

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

March 13, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

The Sermon on the Plain

Topics – Luke 6; The Sermon on the Plain; Beatitudes; Love Your Enemies; House on the Rock

Text – Luke 6:20 - 49

Introduction

This message is similar to but much shorter than the *Sermon on the Mount*, which took up three chapters and is found in Matthew 5 – 7. This message was preached on the Plain. (v. 17) Jesus would no doubt teach similar principles to different groups of people.

The Sermon on the Plain from Luke's gospel does not contain Jesus' expounding of the Law as is the case in Matthew's record of the *Sermon on the Mount*. Remember, Luke's audience was primarily Gentile.

Both messages begin with Beatitudes, and end with the parable of the man who builds his house upon the rock.

In teaching this passage, I am going to try to resist the temptation of comparing this message to the Sermon on the Mount.

I. Contrasting Beatitudes and Woes (vs. 20 – 26)

The word, "blessed," (μακάριος *Makarios*) means, "Oh how happy." God's people should be happy people.

In this portion of the message, Jesus gives four blessings (vs. 20 – 22), and then four contrasting woes (vs. 24 – 26)

A. The Poor is Contrasted with the Rich (vs. 20 and vs. 24)

Note – this is more than just not having this world's goods. This also carries the idea of being "poor in spirit," as Matthew points out. (Matthew 5:3)

B. Hunger is Contrasted with Fullness (vs. 21a and vs. 25a)

Again, this is more than just physical hunger; it is hungering after righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)

C. Mourning is Contrasted with Laughing (vs. 21b and vs. 25b)

D. The World's Opinion of You is Contrasted with God's Opinion of You (vs. 22 & 26)

Notice also the contrast between v. 23c and v. 26b – the same phrase is used to support opposite arguments.

Jesus is not stating in these verses that all poor, hungry, mourning, and persecuted people are blessed. Nor is He saying that all rich, full, laughing, and popular people are blessed. But, he is saying that if you are poor, hungry, weeping, or persecuted for His sake, or because you are a Christian, then you can expect great reward in the Kingdom (or in Heaven for the Church) for the sacrifices that you made here.

The key phrase is "for the Son of Man's sake." (v. 22b) The negative circumstances that these people are experiencing is due to the fact that they are living for the Lord.

I believe these principles apply to every generation of believers. It is just as applicable to the New Testament Christian in Heaven, as it is for the Old Testament believer or Tribulation Saint in the Kingdom.

Notice at the very center of the beatitudes and woes is a statement promising great reward. Jesus is saying that we should, by faith, rejoice when we are persecuted ("in that day") because we trust that He will remember us and reward us.

Lessons on Love (vs. 27 – 35)

Jesus' instruction on love goes against the natural inclinations of man. People may be naturally inclined to love somebody who is beneficial to them, but to love somebody who harms you or hates you is not normal behavior.

All of the instructions given here regarding love are tangible. God is not telling us here that we are to "feel" an affection (phileo) for your enemy, but He is demanding that we act (agapeo) in a loving way toward people who are not very loving toward us. By doing so, we are showing Christ to them and also to anybody else who may be observing. Christ loved the unlovable by dying on the Cross for their sins. (v. 35c)

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

Therefore, we are to "do good" (vs. 27, 35), "bless" (v. 28), "pray" (v. 28), "give" (v. 30), "lend" (vs. 34 – 35)

Notice again that Jesus promises both reward and reputation for obedience to this very difficult and unnatural command. (v. 35)

Be Slow to Judge Others (vs. 37 – 42)

Notice in the middle of this section is one verse dealing with the subject of giving. (v. 38) Though on the surface, this verse does not seem like it has anything to do with the surrounding verses, it ties in. The overall theme of these verses, and really, the entire message, has to do with giving up our rights, comforts, etc. for others and, ultimately, for the Lord. Whatever we give will be given back.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt 6:33)

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:19)

Regarding judgment, Jesus is not saying that we are never to judge anything, because that would go against the clear teaching of Scripture; but, we should be slow to make judgments, and we should be sure that we only make judgments where we can clearly see all of the facts. For example, if I see somebody steal something in the grocery store, I can judge that stealing is wrong; but, I cannot judge the motive of the person stealing, and I cannot judge his heart: whether he is saved or lost. Why? Because I cannot see his heart.

See 1 Corinthians 6:1 – 7 for Paul's instructions regarding judgment within the local church.

Vs. 39 – 40 go together. I believe Jesus is saying here that we need to give people an example to follow, just as we are to follow the Lord's example.

Vs. 41 – 42 teach us that before we seek to straighten out our brother about something, we better first straighten out ourselves. A "mote" (κάρφος – *karphos*) is a piece of a dry twig or straw; just a small speck. A "beam" (δοκός – *dokos*) is a log of wood.

Success and Strength Found in Obedience (vs. 43 – 49)

In vs. 43 – 46, Jesus points out the fact that His children: those that are truly saved; will produce good fruit. This is not to say that there will not be times of disobedience. We are all human, and we all possess a fleshly, carnal, and sinful nature. However, we also have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling us, which is conforming us to the image of Christ. As we yield to the Spirit of God and the will of God revealed in His Word, we will be fruitful; successful in the Christian life.

V. 46 points out the hypocrisy of those who claim to be Christians, and yet have no fruit; they are not obedient to Christ.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:" (John 10:27)

Vs. 47 – 49 speak of the strength and stability of the Christian whose life is submitted to His will, and yielded to His Spirit. When the storms of life come, he stands strong, because his life is founded upon the Rock of Jesus Christ.