

Sermon Topic: Sermon on the Plain by Rev David Ho

Sermon Text: Luke 6:12-26

Why Sermon on the Plain?

- Because the text says so (v. 12-19). He... stood on a level place ... (v. 17)
- Is it the same as Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5)? Possible for Jesus to preach same sermon in two places. What's more important is what Jesus taught in the sermon.

What is the meaning of "Blessed"? (v. 20 – 23; cf. "Woe to you" in v. 24 – 26)

- In the Old Testament, it evoked images of a long life; wealth; a large, healthy family; a full barn; and defeated enemies (Deut 28).
- God was teaching the nation (children) of Israel by means of rewards and punishments. He was teaching them how to live their lives.
- But in this context, Jesus was addressing His disciples (v. 20) who had left everything to follow Him. They asked, "What is in store for me?" (Luke 5:11, 28). So they needed to unlearn what it meant to be blessed when following Jesus.
- The blessed life comes not from getting, or from doing, but from being!
- It is about our attitudes toward circumstances (v. 20-26), people (v. 27-38), ourselves (v. 39-45) and God (v. 46-49).
- Nobody gets saved by following the Beatitudes. Salvation is by grace and only through Christ's death on the cross. There is no need for us to do anything.
- But they are Godly character that every follower of Jesus displays. Story of Mickey Cohen, a gangster who accepted Christ but continued to be a gangster. By contrast, Jesus' disciples must exhibit a change in value system and lifestyle.
- To be 'Blessed' is not about how I feel but what God thinks of me.
- It is a positive judgment of God's approval. Blessedness does not equate to feeling happy. Happiness is not the starting point of being blessed; it's the result of God's approval of us.
- Therefore, the word 'Woe' carries the opposite meaning.
- The question therefore is this: "As a disciple of Christ, do you want His approval more than anything else? Do you want His blessing above all else?"
- **YES?** Then "Blessed are you who are..."

Cover 2 Beatitudes today

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (v. 20).

What are we to be poor about? (Matt 5:3)

- Being "Poor" is NOT saying that one is of no value or self-worth whatsoever.
- Neither does it mean a lack of spiritual vitality.
- Nor is it showy humility.
- It is the personal acknowledgment of spiritual bankruptcy.¹

¹ Don Carson, Sermon on the Mount

- It is the awareness and admission that we are utterly sinful and without the moral virtues adequate to commend us to God².
- Paraphrase: “Blessed are those who realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend them to God, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
- It is the renunciation of our self-sufficiency! Attitude of: Forsaking all, I trust Him (and nothing else) and recognise everyday that I am nothing, except by the grace of God.
- It is the beginning of faith (Luke 18:9-14) and the continuation of humility. Rev 3:17 warns against thinking that we have made it and are hence self-sufficient but in reality, are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind & naked. To the self-righteous, Jesus told parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) and taught that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. A spirit of brokenness must characterise each disciple of Christ and manifest in how we lead our lives.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh (v.21b)

What does it mean to weep?

- It is not about walking around looking sad, melancholic, depressed or self-pitiful
- It is not that we cannot smile or laugh over things that we should laugh about.

What are we to be weeping about?

- We are to weep over how poor we are!
 - ❖ While “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” is an intellectual *assent* that we are spiritually bankrupt; “Blessed are those who weep,” is its emotional *response*.
 - ❖ When we see ourselves for what we are, our emotions will be stirred to weeping.
- We are to mourn over our sins! No one is righteous, not even one. Rom 3:9-18 – sinful in character, thinking, attitudes, words, direction, heart and will. We need to examine ourselves and recognize our spiritual bankruptcy – need God everyday in order to walk in His way.

Whole Life Survey by *Focus on the Family*: All Christians agree they are to live in marital fidelity, BUT

- ❖ 1 in 10 Christians in the past one year admitted to having premarital or extra-marital sexual encounter
 - ❖ 1 in 4 Christians admitted to having sexual encounter outside of marriage in their lifetime
 - ❖ More than 40% have viewed pornography
 - ❖ 84% of Christians say it is not acceptable to have sex before marriage, even in a committed relationship.
 - ❖ But 34% of them (including 47% of dating or engaged young adults) said that they would go overseas alone with their boyfriend/girlfriend even if they could face sexual temptations with each other.
 - ❖ And 28% of the parents approved of it!
- Mourn over our brokenness and sin, as individuals as well as congregation of God’s people. Need to hear the words that Jesus speaks to us: Lord, shine that light upon our hearts!
 - We are to weep over the sins of the world! (Rom 3:9-18). Not to go out there to judge/condemn, for we are no different.
 - Romans 1: God’s wrath against sinful humanity. Wrath of God has already been revealed and we need to weep over godlessness (i.e. denial of God – root of the problem) and wickedness (fruit of what happened). God gave them up (v. 24)
 - Our role is to weep over our own spiritual brokenness and sins as well as to pray over our society.

² Hughes, R. K., Sermon on the Mount

- Adolf Eichmann – Holocaust architect of death; escaped to Argentina but abducted and brought to trial in Israel in 1961. During the trial, Yehiel De-Nur, a Holocaust survivor, was called up to testify against Eichmann. He fainted when he saw Eichmann. In a TV interview in 1983, he was asked if he had fainted because he feared Eichmann, or was overwhelmed by hatred or overcome by horrible memories. De-Nur's response was that it was because he realised that Eichmann was an ordinary man. De-Nur became afraid about himself, that he was exactly like Eichmann and could be capable of what Eichmann did.
- Recognise that we are ALL spiritually bankrupt and could be just the same – mourn and weep.

Do we weep over our sins?

- Do we weep over the sins of the world?
- You cannot be forgiven if you are not sorry for your sins.
- One thing worse than sin is the denial of sin.
- If you have never sorrowed over your sin (not just regret over its consequences), then consider long and carefully if you really are a Christian. (2 Cor 7:10) True repentance involves hearing God, agreeing with Him and turning around.
- Spiritual weeping is necessary for salvation (Luke 15:18-20 – realising his sin against God and his father, the Prodigal Son repented).
- Spiritual weeping brings forgiveness and comfort (Ps 32:1-2).
- The Holy Spirit who convicts us of our sins is also our Comforter.

Reflections – BE BLESSED!

- 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."
- Do you acknowledge that there is nothing within you to commend you to God? Are you mourning? Do you ache with the guilt of your sin before God and man? If so, and if you are a Christian, return to the Lord and be restored to fellowship.
- If you are not a believer, come to Him now and He will give you the kingdom. He will put His robe on your shoulders, His ring on your hand, His sandals on your feet, and will prepare a feast for you. You will be comforted!