

BLESSING OR WOE?

What should God's people be like, as they live in His kingdom, under His reign and rule? That's what Jesus was talking about in the "beatitudes" in Luke 6:20-26. He contrasts the blessing of God to His people with the woes of those who reject Christ and His eternal kingdom.

Those who seek only worldly wealth and pleasures may get it here, but those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness will receive all of God's blessings, here and eternally.

"The radical preaching in these beatitudes, that disciples are poor, hungry, sorrowful, rejected, are spiritual H-bombs," observes RK Hughes, "concerted theological epigrams that detonate with increasing effect, blowing away all shallow talk of discipleship and calling for true commitment."

HUNGER & THIRST - In verse 21 Jesus says, "*Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied*" ("*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*" Matt 5:6). Poverty results in hunger; spiritual poverty leads to a hunger only God can supply. Those who trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior receive His very righteousness, credited to their account.

After the miracle feeding of 5,000 men in John 6, Jesus noted how Moses had fed the people with manna, but that "*I am the bread of life*" - living bread from heaven for eternal life. Only Jesus can fill the eternal longing of the soul for salvation, with the indwelling Holy Spirit. John 7:37 echoes the call of Isaiah 55, "*Come, everyone who thirsts, come buy and eat.*"

Isaiah 65 has sobering words: "*when I called you didn't answer, when I spoke you didn't listen, but did what was evil in My eyes and chose what I did not delight in. Therefore says the Lord God, behold My servants shall eat but you shall be hungry; My servants shall drink but you shall be thirsty; My servants shall rejoice but you shall be put to shame; behold, My servants shall sing for gladness of heart; but you will cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for breaking of spirit.*"

FILLED OR EMPTY? As Psalm 34 and 107 proclaim, "*He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.*" Jesus presents the rest of the beatitude oracle in Luke 6:25, "*woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.*" Again, the great reversal.

Those who reject Him and His kingdom will receive the consequences, the opposite of Christ's blessings. They will get what they want, for now. But like sweets, you eat one and are happy for a moment, then you want more. Worldly rewards have no everlasting benefit.

In Luke 16:25, the rich man received good things in his lifetime, and the poor beggar Lazarus bad things, but in the next life the rich man was in anguish while Lazarus was comforted. If you are trying to live in your own strength and on your own terms, how can you be blessed by God?

Only God Himself can satisfy spiritual hunger and thirst. As Psalm 42 and 63 proclaim, "*my soul thirsts for the living God.*" Turn in humble dependence to live God's way, by the Spirit within! As Romans 14:17 says, "*for the kingdom of heaven is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*"

YOUR CHOICE? - "Jesus calls those blessed who desire above all things to be conformed to the mind of Christ," notes JC Ryle. "They long not so much to be happy or wealthy or learned, as to be holy." As Psalm 17:15 declares, "*they shall awake and be satisfied with God's likeness.*"

Romans 8:18-29 promises, "*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of Son.*" It is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform God's people. That's why Christ's disciples trust and obey Him.

The Spirit of God works the Word of God so the people of God become like the Son of God. Living according to Scripture, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, will transform your life.

"The world says never mind eternal consequences of your present actions, but Jesus says don't be slaves to the present, because right now counts for eternity," notes RC Sproul. Are you trying to satisfy your longings with what the world offers? Only Jesus saves, forever! ☐