarry for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.”

Luke 6:22-23 “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! <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

1. Up to this point, all the Beatitudes are known by the disciples through the prophets and psalms. But here, a crucial shift has taken place. Loyalty to the person of Jesus Christ is openly introduced. No prophet or rabbi in the history of Israel had asked the people or followers to die for them. Loyalty to Jesus is inevitable if one seeks the fulfillment of righteousness from God. This loyalty will be tested by the world with all types of evil, but the reward is great in heaven for those who persevere. Just as the prophets were martyred, so were the apostles and many others who remained loyal to Jesus. For those who actively persecute the saints loyal to Jesus and stand opposed to God’s righteousness, their fate is found with the son of destruction.

Luke 6:24-26 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

<sup>26</sup> “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.”

1. The prophet Jeremiah was accustomed to bringing bad news to the Israelites that were not walking according to God’s commandments. In Jeremiah 18, he brought a rebuke from Lord and spoke of impending disaster because of their evil ways. They plotted to kill him and eventually put Jeremiah in prison in stocks. Upon his release the next day, Jeremiah cried out to the Lord. In his cry we can see the struggle between the opposing attitudes represented by the blessings and woes, between those who actively love the Lord and seek Him and those who actively persecute His followers. Jeremiah 20:7-18 “O LORD, you have deceived me,  
and I was deceived;  
you are stronger than I,  
and you have prevailed.  
I have become a laughingstock all the day;  
everyone mocks me.  
<sup>8</sup> For whenever I speak, I cry out,  
I shout, “Violence and destruction!”  
For the word of the LORD has become for me  
a reproach and derision all day long.  
<sup>9</sup> If I say, “I will not mention him,  
or speak any more in his name,”  
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire  
shut up in my bones,  
and I am weary with holding it in,  
and I cannot.  
<sup>10</sup> For I hear many whispering.  
Terror is on every side!  
“Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”  
say all my close friends,  
watching for my fall.  
“Perhaps he will be deceived;  
then we can overcome him  
and take our revenge on him.”

<sup>11</sup> But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;  
therefore my persecutors will stumble;  
they will not overcome me.

They will be greatly shamed,  
for they will not succeed.

Their eternal dishonor  
will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup> O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous,  
who sees the heart and the mind,<sup>[a]</sup>  
let me see your vengeance upon them,  
for to you have I committed my cause.

<sup>13</sup> Sing to the LORD;  
praise the LORD!

For he has delivered the life of the needy  
from the hand of evildoers.

<sup>14</sup> Cursed be the day  
on which I was born!

The day when my mother bore me,  
let it not be blessed!

<sup>15</sup> Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father,  
“A son is born to you,”  
making him very glad.

<sup>16</sup> Let that man be like the cities  
that the LORD overthrew without pity;  
let him hear a cry in the morning  
and an alarm at noon,

<sup>17</sup> because he did not kill me in the womb;  
so my mother would have been my grave,  
and her womb forever great.

<sup>18</sup> Why did I come out from the womb  
to see toil and sorrow,  
and spend my days in shame?”

2. Those who see themselves as rich and superior to others have no need to submit to Jesus as King. Those who are full of themselves

have no hunger for righteousness. Those who laugh at the condition and expense of others lack the compassion necessary to seek repentance. Those who tell people what they want to hear instead of the truth, in love, deceive both themselves and others.

- a. In Luke 13 Jesus says to strive to enter through the narrow door because once the door is closed, for those left outside, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- b. There are only 2 paths, the narrow path that leads to life and the wide path that leads to destruction. Which path are you on?

### **Applications:**

#### 1. Future Inheritance

- a. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

<sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

- b. What, then, gets you into the kingdom of God? Will preaching in the pulpit every Sunday morning for 30 years get you there, or leading a Bible study in prison, or how about selling everything you have and move to Africa to spread the Gospel? Only those who are born of the Holy Spirit can enter the kingdom of heaven.
  - c. If you are unsure about your future, cry out to the Lord. Believe in Jesus Christ, confess and repent your sins, and ask God to be born of the Holy Spirit.
2. Labor of Love
- a. The work of the Lord does not earn salvation, it is the active lifestyle of those who are brothers and sisters with Christ.
  - b. You are free to serve God as the Spirit leads. In ancient times, the slave or servant of a king had a higher standing and more freedom than a freeman did. There will come a time when everything built by man will come crashing down and only the Rock and that built upon the Rock will stand.
  - c. John 3:7-8 “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You<sup>[d]</sup> must be born again.’<sup>8</sup> The wind<sup>[e]</sup> blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Prayer: That each one here today will go into your mission field this week and labor for the glory of God the Father with a pure heart and right attitude. Live blessed!

**Benediction:**

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and

good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.”