

Luke 6:12-26

“A Proper Perspective”

Think about it, what will it take for you to find true satisfaction in this life? What's the purpose of life? Wherein lies the secret of true happiness? If in your mind you're thinking something along the lines of “Fortune, fame and laughter” you might find yourself surprised with today's text.

Jesus would have you to know that you will never find true satisfaction, true contentment in the things of this world. Even a nominal survey of the life of Solomon would surely show us that; the wealthiest man of his day (making kings look like paupers) and the wisest man of his day (or of any day for that matter [outside of Christ]). Yet certainly the scriptures demonstrate that he was also one of the most miserable men of his day as well. This guy had fame, he had fortune, every material benefit, 1,000 women at his beck and call; 700 wives and 300 concubines. He withheld himself from nothing that this world had to offer, overdosed on everything he could in the hopes of finding meaning/happiness. He says of himself that whatever his eyes desired he refused to refrain himself. Then he writes, “*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.*” Eccl 2:11 Translation; it was meaningless, it didn't do a thing for him inwardly, it didn't satisfy him beyond the moment temporarily.

We have this false notion that true happiness is out there we just haven't found it yet, we need a little more money, a little more power or notoriety...*then* we'll be happy. But here's what we need to sink into our heart; *the flesh is never satisfied*. It's always hungering for just a little bit more; that's what the scripture's talking about when it says, “*Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.*” Prov 27:20 700 wives; 300 concubines...seems a bit excessive doesn't it? You know what that screams to this age of quick and ez divorce, drop this person and move on with another person? Listen men, if you can't be content with one woman, then you won't be content with 1,000 women. The problem is not in your spouse, it's in you. The flesh is never satisfied.

That's what Jesus was talking about when He said to the woman at the well, "*Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.*" John 4:13-14 You can drink of the waters of fame, the waters of fortune, the waters of excessive relationships trying to get your fill, but you'll thirst again.

It's not until you come to Christ and receive the gift of everlasting life; it's not until you drink deep of the waters of salvation that you will find contentment and satisfaction. Satisfaction isn't found in the things of this world; but in Christ alone. But here's the deal, you have to recognize your need, you have to realize your own wretched condition, until you do you won't cry out to God, you won't seek what Jesus has to offer.

That's why Jesus pronounces the blessing on those who realize and will recognize their need. We'll get there in a few minutes, for now look at Vs 12.

Vs12-16

The appointing of the apostles; just a couple things I want to quickly draw out of this portion then we'll move on. It's interesting to think of the fact that we really don't know much about most of these guys and some we really know virtually nothing about other than their names. Their fame will be reserved for heaven; it's kind of encouraging to think that if an apostle can be virtually unknown and still receive a great reward than the way heaven rewards me won't be according to the way history records my accomplishments. God doesn't ask me to set the bar by accomplishing incredible things; He simply asks me to be faithful with that which He's entrusted to me. God is looking for faithfulness from us; He'll take it from there. If you're faithful in what He's entrusted to you you'll be rewarded the same as the one who walks in the limelight who was faithful to what God entrusted to him/her. It's not so much *what* we're called to do as it is our *faithfulness* to do it.

Basically we have a couple sets of brothers here, some business partners, a tax collector who'd worked for Rome, a Zealot who'd hated Rome and a traitor. But really outside of Peter, James, John, and Judas we don't know much about the rest, little bits perhaps here and there concerning a couple of them but that's it.

Now, what's the difference between a disciple and an apostle? A disciple is a "learner" one who would follow his teacher, there's an element of personal attachment behind the word "disciple" so it goes beyond "student" but they're learners nonetheless. The idea behind the word, "apostle" is that of an ambassador. One who has a message from another who has sent them and they come representing both the power and the person of the individual whom they represent.

What we need to see in this section is this: 1st Jesus *communes* with God, then He calls His apostles. He prays before He appoints them a position; not just a little bit, all night long. Why? Well, because those whom He would appoint would be pivotal in the establishing of the foundation of the church throughout the entire world for all time. You might say it was a *significant* decision that He was faced with. He didn't leave it to democracy, He wasn't concerned for who the most charismatic person was, He wasn't thinking of who the most popular guys may've been, He was seeking the heart of God. and I have discovered that God rarely picks the popular, the most influential or the "slam dunk" decision. Remember these words? 1 Sam 16:7 "*For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*" (1 Cor 1:26-31) Here's the application for you and me. When you have, when I have a significant decision to make we do well to marinate/saturate that decision in prayer. We do well to seek the Lord with our whole heart that we might get a grip on His heart pertaining to the matter. That's what Jesus did, that's what we're to do.

Vs17-19

The idea here being that people were traveling great distances to see Him and receive some sort of touch from Him. If you look at one of the maps in the back of your bible you'll discover that Tyre and Sidon were way up north and east as to where Judea and Jerusalem were farther south. The bottom line here is that Jesus was at this point a significantly famous individual.

You can sorta see the scene in your mind, after being up on the mountain with His disciples He comes down into the plane, on a level place where the familiar scene of multitudes of people were waiting for Him. They were seeking 2 things, to *hear* Him and to be *healed by* Him; they were looking to hear Him *teach* and receive His *touch* upon their lives.

Not only on a physical plane, but there were those with spiritual needs as well being tormented or possessed by demonic entities. and We read that “power went out from Him and healed them all...”

So not only did Jesus have the power of God *in* Him, but the power of God went out *from* Him to minister and meet people’s needs. Here’s what I want you to see; many are there to be served, Jesus was there to serve. It seems to me that like these people we’re all too eager to want the power of God *in* us to somehow *help* us, but how many of us really long for the power of God to go out *from* us to touch lives in need around us?

There are people all around us to who need to hear God’s word, who need to receive the healing touch of Jesus Christ upon their lives. They’re afflicted by various ailments and diseases. We spoke recently on midweek of the diseases of bitterness and unforgiveness, the disease of lust and/or addiction. We spoke of the debilitating disease of depression and how Christ was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was placed upon Him and it’s by His stripes that we’re healed. Jesus wants to touch your life and take those things from you; He desires that you *hear Him*, He wants to *heal you* if you’ll simply press in *on* Him that you might “get in touch” *with* Him.

These people were purposed to get in touch with Jesus. We read that the whole multitude “sought to touch Him”. Understand that there is a certain amount of passion and persistence behind that word “sought”. There is a purposed resolve to try and make something happen in that word. They wanted to get close to Jesus because if they touched Him *power* would go forth from Him and they would be *changed*. Do you understand what I’m saying there? They were passionately pressing in on Jesus because if they got in touch with *Him*, He would change *them*. Here’s the question. How passionate are we about really *pursuing* Christ? How desperately do we really want to be in touch with Him; because if you’re persistent in it, if I’m passionate about it Jesus will change our lives. We’ll experience His power and something in us will change, many have what we might call a “casual pursuit” few have a “strong passion” to seek the Lord in truth.

He was sending a signal to His new apostles, and to you and me that we have a purpose here and it's to share His love and His power with those have need to hear Him and receive healing in Him.

Ok. Beginning in Vs 20 we come to Luke's passage that resembles Matt's gospel Ch's 5-7 in the portion in Matt's gospel known as the Sermon on the Mt. However it seems to me that contrary to what some believe this isn't simply an edited version of the same message but rather it's a similar message spoken by Jesus at a different time. More than one reason for that not the least of which in Matt's gospel Jesus is on the hillside, here we read that He stood on a level place; in Matt's gospel we read of the blessings, in Luke's gospel we read of "woes" as well. It wouldn't be uncommon at all for Jesus to repeat Himself when speaking to a different crowd on the same topic, or even remind the same crowd of pertinent issues pertaining to the kingdom. Even as Peter said, "*I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.*" 2 Peter 1:12

As for the "Beatitudes" people wonder why they're called "Beatitudes" the simplest explanation of which is this: these are *attitudes* that should *be* in your life as a believer. I should point out that neither the beatitudes nor anything found in this message constitutes the gospel message. Following the sermon on the Mt isn't the recipe for salvation or how I'm to live if I want God to save me. I'm saved by grace through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ on my behalf and nothing else.

It is however a proper perspective/understanding in the life of the believer and how the life of Christ goes on display in the believer's life. Of course some of these things will be stirring in us prior to ever coming to Christ helping us to see our need for Christ, and they'll be attitudes that are maintained in us once we're *in* Christ.

One has said, “Jesus’ Beatitudes pierce to the heart of human values, and force us to ask the basic questions we find so easy to ignore. What is life all about for me? What moves me? What determines my choices? What makes me glad or sad? Am I controlled by my needs, struggling as the pagans do to make sure I have enough? (Matt. 6:25–32) Am I controlled by pleasure, satisfied with the laughter and distraction I can find in amusements? Am I controlled by a desire for wealth, satisfied to see my cash and credit grow? (Luke 6:24) Am I controlled by a need to be liked and admired? (v. 26) Jesus said, ‘*How miserable for you!* You might better be hungry, poor, weeping, and hated. For then at least you might turn from these empty things to Me, to find out what life is really all about.’ Jesus’ words jolted the men of His day, and they ought to jolt you and me too.¹”

with that let’s read Vs 20-26 then we’ll come back and consider them a little more carefully.

Vs20-26

These last few Vs read much like the opening of James Ch 5. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if James was thinking of these kinds of statements as he penned that portion of his letter.

But the people then were much like we are today. Thinking that happiness comes from all the material possessions I can acquire, or holding a position of power, enjoying pleasures and popularity that only money can buy. So you can imagine how shocked they must’ve been when Jesus dropped this bomb that exploded in such a way as to leave them struggling to apprehend the fact that the true secret to happiness would be found in terms *just the opposite* of what they’d always thought and pursued...

It’s not a change in circumstances that we need, it’s a new outlook *on* and understanding *of* life that comes through a change in my relationship to God.

Now again we note that Jesus was speaking to His disciples, this wasn’t evangelical, He wasn’t calling unbelievers to repentance here but rather He was encouraging the believers who were forsaking all to follow Him.

¹ Richards, L., and Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher's commentary* (661). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

I should also point out that Jesus wasn't glorifying material poverty. Though it would appear as though God has a "soft spot" (if you will) for the destitute and poverty stricken the bible nowhere indicates that poverty is a sign of spirituality or a guarantee into His Kingdom. If you look at the Beatitudes in Matt's gospel you read where Jesus said, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Matt 5:3 The bottom line here is that the blessing comes to the one who will #1 recognize and realize their need and that #2 their need is greater than their own potential or ability to meet. The blessing is reserved for the person who realizes that apart from God moving in their lives, somehow intervening in their situation they're destined for destruction. Of course when you qualify that spiritually (Jesus said the words He spoke were spirit [Jhn 6:63]) than you're talking about a confession from the heart of one's own sinfulness and rebellion, and a recognition that he/she is with out any moral virtues whatsoever adequate to commend them to God. Jesus says here that the one who will recognize that they're poverty stricken of spirit (which [I might add] results in deep inner humility whereby I'm willing to cast myself on the mercies of God and beg for His forgiveness) will be rewarded: they receive the kingdom of God.

So apart from absolute bankruptcy of spirit you and I will not see the kingdom of heaven. Poverty of spirit is a prerequisite; apart from it we won't sense or see the need to be saved. It's the result of seeing God for who He truly is and/or responding to the work of the Holy Spirit in and upon our heart. It can't be artificially induced and God knows when it's genuine (Luke 18:9-14). Put plainly it's the polar opposite of pride. I also might add that it's not something that only begins my journey in Christ it abides *throughout* my journey in Christ, it's always before you. Apart from Jesus we can do nothing of any eternal value whatsoever; we're utterly/always dependent upon Him.

Now, true poverty of spirit will lead to a few things. In brief they are these; #1 A hunger for more of Christ in your life, #2 A brokenness over sin in your life, and #3 an isolation and a segregation from the world, notice. (Read Vs 21-23)

Again since nowhere in scripture does God equate physical hunger with spirituality I think we're safe to see Jesus' words here in the same light as Matt 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst *after righteousness*: for they shall be filled." What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness? In brief you're thirsting after the *Person* of God and the *precepts* of God; you want to know Christ more intimately, you want to walk in the ways and will of God, you want to obey the word of God. Jesus says here, "If that's your heart's desire I'm going to honor that, I'm going to meet you in that place and satisfy your longing to know Me more."

Of course the more you hunger after the things of God, the more innately aware of your own sinful condition you're going to become. You're going to be more acutely aware of the ramifications of sin all around you as you watch the news or read the paper or whatever. The things in your life and in this world that put Christ on the cross are a heavy reality to your heart. Jesus says, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh" that is, comfort is coming your way.

Now what is the result of someone who realizes their own poverty of spirit, hungers after Christ, mourns over sin and longs for righteousness to be dominant in their lives and in this world? Nobel peace prize? No, men hate you, exclude you; revile you and speak evil of you, lie about you. Why? Because the light that shines from your life reveals the deeds of darkness done in theirs and people don't like that. Jhn Ch 3, "*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*" John 3:19-20

When you're hated (not because you're weird) for Christ's sake Jesus says, "Take heart, you're in good company and your reward will be great. The prophets were treated the same way."

Vs24-26

Of course we need to realize that no more than poverty commends a man to God do riches condemn a man before God. It's true that the bible condemns the *love* of money, that is, making money your god. You can't serve God and money you'll love one and hate the other, serve one and despise the other. The meaning of life can't be summed up in a bank account or on a balance sheet.

The idea here is being self satisfied, seeing or sensing no need for Divine intervention because you have everything you need. You're comforted now, you've got it good now, why worry about tomorrow? A good commentary on this would be Luke 16:19-31. The warning here is not to find your fulfillment in the things of this world, material fullness can rob us of the awareness of our spiritual emptiness. Like when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and said, "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

He wasn't saying that they were sinners, but that they considered themselves righteous therefore didn't sense the need for a Savior. They were self sufficient. The point here is that if you see yourself as self-sufficient now; if you're satisfied with the things of this world then when you stand before God it'll be too late. The day will come when you will be hungry, you will weep and wail throughout eternity and nothing can be done for you then. Don't walk around with a false sense of eternal security because you have it good now; the good things you have in life now may turn out to be your misery throughout eternity.

A man by the name of H.H. Farmer wrote that "to Jesus the terrible thing about having wrong values in life and pursuing wrong things is not that you are doomed to bitter disappointment, but that you are *not*; not that you do not achieve what you want, but that you *do*" (*Things Not Seen*, Nishbet [London], p. 96).

Jesus is trying to wake us up to a proper perspective, don't seek satisfaction in the things of this world (you'll never find it). Find your contentment in Christ...

Prayer Points:

Lord You've definitely given us much to consider today. Help us to heed Your word and think carefully through where it is that we're seeking to find satisfaction; what our values are, what makes us tick and what motivates us. If we need an adjustment in our mindset Lord please...please impart to us a proper perspective, an eternal perspective. May You use our lives as a means for people to hear Your word and receive Your healing touch upon their lives. Help us to hunger for You more.

I want to extend the opportunity for you to enter in to the healing waters of salvation today. If God is dealing with you right where you're at, you're realizing the fact that you're a sinner. You're absolutely unable in any way to commend yourself to God but you want to cast yourself upon His mercies solely upon the basis of the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf than I want to give you the chance to do that. You realize that this world has nothing to offer you, no matter how hard you try you always thirst again and you desire to have Jesus quench the thirst of the deep recess of your heart. Let me encourage you to open your heart and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ