

Sermon Outline for Epiphany 6, Series C
“Blessings and Woes”

(sermon based on Luke 6:17-26)

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Introduction – Sermon on the Plain

- Teachings for Jesus’ *disciples* (v. 20) – not just crowds
- Similar content to Sermon on the Mount
- Shorter and different than Sermon on the Mount
- Repertoire vs. Reporting?

Beatitudes: Matthew 5 vs. Luke 6

Matthew 5:1-12, ESV ¹	Luke 6:17-26, ESV
¹ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:	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. ^{20a} And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:
³ “Blessed are the poor <u><i>in spirit</i></u> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”	^{20b} “Blessed are <u><i>you</i></u> who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”
⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”	
⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”	
⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst <u><i>for righteousness</i></u> , for they shall be satisfied.”	^{21a} “Blessed are <u><i>you</i></u> who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.”
	^{21b} “Blessed are <u><i>you</i></u> who weep now, for you shall laugh.”
⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”	
⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”	
⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”	

¹ All Scripture references, unless otherwise indicated, are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

<p>¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."</p>	<p>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."</p>
	<p>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."</p>

Q. What is a beatitude?

A. Pronouncement of Divine blessing!

(Greek: *makarios* vs. *eulogētos*, “fortunate/happy” vs. “blessed”)

“Luke’s” Beatitudes:

- Shorter
- Fewer
- More visceral (earthlier vs. “merely” spiritual)
- 2nd person (“y’all”) vs. 3rd person (“they/those”)

Luke’s Beatitudes and Woes (unique addition) are deeply concerned with our earthly reality, including poverty, hunger, and oppression.

This is NOT leftist Liberation theology (Christianity mixed with Marxism/Socialism).

📖 **“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:15).**

Rather, Luke’s Beatitudes reflect the “Great Reversal,” which is a common theme in his Gospel, beginning with Mary’s Magnificat:

📖 **“He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty” (Luke 1:52-53).**

According to William Barclay, regarding the Beatitudes, “we have read them so often that we have forgotten how revolutionary they are.”² The Beatitudes “take the accepted

² William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 76.

standards and turn them upside down. The people whom Jesus called happy the world would call wretched; and the people Jesus called wretched the world would call happy. Just imagine anyone saying, ‘Happy are the poor, and, Woe to the rich!’ To talk like that is to put an end to the world’s values altogether.”³

But God promises not to forget or ignore his children (disciples). The Beatitudes are eschatological—they deal with the End Times. They reflect the now/not yet reality of God’s kingdom (i.e., the “reign of God” [v. 20, CSM]) breaking into our world!

📖 **“Yahweh is my shepherd; I shall not lack” (Ps. 23:1, CSM).**

📖 **“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:16-17).**

Yet we shouldn’t think that **all** the blessings of the Christian life are only future-oriented with no present-day reality. Jesus says, “Yours **IS** the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20b) and “Your reward **IS** great in heaven” (vs. 23). God blesses us even today with the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit is a down payment (God’s deposit) on God’s promises. And God never breaks his promises. He **always** keeps his Word.

So even if we are poor, hungry, hurting, and hated now in this life, the best is yet to come. In this life we suffer from the consequences of sin—our sins and others’. People will brand us as bigots and brigands. Don’t be surprised: they said terrible things about the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles. But approval by the world is not a badge of honor: “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the **false** prophets” (Luke 6:26).

Both the religious leaders and representatives of the civil government mocked and abused Jesus during his arrest, trial, and on the cross. But God had the last laugh when Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, confounding all their plans and proving them ineffective.

Someday the night will pass. “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the mourning” (Psalm 30:5b). He will turn our mourning into dancing (Ps. 30:11) when Christ returns on the Last Day. Yet even now, as we await that great Day, we rejoice because we are blessed. The kingdom of God belongs to us. The Kingdom comes to us, here on earth as it is in heaven, through Jesus’ Word of life, in the waters of Holy Baptism, and in the Body and Blood of our Lord. Our “reward” (really, more of an inheritance) is eternal life, already stored up for us in heaven (Luke 6:23). We have nothing to fear of our enemies or those who mock Jesus and his Church. For we will have the last laugh on the Last Day. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh” (Luke 6:21b). In the name of the Father and of the Son and of ✠ the Holy Spirit. Amen.

³ Barclay, *Luke, ibid.*