

Blessed Are the Weeping, Part 1

Luke 6:21

Let's look at Luke 6:20-26. It says that, "Jesus lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. 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. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold: your reward is great in Heaven. For so their fathers did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.'"

let's observe carefully first what Jesus said. And again, this is just a quick reminder, this is a bit of a review. First, notice in verse 21 that Jesus identifies two classes, or groups

of people, in that verse using participles. He's talking about "those who hunger," and he's talking about "those who weep." That is the same group of people that he identified as "the poor" in the previous verse, verse 20. So, what Jesus said about the poor, it carries into what he is saying here about "the hungering" and "the weeping."

We said that Jesus has used poverty as a metaphor for those who are true citizens of the kingdom of God, because they, and they alone, have recognized their spiritual destitution before God. They have realized that the world has nothing to contribute to them, and so they come to God, before him as beggars. Having let go of the world completely, they've extended empty hands up to God, reaching out to him for mercy, for divine mercy, and God is very pleased to give it to them. When God gives, he gives without measure. He doesn't hold anything back. He lavishly supplies them with the entire kingdom, which is a complete reversal of fortune.

But these poor, as you see in verse 20, even as actual possessors of the kingdom of God right now, they have not yet entered into the full inheritance of that kingdom, and that's

what verse 21 is talking about. This is the already/not yet aspect of these kingdom promises, which is a common theme throughout the New Testament. Jesus had already, he has already inaugurated the kingdom of God, but he has not yet introduced the fullness of the kingdom of God in all of its power. So, verse 21 pictures the current condition of the poor as those who are hungering now and those who are weeping now.

And that brings us to a second observation we made, the participles there are in the present tense. This group of people are those who are hungering. They are those who are weeping. That is present tense, means like a continuous state of being. It's an ongoing condition of their experience in reality. And that means, at present, for those who are, the poor, there is no lasting relief here in this life, here, now, from hungering and thirsting. Their full consolation and the permanent change in their condition, that's not yet. But it will come later.

And that brings us immediately to a third observation, which is this confident hope that Jesus gives for a change in their present circumstances in reality. You may remember how we talked last time about that three-letter temporal adverb, now.

You are all grammar experts, so none of this is lost on you. You love talking about temporal adverbs and present participles, right?

You know what else you like about grammar, though? You also love future tense verbs like, "You shall be satisfied." And, "you shall laugh." You love future tense verbs! Because with them, Jesus communicates to us the full assurance of our hope which is this: The now conditions of hungering and weeping, those conditions will one day be completely erased. Those conditions will one day be utterly forgotten in a total eclipse of God's abundance. The magnitude of future blessing is so staggering and the reversal of fortune, here, is so drastic.

And that brings us to our fourth observation, that Jesus gives not just confident hope, he also gives abundant hope. Our current condition of hunger is going to be swallowed up by full satisfaction, and our condition of weeping will be engulfed in pure delight, in righteous laughter. And when the kingdom arrives in its fullness, fortunes will be reversed, as those who are now hungry are filled with complete satisfaction, and those who are weeping now are overcome with joy.

Now, here's where we need to make a clear, significant distinction between the second and third beatitudes. Those two beatitudes in verse 21, "Blessed are you who are hungry now," and, "Blessed are you who weep now," they are truly and fundamentally connected as already/not yet realities. They're current circumstances combined with future fulfillment promise. But there's a fundamental difference in the cause of those ongoing experiential realities for what we might call, the blessed poor, that's us.

What makes the blessed poor weep? But what is this promise of laughter? That's what we're going to take time to understand, "blessed are those who are weeping." And here's where we're going to jump into our outline first point, which really does give away the punchline right away: sin is the cause of all of our weeping. Sin is the cause of all of our weeping. The blessed poor weep because the abiding presence of sin makes us weep. This weeping here, this verb *klaio*, and the noun *klafthmos* it refers to a sincere, a heartfelt sorrow that's expressed outwardly in crying, in weeping, shedding of tears. So, that's the language used here.

Now let's try to understand Jesus' meaning. And, for that, we have asked the question: Why are these blessed poor weeping? What makes them cry, so that we can see it? As Leon Morris points out, he says, "This cannot mean those who cherish some personal grief." Jesus isn't here promising to settle all of our scores, to satisfy all our personal grudges and the things that make us cry because we're angry at so-and-so, and so tears come out. Morris says, "Those who weep are those who are people who are sensitive to evil, to the world's rebellion against God, and to the world's consequent suffering. It is those who see these realities of life who will, in the end, laugh."

That's exactly right. And I want you to understand something very important here. This beatitude about what causes us to weep, this gets to the very heart of our affections, what we truly love, and on the other hand, what we truly hate. What we love causes us to rejoice and even to laugh out loud, and what we hate causes us to mourn, perhaps even to shed tears, to weep. This beatitude has to do with our affections. It has to do with that which affects us and moves us from the inside to what is expressed on the outside. You can tell a lot about someone's

affections by observing what makes them laugh out loud, and also what makes them mourn and weep. Just by observing someone for a time, what they laugh at, and what they weep over, you can read that person's heart like a book. And that's how Jesus sees it.

For those with regenerate hearts, good treasure in good hearts produces good. They love what God loves, they hate what God hates, they rejoice over that which makes God rejoice, and they sorrow over what grieves God. For those with unregenerate hearts, though, with hearts that are bent and inclined toward sin, evil things come forth. They laugh at the things God hates. As Paul puts it in 2 Thessalonians 2:12, "They are condemned people, because they do not believe the truth, but they have pleasure in unrighteousness." They laugh out loud at the things that God specifically says, I hate this. This is an abomination to me. They laugh out loud at it. Not only do they not sorrow, but they take pleasure in it. They don't grieve, they don't mourn, they don't weep as they should do.

Listen, godly people: the poor, the hungry, the weeping; they hate sin. And it grieves them to see sin indulged and coddled and tolerated, or ignored or celebrated. For those who

profess Jesus Christ, if they're soft on sin, then they are revealing their spiritual immaturity. And it is to them that James says in James 4:9, Look, you who don't get this, if you profess Christ, "be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom." Listen, that's not promoting grumpiness. It's a pastoral exhortation to hate sin, to let it affect you, and to mourn over that which grieves God.

So, why are they weeping? Because of sin. And this is where we begin to see the distinction between the second beatitude, "Blessed are the hungry," and the third beatitude, "Blessed are the weeping." Fundamental difference and I'd like to show you that starting back in Genesis. So, if you could take your Bibles in hand and turn back to Genesis, chapter 2. Genesis 2. We'll take a look at where weeping began.

You remember we talked about the condition of hunger. God created hunger from the very beginning. God created us with digestive tracts and mouths and teeth, a tongue with tastebuds. He gave us a brain to interpret all that stimuli coming in our mouth, and to release chemicals that cause us to enjoy the



pleasure, the contentment, the comfort of eating. God designed our bodies to digest food regularly to keep us alive. He designed our bodies with palates to discern good food from bad food.

Jesus, though, combines this hungering, which is a good thing, with this attitude of sorrow, this disposition of continual weeping. And this is where we see the key difference between these two beatitudes. Because, unlike our hunger, our hunger, God created for our good, and for our instruction. Weeping is not a product of God's original creation. Why? Because all weeping is fundamentally caused by sin. Sin was planned for in God's eternal sovereign decree, but sin was not a product of his creative activity. You can see that for yourself in the biblical record prior to The Fall. We find no evidence of mankind weeping.

We do, however, discover the source of our weeping. And look, if you'll notice there in Genesis 2:9, it says, "The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." There's the first hint, right? Prior to The Fall, an object that could become a source of

weeping. God's stated intention for mankind, it was quite the contrary of weeping. The forbidden tree was an object of testing mankind, which is holy, and righteous, and good. Testing and training mankind, that was according to God's goodness and wisdom.

And, by the way, it's not like that forbidden tree was the only thing he gave them to eat. Look at verses 15 and 16. The Lord God took the man, put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and keep it. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree in the garden." Look, we saw last week, God created man with a body that needed to be replenished by energy, which required the consumption of food. He created a food supply in his perfect world, even before he created mankind. When he created mankind, he created them with bodies that could consume and digest food, extract the nutrients, turn them into energy. God created the palate to taste food. He gave us the pleasure of enjoying food. Not just one kind, but, as we read there, many varieties, "You may surely eat of every tree in the garden."

My wife and I once had the opportunity to visit the Philippines, and we both thought we knew what fruit tasted like. We thought we'd eaten mango and pineapple before, but we were wrong. The Filipinos introduced us to real mango and real pineapple. They were luscious, juicy fruit that burst with flavor. The similarly named fruit we had eaten here in the States probably had some molecular identity with mango and pineapple, but someone had gone in and we, this is a scandal, this is something we need to write about, they'd gone in and extracted all of the actual and wonderful taste. Why did they do that? We're being scammed and robbed, I can tell you that.

But those mangos and pineapples in the Philippines, they're grown, bear in mind, in a post-Fall, sin-cursed world. Look, we can't even imagine what food tasted like in a pre-curse, pre-Fall world. The varieties of foods and flavors that God created for Adam and Eve, how full they were with richness and nutrient and goodness. As long as Adam and Eve continued trusting God, they would find full contentment in him, in what he created for them, in what he gave to them, in his provision, in his immense goodness.

We get a hint in the narrative that, prior to The Fall, foreshadows and predicts the reality of the world that we're now living in. Look how the narrative continues in verse 17, "The Lord God commanded the man saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" Adam has God's instruction right there, both the promise and the warning. And he is to pass that on to his soon-to-be created wife. Which is, as we say around here all the time; God created men and designed them to be leaders and teachers. God gave this command to Adam before Eve was ever on the scene. What does he expect Adam to do with this life-and-death information? Pass it on, teach, instruct, give, lead. And the wife, she's created to learn and follow. He's to pass this on.

God created the woman. He brought her to the man. He's absolutely thrilled, and the two of them begin to enjoy the perfect world that God created for them, the one that God himself called in Genesis 1:31, he called it very good. So, they enjoy pure, holy fellowship with God and with one another. They talk together, they discover together, they learn together,

they're trusting in God, they're enjoying the goodness, the full bounty of his perfect creation. It is all going according to God's stated desire and intention, until we turn the page to Genesis 3:1.

Turn the page there. "The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?"' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die.'"

That, folks, is where weeping began. It began with a lie, which mankind believed. It began with sin. It began with the transgression of God's clear word, which began when the heart of mankind unhitched itself from the true supply and became shackled and enslaved by a lie. And the cruel tragedy of it all causes us to weep even now, as we reread this familiar story. It is tragic to be set up so well by God, elevated so high, with

such promise, such a future, and then to fall from that lofty height, descending into this lie.

“You will not surely die.” Oh, really? Satan knows this how? There’s never been a creation, never been a garden, a mankind, trees. He’s never observed anyone eating the fruit and living. He is lying! Turn away, Eve! In fact, even more audacious than that, he himself had experienced the death of sinning against God, as he’s cast out of heaven. Death, fundamentally, in biblical terms, is separation. And Satan was separated from God when he sinned in heaven.

Look at the next phrase, “For God knows.” Huh-huh, oh, really? Here is a creature in the form of a serpent, pretending to have special access to the Divine mind, that mind that produced the ground upon which the serpent and the woman are standing, the trees of which they are speaking, the breath that fills their lungs. And the serpent pretends to know what God knows.

He says, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened; you'll be like God knowing good and evil." Not only does Satan pretend to know the mind of God, he pretends to know his motives as well. And here he is insinuating what is contrary to all the, the very goodness of the created order, which is plain for us to see. There's goodness all around. This wicked little creature tells Eve, contrary to what you can easily see for yourself about God's bounty and God's provision and God's supply and his goodness, God's keeping something from you. What is it? Satan's telling Eve that God has a selfish motive. He wants to keep the knowledge of good and evil all to himself. Why? Because, again, this is completely contrary to the eternal power and divine nature so readily evident in the world God created, Satan wants Eve to believe that the knowledge of good and evil is the only thing that puts God above mankind.

Not only that, how exactly does eating a piece of fruit transfer this God-like knowledge of good and evil to the consuming creature? I mean, is she to think this is like some kind of magic pill? Is she to think this is where God gets his superpowers from and all his omniscient knowledge, by visiting this tree every day? If so, and if God is wary of rivals to his

sole sovereignty, well, it wasn't very smart of him, was it, to put this divinely, divinity-producing tree within the reach of a human couple, right? Listen, this lie is so utterly unrealistic, so completely ridiculous here.

But notice, that doesn't stop Eve from considering it, from pondering it, and eventually believing it. If you'll notice in verse 6, the transgression of God's command comes at the end of the verse, but the transgression is just really the culmination of a sin that started with unbelief in the beginning of the verse. Look at verse 6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." Good for food?

But how did she know that? But see, that phrase, delight the eyes, that reveals just how far her heart had already moved. The fact that this fruit no longer produces the fear of death in her, but is a delight to her eyes, that very fact shows how much her heart has already changed. How she's living by sight, and no longer by faith. That last phrase, "The woman saw that the tree



was to be desired to make one wise," well that's a conclusion that was fed to her already from the pit of hell, by the prince of darkness. She's just taking the word, the conclusion, of the greatest mass-murderer who ever lived.

So, she bought the lie, which means she stopped believing in God and started believing in a creature, that which is not God. The sin of unbelief, inevitably led her to transgression, which is what we see. And after taking a moment to contemplate all this for Eve in verse 6, eventually you see she ate the fruit. And she gave some to her husband, who had the clear command from the mouth of God, himself, and he ate the fruit. Thus, the entire human race was plunged into this irreversible state of sin. That's cause for weeping.

Paul said in Romans 5 verse 12, "Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men." Verse 15, "The many died through one man's trespass." Verse 16, "The judgement following one trespass brought condemnation." Verse 17, "Because of one man's trespass death reigned." Verse 18, "One trespass led to condemnation for all

men." Verse 19, Romans 5, "By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."

And finally, verse 21, "Sin reigned in death." That's a lot of ugly language in that passage, isn't it? What we read there is what we have seen and experienced all of our lives. When God said, Genesis 2:17, "In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die," he was not kidding. And that's something to mourn, and weep over, isn't it? That we would turn away from that good God, and turn to death, the reign of sin and death. Look, the reality of sin is what makes us weep.