

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

† THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

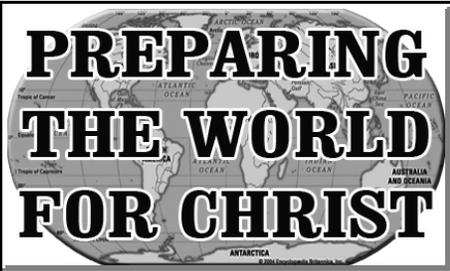
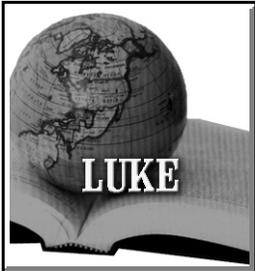
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #22

COMMENTARY ON: 6:20-38

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Luke gives us a comparative summation of, what is called, "The Sermon on the Mount" – nineteen verses. Matthew presents a more thorough view, three chapters, or one hundred and eleven verses. It is evident that each Gospel writer was not intended to give a thorough recap of everything Jesus said and did. Strictly speaking, the Gospels are not a biography of Jesus' life – most of which is omitted in all of the narratives, which cover only ten percent of His entire life. Luke's Gospel seems to accentuate the universality of salvation. There is also an emphasis on the pity and love of the Savior. Without distracting your attention from the text, it is enough to say here that God moved Luke to accentuate certain things peculiar to Luke's assigned objective. If, in our perusal of the four Gospels, we will devote ourselves to believing what is written, as compared with merely analyzing it, we will realize a fuller understanding of Christ that would not have been realized by four full accounts of His ministry. Divine wisdom is seen in this approach.



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 8/21/2015

Lesson Number 22



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ETRV = Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LUKE 6:20 "And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God ²¹ Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. ²² Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. ²³ Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. ²⁴ But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. ²⁵ Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. ²⁶ Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. ²⁷ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, ²⁸ Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. ²⁹ And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. ³⁰ Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. ³¹ And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. ³² For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. ³³ And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. ³⁴ And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. ³⁶ Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. ³⁷ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: ³⁸ Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:20-38

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Luke gives us a comparative summation of, what is called, "The Sermon on the Mount" – nineteen verses. Matthew presents a more thorough view, three chapters, or one hundred and eleven verses. It is evident that each Gospel writer was not

intended to give a thorough recap of everything Jesus said and did. Strictly speaking, the Gospels are not four independent biographies of Jesus' total life – most of which is omitted in all of the narratives, which cover only ten percent of His entire life. Luke's Gospel seems to accentuate the universality of

salvation. There is also an emphasis on the pity and love of the Savior. It also contains more of the details of Jesus' life (Lk 2:42-50; 2:22-39,40; 51-52, etc) which contributed to preparing Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb 4: 15- 16). Without distracting your attention from the text, it is enough to

Jesus now focuses on His disciples, and delivers some salient sayings which contradict world 's manner of thinking. – GIVEN O. BLAKELY

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say here that God moved Luke to accentuate certain things peculiar to

Luke's assigned objective.

If, in our perusal of the four Gospels, we will devote ourselves to believing what is written, as compared with merely analyzing it, we will realize a fuller understanding of Christ that would not have been realized by four full accounts of His ministry. Divine wisdom is seen in this approach. The Spirit will work within us to develop a more full picture of the Son of God.

WHEN ACCOUNTS SEEM CONTRADICTORY

When Gospel accounts of the same event or occasion appear to contradict one another, an immediate effort must be expended to subdue that imagination. Were such a thing true, then God would have lost control of His Word. Such things as scribal errors, human interpolations, etc. must not be allowed to be default forms of reasoning. Of old time, men did not retranslate, or rewrite Scripture, but copied it. There was a certain fear in the ancients of misstating Scripture – even of writing the name of the Lord.

Know that all of the endless questions on this subject have been caused by men tampering with Scripture in the first place. Anyone translating Scripture, must themselves be aware of what is being taught in the Word of God. There are words and concepts in Scripture for which there is no adequate parallel in any language. That is why many theological English words were created by transliteration – to represent or spell in the characters of

another alphabet – i.e. "Baptism," "Christ," "David," "Abraham," "Sabbath," "apostle," "angel," "deacon," etc.

This is not the kind of thing that can be approached with worldly wisdom. We must consider the unchangeability of God Himself, the unchanging nature of truth, the truth of inspiration, and the fact that faith hinges on the Word of God. When we begin to trust the wisdom of man, we are drifting away from the Divinely established moorings. If the Word of God is not the result of the interpretation of godly men (2 Pet 1:20-21), how can it possibly be moved from one language to another by that means?

THE SETTING

Jesus has chosen His twelve apostles from among the larger group of His disciples. *"He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach"* (Mark 3:14). Their presence with Him was intended to be continual, not sporadic. These men did not visit with Jesus periodically. John informs us that Jesus Himself told the twelve why He chose them: *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, he may give it you"* (John 15:16). These men were set *"first"* in the church, which is Christ's body (1 Cor 12:28). They are not a separate body of people, but a class within *"one body."*

BLESSED ARE THE POOR

LUKE 6:20 *"And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God."*

HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES UPON HIS DISCIPLES

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT

In His account of this occasion, Matthew wrote, *"And seeing the*

multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him" (Matt 5:1). This was, then, a discourse to the disciples of Jesus, not to the general multitudes (Matt 4:25; 8:1,18; 9:33,36; 11:7; 12:15; 13:2; 14:22; 15:30-31; 19:2).

To this day, there are great

masses of people who theoretically follow Jesus seasonally and at a distance. Such people were never given very much teaching from the Son of God – and the teaching He did give them was generally couched and hidden in parables (Matt 13:10-11). Those who affirm, that Jesus preferred to be around such people have done nothing more than display their ignorance.

Let it be clear, that the church must never tailor its gatherings for such people. When the saints are gathered together, and proper edification is being ministered to the saints, the proclamations are not to be dumbed-down for the unlearned or disinterested. The truth itself, as it is in Christ Jesus (Eph 4:20), is always accompanied with power, and is used by the Holy Spirit to probe the hearts of men. No person can improve on that.

"And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples . . ."

Other versions read, "turned His gaze on His disciples," ^{NASB} "looking at His disciples," ^{NIV} "turning his eyes to His disciples," ^{BBE} "fixing his eyes on His disciples." ^{NJB}

Here is a notable trait of the Savior. Men are prone to address their words primarily to the unlearned. **Jesus, however, addresses them to those who are closest to Him.** These are words of exposition and revelation.

There are preachers and teachers without number who make a practice of starving the disciples in order to reach others. This, however, was not always the manner of the Lord. When it got right down to teaching, and giving an exposition of truth, the disinterested were often dismissed (Matt 4:22-23; 13:35-52). **In-depth teaching was always delivered to the disciples closest to Him.**

If you have the eyes to see it, it is still this way. **Those who stand aloof from Jesus are never granted understanding.** The truth always confuses them, and they remain in the school of "the unlearned" (1 Cor 14:16,23-24; 2 Pet 3:16). However, for those who will draw close to Jesus, preferring Him, there will always be a corresponding growth in knowledge and understanding.

BLESSED BE YE POOR

" . . . and said, Blessed be ye poor . . ."

Other versions read, "blessed are

ye poor," ^{NKJV} "Blessed are you who are poor," ^{NIV} "Happy are you who are poor," ^{BBE} "How blessed are you poor!" ^{CJB} "What happiness there is for you who are poor," ^{LIVING} "Poor people, be happy," ^{IE} "How blessed are you who are destitute," ^{ISV} and "Blessed (happy—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, apart from your outward condition—and to be envied) are you poor and lowly and afflicted (destitute of wealth, influence, position, and honor)." ^{AMPLIFIED}

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 5:3).

There is no conflict in the two phrases, "the poor," and "the poor in spirit." In this case, the "poor in spirit" had their pride crushed by their circumstances. These are the people to whom Jesus will say, "Therefore I say

of men. That is why this text is seen in a more broad sense by those who have heard and believed the Gospel of Christ.

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

" . . . for yours is the kingdom of God."

Other versions read, "the kingdom of God is yours," ^{BBE} "yours is the reign of God," ^{YLT} "God's kingdom belongs to you." ^{LIVING}

These words do not promise you will be the head of this Kingdom – it already has a Head. It is referred to as "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 1:11). **The meaning is that the vast resources of this Kingdom are available to you – "all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (2 Pet 1:3). Those who realize the poverty of "the natural man" (1 Cor 2:14), have not been abandoned by heaven. That awareness, produced

This is a most arresting statement – and it is the absolute truth. It suggests that the acquisition of wealth and earthly stability carries with it the jeopardy of passing by the promises of God.

unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Mat 6:25-26). **These are not words Jesus said to the rich, but to the obviously poor. Later He will warn the rich, not comfort them (Lk 6:24).**

It is possible to be "poor in spirit" because of the acute awareness of spiritual poverty. While this was possible prior to Jesus, it was not probable. Little had been said about the improvement of the spiritual condition

by faith, qualifies "the poor in spirit" to access "the riches of His grace" (Eph 1:7), and "the unsearchable riches of Christ"(Eph 3:8).

This is a most arresting statement – and it is the absolute truth. It suggests that the acquisition of wealth and earthly stability carries with it the jeopardy of passing by the promises of God. Of course, that liability exists in poverty also – that such attention can be given to earthly stability that it drowns out the quest for eternal life.

Solomon provided both perspectives in this prayer: "Remove far from me vanity and lies: **give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD?**

or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov 30:8-9). Here, the word "convenient" means "allotted to me," ^{NKJV} "that is my portion," ^{NASB} "the food that I need."

^{NRSV} For those in Christ, that means provisions that are appropriate for their placement in the body of Christ, and the general relationship they have to God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, and

other fellow disciples. It means they have what is required to live godly in this world, and prepare adequately for death, the coming of the Lord, and the day of judgment.

BLESSED ARE YE THAT HUNGER NOW

^{21A} **Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled."**

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt 5:6).

Some have wondered why

(John 6:34). As Jesus began to unfold that saying, it was not long until "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John 6:66). To me, this is what necessitated Matthew's inclusion of the words "after righteousness." I will proceed with the assumption this is the hunger – hunger for righteousness – that Luke reports.

Jesus is speaking of those whose spiritual appetites had been awakened, particularly during the past six months – the time of the preaching of John the Baptist, and now of Himself. Both of them had announced, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17). There were some who knew that a call to repentance was in order to appropriate righteousness – to have a thirst "to seize it by force [as a precious prize—a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion]" (Matt 11:12). ^{AMPLIFIED}

Such people were joining the ranks that included Joseph of Arimathaea, who "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mk 15:43; Lk 23:51). Good preaching and teaching should awaken holy desires for what God is giving in this day of salvation.

There are numerous references to a hunger and thirst that are not in the flesh. This is the kind hunger and thirst that is the focus of this word.

⇨ "Ho, **every one that thirsteth**, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa 55:1)

⇨ "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that **seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.**" (Psa 34:10)

⇨ "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee **the desires of thine heart.**" (Psa 37:4)

⇨ "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace

Jesus is speaking of those whose spiritual appetites had been awakened, particularly during the past six months – the time of the preaching of John the Baptist, and now of Himself.

Matthew gave a more thorough report of this saying – and there has been a lot of unwarranted conjecture on the subject. It seems very apparent to me that we have here the difference in writing to a singular believer (Theophilus, Lk 1:1-5), and addressing a body of people, generally considered to be primarily the Jews. Theophilus was a believer in Christ, and had been "instructed" in the Gospel (Lk 1:4). He would know that the hunger that is assuaged by Jesus was not the physical appetite. The Jews, however had been historically provided with "bread from heaven" (John 6:31). As confirmed in that text, these people, as a while, could not distinguish spiritual food from natural food. Jesus told them, "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33). Having no idea what He meant, those Jews responded, "Lord, evermore give us this bread"

BLESSED ARE YE THAT HUNGER NOW

"blessed are ye that hunger now..."

Other versions read, "are in need of food now," ^{BBE} "the ones hungering now," ^{ABP} "you hungry people," ^{CEV} "happy are you who are hungry now," ^{PHILLIPS} and "are you who hunger and seek with eager desire now." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Although quite a few versions omit the word "now" ("hunger now"), it is in the text. For whatever it is worth, it is also included in all the Greek manuscripts to which I have access. The word from which it is translated [nun] has the following meaning: "AT THIS TIME, THE PRESENT, NOW," ^{STRONG'S} "AT THE PRESENT TIME," ^{THAYER} "DESIGNATING A POINT OF TIME NOT PAST OR FUTURE NOW, AT THE PRESENT TIME," ^{FRIBERG} "A POINT OF TIME SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE EVENT OF THE DISCOURSE ITSELF," ^{LOUW-NIDA} AND "NOW AT THIS VERY TIME." ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

at my tears: *for I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*" (Psa 39:12)

- ⇒ *"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"* (Psa 42:2)
- ⇒ *"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."* (Psa 42:7)
- ⇒ *"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."* (Psa 51:2)
- ⇒ *"My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me."* (Psa 63:8)
- ⇒ *"I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."* (Psa 69:3)

A **"hunger and thirst for righteousness"** is a deep and consistent desire to walk within the circumference of Divine approval. That desire is answered in Christ Jesus.

YE SHALL BE FILLED

" . . . for ye shall be filled."

Other versions read, *"you shall be satisfied,"* ^{NASB} *"made full,"* ^{BBE} *"have your fill,"* ^{NJB} *"completely satisfied,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"have plenty to eat,"* ^{CEV} *"Then you're ready for the Messianic meal,"* ^{MESSAGE} and *"you shall be filled and completely satisfied!"* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *"filled"* [chortazo] has the following lexical meaning: **"TO FILL OR SATISFY MEN; TO FULFIL OR SATISFY THE DESIRE OF ANY ONE,"** ^{THAYER} AND **"EAT ONE'S FILL, BE SATISFIED."** ^{FRIBERG}

The overriding idea is that of **satisfaction**. The idea is that sufficient will be supplied to remove the pangs of hunger. This is not speaking of food for the body, a depiction that is provided by the Contemporary English version. Also, this does not imply a single meal that has filling effects for the rest of one's life. This postulates the regular feeding of the soul – like

living *"by every word of God"* (Luke 4:4).

The amount of spiritual dissatisfaction within the professing Christian community is staggering. It can only be accounted for by the saying (which refers to the devil), *"an enemy hath done this"* (Matt 13:28). What Satan has done is this: He has created a false church, that has false ministers who perpetrate the *"doctrines of demons"* (1 Tim 4:1). **Nothing is actually offered to sustain the soul, and therefore dealing with sin and moral weakness is a primary activity.** All of the sins that are found in *"the world,"* are now found in the professing church as well. There is, however, a remnant of faithful people, like there was in the *"dead"* Sardis church (Rev 3:4). They are, however, being systematically starved in their assemblies. They are not *"satisfied,"* or *"filled."* Unlike Israel's gathering of manna in the wilderness, enough is not provided for the spiritually matured.

THE GATHERING OF THE MANNA

– A PATTERN –

The manner in which the manna was to be gathered is a display of the wisdom of God. The directions are found in Exodus 16:1- 18).

⇒ A count was to made of the household, young and old, and on days one thru five, one omer was gathered for each person (Ex 16:16), and two omers were to be gathered for every person on the sixth day (Ex 6:22).

⇒ The result of this procedure is that those who *"gathered much"* because of the size of their household, *"had nothing over,"* and those who gathered little because of their smaller household, *"had no lack"* (Ex 16:18).

⇒ EVERYONE WAS FILLED, OR SATISFIED!

When I was an infant, we did not have baby food. The mother of the household always took an extra portion of the food, and made the necessary preparations for a young child to eat – mashing the food so it could be easily eaten by the child. But, it was the same food the adults ate.

This is the manner in which the flock of God is feed. They all eat from the same supply, only in differing measures. But this, for the most part, is not being done in our time. Thus, in the assembly, the children are not allowed to hear profound things with which the

Are we to imagine that the mature in Christ need no spiritual nourishment? Or are they wholly dependant upon self-study? Is their edification to be excluded from the general assembly? Have they been omitted from the admonition, "Feed My Sheep," "feed the flock of God," and "feed the church of God"

⇒ The manna was to be gathered *"at a certain rate"* every day (Ex 16:4).

⇒ An extra supply of manna fell on the sixth day, so that the people could gather twice as much, being forbidden to gather manna on the Sabbath Day (Ex 16:6).

Spirit can work with them, as He did with young Samuel, young Jesus, and others. At the same time, those who are spiritually mature are imagined to not require spiritual nourishment – even though they are in a *"vile body"* (Phil 3:20-21), confront the adversary of their soul (1 Pet 5:7-8), are in a world of which Satan is the *"god"* (2 Cor

If Jesus promises that those who hungered and thirsted for righteous (Matt 5:6) would be filled, should not a gathering of the saints contribute to that end?

4:4), and regularly contend with an adversarial "law" in their own members, or persons (Rom 7:21-23).

Are we to imagine that the mature in Christ need no spiritual nourishment? Or are they wholly dependant upon self-study? Is their edification to be excluded from the general assembly (1 Cor 14:26)? Have they been omitted

from the admonition, "Feed My Sheep" (John 21:16-17), "feed the flock of God" (1 Pet 5:2), and "feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28)? Must they endure frothy and juvenile choruses written by novices, when they prefer singing that teaches and admonishes (Col 3:6).

If Jesus promises that those who hungered and thirsted for righteous (Matt 5:6) would be filled, should not a gathering of the saints contribute to that end? The time has come for the saints to declare war, and take up spiritual arms (2 Cor 10:1-5) against religious practices that are thieves and robbers! Those who can see this should set out to "cast down" "imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor 10:5).

Enough of malnourished believers! Enough of emaciated members of the body of Christ! Enough of inadequate food being served up for the soul! Let the feeding be adequate!

BLESSED ARE YE THAT WEEP NOW

"^{21B} *Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.*"

Matthew reports that Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (Matt 5:4).

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT WEEP NOW
"Blessed are ye that weep now . . ."

Other versions read, "are weeping now," ^{BBE} "who are crying now!" ^{CJB} "are wailing now," ^{MONTGOMERY} "who now weep aloud," ^{WEYMOUTH} "when the tears flow freely," ^{MESSAGE} and "who weep and sob now." ^{AMPLIFIED}

In "this present evil world," even though we have been delivered from its defiling influences, the saints do a lot of weeping.

⇒ **THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE.** When Sarah died, Abraham wept (Gen 23:2).

⇒ **SEEING AND REMEMBERING.** When Joseph saw his brothers for the first time in about thirty years, "he sought where to weep" (Gen 43:30).

⇒ **WHEN CHASTENED OF THE LORD.** During a chastening of the Lord, the children of Israel "were weeping before the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation" (Num 25:6).

⇒ **WHEN A GREAT LEADER DIES.** When Moses died, the children of Israel wept for him for thirist days (Deut 34:8).

⇒ **WHEN THE ENEMY TRIUMPHS.** One time, when their city had been sacked, and their wives carried away captive, David and the people who were with him "lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep" (1 Sam 30:4).

⇒ **WHEN CONFESSING THE SINS OF A NATION.** When Ezra prayed, confessing the sins of the people, he "confessed, weeping before ther house of God" (Ezra 10:1).

⇒ **DURING THE TRYING OF OUR FAITH.** During his great trial, Job said, "My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death" (Job 16:16).

⇒ **THERE IS SUCH A THING AS "THE BREAD**

OF TEARS," GIVEN TO MEN BY GOD. "Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure." (Psa 80:5).

⇒ **FOR THE SLAYING OF GOD'S PEOPLE.** "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer 9:1).

⇒ **PAUL WARNED THE CHURCH WITH TEARS.** "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:31)

⇒ **TIMOTHY SHED TEARS IN HIS LABORS FOR THE LORD.** "Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy" (2 Tim 1:4).

⇒ **WHEN DESIRING TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD.** On the Isle of Patmos, when John heard that no one could be found worthy to open the sealed book, he said, "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Rev 5:4).

This is not to mention the weeping Jesus, who is the premier Weeper of men.

⇒ AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS, WHERE THERE WAS HOPELESSNESS. *"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept"* (John 11:33-35).

⇒ WHEN HE SAW THE REJECTING CITY OF JERUSALEM. *"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it."* (Luke 19:41).

⇒ WHEN HE FACED THE CROSS, WHERE HIS OBEDIENCE WOULD BE PERFECTED. *"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered"* (Heb 5:7-8).

Although weeping is by no means

a pleasant experience, it does not move us beyond the circumference of hope. Thus Jesus promises, *"ye shall laugh."*

FOR YE SHALL LAUGH
" . . . : for ye shall laugh."

Other versions read, *"you will be*

In the Scriptures, the Greek usage means, "LAUGH, BE MERRY, IN BOTH GOOD AND BAD SENSE," FRIBERG "TO DERIDE," LIDDELL-SCOTT "AN ACTION USUALLY EXPRESSING JOY (GENESIS 21:6; PSALM 126: 2; ECCLESIASTES 3:4; LUKE 6:21); SOMETIMES MOCKERY (GENESIS 18:13; ECCLESIASTES 2:2; JAMES 4:9); AND OCCASIONALLY CONSCIOUS SECURITY (JOB

Although weeping is by no means a pleasant experience, it does not move us beyond the circumference of hope. Thus Jesus promises, "ye shall laugh."

glad," BBE and *"laugh with joy."* LIVING Most of the versions read *"laugh."*

In the Authorized Version, the word "laugh" appears in its variety of forms thirty times from Genesis thru James, In the English language, "laugh" has a rather broad meanings, ranging from humor to scorn: "TO SHOW EMOTION (AS MIRTH, JOY, OR SCORN) WITH A CHUCKLE OR EXPLOSIVE VOCAL SOUND; TO FIND AMUSEMENT OR PLEASURE IN SOMETHING; TO BECOME AMUSED OR DERISIVE." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

5:22). WHEN USED CONCERNING GOD (AS IN PSALM 2:4; 59:8; PROVERBS 1:26) IT SIGNIFIES THAT HE DESPISES OR PAYS NO REGARD TO THE PERSON OR SUBJECT." McCLINTOK & STRONG'S

As used here, the word "laugh" refers to unusual joy, while "weep" is related to unusual sorrow. You have the extremes of emotion "weeping" and "laughing" with the better being last. It is intelligent and controlled laughter that is accompanied by spiritual insight.

BLESSED ARE YE, WHEN MEN SHALL HATE YOU

" 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

WHEN MEN HATE YOU

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you . . ."

Other versions read, *"detest you,"* ABP *"despise (hate)."* AMPLIFIED The rest of the forty-eight Versions I have use the "hate," with single exception being The Message Bible, which leaves the word

out altogether.

The word from which "hate" is translated [miseo], has the following lexical meaning: "HATE, PURSUE WITH HATRED, DETEST; THE SIGNIFICATION TO LOVE LESS, TO POSTPONE IN LOVE OR ESTEEM, TO SLIGHT, THROUGH OVERSIGHT," THAYER "HATE, DETEST; PREFER LESS, LOVE LESS," FRIBERG "TO DISLIKE STRONGLY, WITH THE IMPLICATION OF AVERSION AND HOSTILITY - 'TO HATE, TO DETEST,'" LOUW-NIDA and "HATE DETEST, ABHOR." GINGRICH

I see no way to avoid the conclusion that Jesus is speaking of genuine hatred, aversion to, abhorrence, detestation, and loathing. It involves disgust, antipathy, repugnance, repulsion, hostility, distaste, rancor,

scorn, and much more. When a believer, shining as a light in the world (Phil 2:15), confronts an unbeliever who is dominated by darkness (Eph 5:8), and is a lover darkness (John 3:19), there is an avoidable collision – an abrasive clash. It is a clash of natures, of perspectives, of preference, and of manner of life.



This is a conflict that cannot be avoided *"in this world"* (John 12:25),

and believers ought not adjust their lives to avoid such contradiction. Such an adjustment amounts to dousing the light God has given the person, yielding to the devil, thinking more of men than of Christ, quenching the Spirit, and grieving the Spirit. It means the compromiser has not crucified the flesh, is not putting off the old man, is not putting on the new man, and is not perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord – and that is just a few of the transgressions that have been committed! They have taken their hand off the plow (Lkj 9:62), stopped running the race (Heb 12:1), ceased to look to Jesus (Heb 12:2), and refrained from working out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). They have not given heed to the grace of God that teaches them to reject ungodliness (Tit 2:11-12).

The expressions “blessed ARE” and “your reward IS great in heaven” do not apply to such people.

For many, this is the acid test, that puts their profession of faith on trial. Some of us have experienced being separated “from their company.” Some were asked to leave, while others were simply ignored.

But our enemies are not content to merely separate us from their company.

WHEN MEN REPROACH YOU

“ . . . and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake . . . ”

Other versions read, “revile you,” ^{NKJV} “cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil,” ^{NASB} “defame you,” ^{NRSV} “say angry words to you, turning away in disgust at your name,” ^{BBE} “insult you, and slander your name as evil,” ^{CSB} and “revile and denounce you and defame and cast out and spurn your name as evil (wicked).” ^{AMPLIFIED}

While your enemies may not realize why they are opposing you,

announces such people, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me” (Mat 25:45).

Candidly John wrote to believers, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 John 3:13).

REJOICE IN THAT DAY

“ . . . ²³ Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy . . . ”

And what is to be our response to this aggressive rejection, defaming speech, and treating us as though we were evil?

Jesus say, “Rejoice IN THAT DAY.” That is to be our immediate response. This was actually lived out in the beginning of the church. After the apostles had been “beaten,” and “commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus,” “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:40-41). That proved to them they had the real thing – “eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

How the world needs a telling witness like this – people who will not compromise, dim their lights, or shut their mouths! When Jesus confronted rejecting people, He spoke frankly to them about their condition (Matt 23:13-29; Lk 6:24-26; 11:46-52). I will tell you that you will not be able to rejoice in opposition if you are not actually living for the Lord, and know that He is for you, and not against you.

YOUR REWARD IS GREAT IN HEAVEN

“ . . . for, behold, your reward is great in heaven . . . ”

Other versions read, “surely your reward is great in heaven,” ^{NRSV} “you have a great reward in heaven,” ^{CEB} “look!-your reward will be great in heaven,” ^{NJB} “a great reward awaits you in heaven,” ^{NLT} “you will have a great reward in heaven,” ^{IE} “for your reward will be rich in heaven,” ^{WILLIAMS} and “your reward is rich and great and strong and intense and abundant in heaven.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

It is quite true that the reward will be realized in the future, but it exists at this present time. It, so to speak, awaits us. Its present existence is what enables to rejoice when men reject us.

WHEN MEN SEPARATE YOU FROM THEIR COMPANY

“ . . . and when they shall separate you from their company . . . ”

Other versions read, “exclude you,” ^{NKJV} “ostracize you,” ^{NASB} “put you away from among them,” ^{BBE} “reject you,” ^{CEB} “avoid you,” ^{GWN} “drive you out,” ^{NJB} “thrust you out of their company” ^{TNT} “excommunicate you,” ^{MONTGOMERY} “won't have anything to do with you,” ^{CEV} “cut you off,” ^{LITV} and “exclude and excommunicate you [as disreputable].” ^{AMPLIFIED}

Jesus said it is because of your affiliation with Him: “because of the Son of Man,” ^{NIV} “on account of the Son of Man,” ^{NRSV} “because you are committed to the Son of Man,” ^{GWN} and “because you follow the Son of Man.” ^{NLT}

Your foes really do not know this is the cause for their opposition of you. **To them, it is because you are not only different from them, but your presence is an aggravation to them.** What has really happened is in their opposition to, and rejection of, you, they have really made known how they feel about Jesus. Jesus will clarify this before an assembled universe when He

Some of the versions account that the reward is in the future: *"will be great,"* ^{BBE/NAB/NJB} *"you will have"* ^{CEV/IE} *"will be rich."* ^{WILLIAMS}

It is quite true that the reward will be realized in the future, but it exists at this present time. It, so to speak, awaits us. **Its present existence is what enables to rejoice when men reject us.** That reward speaks of our present acceptance by God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb 12:22-24).

Rejections along the way to glory are like the storms Paul encountered as he went from place to place in ships.

SO PERSECUTED THEY THE PROPHETS
" . . . for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

Other versions read, *"for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets,"* ^{NASB} *"For that is how their fathers treated the prophets,"* ^{NIV} and *"after this manner did their fathers act toward the prophets."* ^{DARBY}

The generation of those who reject the people of God goes all the way back to Cain. They are in his spiritual lineage. Jesus said of a

The generation of Jesus, which is now declared, although it was not in Isaiah's day (Isa 53:8), will never cast from it those who are living by faith, and are separate from this world – NEVER!

generation to whom He spoke, *"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation"* (Matt 23:34-36).

Solomon wrote, *"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how*

lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men" (Prov 30:11-14).

The generation of Jesus, which is now declared, although it was not in Isaiah's day (Isa 53:8), will never cast from it those who are living by faith, and are separate from this world – NEVER!

The only people who reject the people of God are the people God has not accepted. So when they persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, rejoice and be exceeding glad. **This world is the only place you will have to contend with them!** Further, their contention confirms that God has received you!

WOE UNTO YOU THAT ARE RICH

"²⁴ But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation."

WOE TO THE RICH

"But woe unto you that are rich!..."

Other versions read, *"who have wealth"* ^{BBE} *"you rich people,"* ^{IE} *"you rich men,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"who are rich now,"* ^{GNB} and *"who are rich (abounding in material resources."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *"rich"* [plousios] has the following lexical meaning: **"RICH; PROPERLY, WEALTHY, ABUNDING IN MATERIAL RESOURCES,"** ^{THAYER} **"RICH, WEALTHY, WELL-TO-DO,"** ^{FRIBERG}

"PERTAINING TO BEING RICH - 'RICH, WEALTHY, WELL-TO-DO," ^{LOUW-NIDA} **"RICH, WEALTHY, OPULENT."** ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

I realize that some contemporary theology contradicts this affirmation – but such views cannot change what is said: not by translation or interpretation.

The word translated *"woe"* [ouai] means, **"AN INTERJECTION OF GRIEF OR OF DENUNCIATION,"** ^{THAYER} **"EXPRESSING EXTREME DISPLEASURE AND CALLING FOR RETRIBUTIVE PAIN ON SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WOE! ALAS!"** ^{FRIBERG} **"A STATE OF INTENSE HARDSHIP OR DISTRESS - 'DISASTER, HORROR."** ^{LOUW-NIDA}

Why did Jesus make this

statement? Is it something we can simply brush aside as though it had never been uttered? Is anyone willing to affirm that these words are excluded from the statement, *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"* (John 6:63). Could it be that these words are omitted from the words, *"My words shall not pass away"* (Mk 13:31), or *"whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"* (John 12:50). The answer is too obvious to pursue the matter any further.

SOME REASONS FOR THE SAYING

- ⇒ Such riches can only be experienced in this world.
- ⇒ They give no advantage to the soul.
- ⇒ They do not enhance one's relationship to God.
- ⇒ They make it more difficult to enter the Kingdom of God (Mk 10:25).
- ⇒ Those who want them *"fall into temptation and a snare, and into*

⇒ Solemnly we are reminded, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."* (1 Tim 6:6-8).

Those who do not take these words seriously are fools of the highest rank. I hardly see how more or stronger words could be said about the nature

they die; **more** to draw their souls downward. O, to be sure, there is grace for their situation –but it must be appropriated, and riches do make it more difficult to appropriate grace (Matt 19:24). That is why those desiring to be rich are warned. It is why the wealthy have a special word of warning and admonition delivered to them.

YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR CONSOLATION

" . . . for ye have received your consolation."

Other versions read *"you are receiving your comfort in full,"* ^{NASB} *"you have already received your comfort,"* ^{NASB} *"you have been comforted now,"* ^{BBE} *"you have already had all the comfort you will get!"* ^{CJB} *"you have your only happiness now"* ^{NLT} and *"for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity) and have taken and enjoyed your comfort in full [having nothing left to be awarded you]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

It is obvious that Jesus is speaking of the same circumstance Paul mentioned– **"trust in uncertain riches"** (1 Tim 6:17). Job referred to this as having *"made gold my hope"* (Job 31:24). David wrote of those who *"trusted in the abundance of riches"* (Psa 52:7). He also admonished, *"if riches increase, set not your heart upon them"* (Psa 62:10). Solomon warned, *"He that trusteth in his riches shall fall"* (Prov 11:28). Jeremiah warned, *"let not the rich man glory in his riches"* (Jer 9:23). Jesus also spoke of those who *"trust in riches,"* affirming *"how hard is it is"* for them to *"enter into the kingdom of God"* (Mk 10:24).

Earthly riches themselves, in their fullest measure will not contribute a feather's weight of significance to an eternal reward, eternal life, spiritual stature, or victory over the wicked one. All of this is reason enough for Jesus to say what He did: *"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation"* (Luke 6:24).

Let every child of God take this

If there are children of the Lord who are rich in this world's goods, or have more than they need, they are NOT told they are sinners because of that status. However, a special word is addressed to them.

many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim 6:9).

- ⇒ They are characterized by *"deceitfulness,"* which choke the Word of God and make it unfruitful (Matt 13:22).
- ⇒ It is possible for them to witness against the one who has them (James 5:3).
- ⇒ One cannot serve God and *"mammon"* ('money,' ^{NIV} 'wealth,' ^{NRSV})
- ⇒ Worldly wealth ^{NIV} is referred to as *"unrighteous mammon"* (Mt 16:11).
- ⇒ The *"love of money"* is the *"root"* of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10).
- ⇒ Some who have coveted *"money"* have *"erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Tim 6:10).
- ⇒ *"Riches"* are characterized by being corrupted by *"moth and rust"* (Matt 6:19).

and liabilities of money.

If there are children of the Lord who are rich in this world's goods, or have more than they need, they are NOT told they are sinners because of that status. However, a special word is addressed to them. *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"* (1 Tim 6:17-19).

The rich are stewards of their riches, and are to think of distributing them wisely, and not trust in them. Their heavenly-recognized *"riches"* are their *"good works"* – works in which they use their riches to assist them in laying hold on eternal life (1 Tim 1:19).

Because this is not the default mode of thinking for the rich, a woe is pronounced upon them. They have **more** to overcome than the less fortunate; **more** to leave behind when

word seriously! Do not make riches your aim! This is particular appropriate for our generation and environment. Opulence in some form is all about us, and is calling for our attention. There are also those who are marketing wealth.

WOE UNTO YOU THAT ARE FULL

“^{25A} Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger.”

This is opposite of the blessedness pronounced on those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6). The idea here is one who feels he is thoroughly adequate. There is no perceived need of a righteousness from God, and therefore it is not sought as Jesus required (Matt 6:33).

This is NOT speaking of being *“filled with the Spirit”* (Eph 5:18), *“filled with the fruits of righteousness”* (Phil 1:11), being *“filled with all the fulness of God”* (Eph 3:19), being *“filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”* (Col 1:9), or being *“filled with joy”* (2 Tim 1:4). It certainly does not refer to being filled

“With all joy and peace in believing” (Rom 15:13). **None of those are accompanied by a feeling of thorough self-adequacy.** Rather, they all accentuate the need for continual growth, advancement, and being partakers of Christ (Heb 3:14), and of the *“Divine nature”* (2 Pet 1:4). The *“treasure”* that we have is held in *“earthen vessels,”* which are porous (2 Cor 4:7). **What God gives us in Christ must be continually received in increasing measure.** Those who are *“full”* have no sense of this need.

The *“hunger”* that these people will experience is not one for righteousness – such a hunger will be always be honored by God. The *“hunger”* of which Jesus speaks here will follow the unrighteous

disembarking from this present evil world. At that time, or perhaps even shortly before it, the saying of Jesus will be fulfilled, *“The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it”* (Luke 17:22). And again, *“I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come”* (John 8:21).

This is why Jesus said, *“Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth”* (John 12:35).

This is a dreadful woe, indeed; but men must give heed to it. They must avoid the delusion of self-sufficiency, and trusting in self.

WOE UNTO YOU THAT LAUGH NOW

“^{25B} Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.”

This is the opposite of *“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”* (Matt 5:4). This describes those who have not received the forgiveness of sins, and do not enjoy the grace of God, **yet laugh as those who have need of nothing.** Sin does not annoy them. They cannot feel the defilement of transgression. They are not discontent with having a *“vile*

body” (Phil 3:20-21). They are *“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”* (2 Tim 3:4). For them, the main thing is to have fun, and enjoyment in the flesh. **Jesus says that is the domain of woe!**

This is a word that is particularly tailored for this generation – a generation in which pleasure, entertainment, and the likes reigns supreme. There are higher *“pleasures”* which are at the right hand of God (Psa 16:11). Of such pleasures it is written,

“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures” (Psa 36:8). That is compared with our former lives, of which it is written, *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3). Thank God for deliverance from the carnal laughing-life – for the rescue from the snare of profitless pleasure.

WOE UNTO YOU, WHEN MEN SHALL SPEAK WELL OF YOU

“²⁶ Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

WOE UNTO YOU

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! . . .”

This is to be compared with Matthew 5:10-12: *“Blessed are they*

which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you

falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The idea here is that those who persecute the righteous, saying all manner of evil against them, actually think well of those covered by the woes Jesus mentioned. When the people who malign the saints, despise them, and make life difficult from them, are favorably drawn toward a specific person, that person is the one against whom this woe is pronounced.

FOR SO DID THEIR FATHERS
" . . .for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

"Their fathers" speaks of the generation of those who have opposed the righteous. It commenced with Cain, and continues down to this day. Jesus affirmed a technical point that is most arresting. **The person who opposes the godly is given the credit of all opposition to the godly that has taken place through the centuries.** Jesus put it this way, as He spoke of the generation among whom He walked.

*"Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: **That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation"** (Luke 11:49-51). That is a matter to which serious and extended thought is to be given.*

I SAY UNTO YOU WHICH HEAR

"²⁷ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. ²⁸ Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

YOU WHICH HEAR

"But I say unto you which hear. . ."

Other versions read, *"But I tell you that hear Me,"* ^{NIV} *"you that listen,"* ^{NRSV} *"you who give ear to Me,"* ^{BBE} *"you who are willing to hear,"* ^{CEB} *"willing to listen,"* ^{NLT} *"who are hearing,"* ^{YLT} *"you people who are listening to Me,"* ^{LIVING} *"all of you who will listen to Me,"* ^{PHILLIPS} and *"you who are ready for the truth."* ^{MESSAGE}

These are those who **desire** to hear what Jesus has to say – those who have *"ears to hear"* (Deut 29:4; Matt 11:15; Mk 4:23). They are **willing** listeners, **attentive** listeners, listeners who are **willing to obey** what Jesus says.

All listeners are not the same, and all listeners are not treated the same. For those who are willing to hear the Lord, He will take them further – into deeper waters, into more profound activity, and greater fellowship with Himself.

Your attitude toward Jesus will determine how He greets you, what He says to you, and what He unveils to

you. He will convey general obligations to even the scribes and the pharisees (Matt 23:23). But for those who are more attentive, He has more to say.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

" . . . Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. . . "

Other versions read, *"in order to heed, make it a practice to] love your enemies."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Apostolic doctrine says,

we have it (Prov 3:27). Love like Jesus did when He washed Judas' feet (John 13:4-5,27). Love as Jesus did when He fed the multitudes who later left Him (John 6:11-13,26,66).

Our *"enemies"* are those who *"hate"* us because of our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The idea is not that we have a deep affection for our enemies, but that we have a profound desire for them to know the One to whom we have given

Some people have a lot of difficulty with this word. I encourage you not to muddy its waters with philosophizing, and groping about for convenient explanations. Do what Jesus says.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom 12:17).

This is loving our enemies like God *"loved us, even when we were dead in sins"* (Eph 2:4). It is a love that is willing to help and aid like the good Samaritan (Lk 10:33-34), and will not withhold good when it is needed and

our lives. It is good to remember that **the only true good our enemies (in their state of enmity) will receive is what comes from us.**

Solemnly we are told, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us **do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"*** (Gal 6:10). We will not withhold the

practical things people need because they are our enemies. But neither will we treat them as we do our brethren.

Some people have a lot of difficulty with this word. I encourage you not to muddy its waters with philosophizing, and groping about for convenient explanations. **Do what Jesus says.** Prepare your heart by purging from it all bitterness, so you can delight in doing good to all men.

BLESS THEM WHICH CURSE YOU

“ . . . Bless them that curse you and pray for them which spitefully use you.”

The most notable example we have of this is the prayer of Jesus from the cross: *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for **they know not what they do.** And they parted His raiment, and cast lots”* (Luke 23:34). We also have the example of Stephen, who prayed for those who stoned him, *“And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”* (Acts 7:60).

Paul admonished believers, *“Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not”* (Rom 12:14).

Peter exhorted, *“Not rendering evil*

for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pet 3:9).

In reacting in this manner, we are leaving retribution and judgment up to God. He has promised, *“Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people”* (Heb 10:30). For our Lord, *“it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you”* (2 Thess 1:6). It is **not** righteous for us to take matters into our own hands.

IF YOU ARE SMITTEN, OR YOUR CLOAK IS TAKEN

“²⁹ And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.”

These are very difficult sayings for the flesh. However, I admonish you not to seek to neutralize them with human reasoning. Ask the Lord for grace to receive them, and to execute them for His glory.

OFFER ALSO THE OTHER

“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other, and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.”

This is not sanctioning abuse. It is rather emphasizing the necessity of living by faith, trusting in the Lord to correct injustices when we are not able to do so – like Paul appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:11). In his case, an injustice had been committed that was prohibited by Roman law. Paul did not take matters into his own hands, but sought for it to be resolved by God-

sanctioned authority (Rom 13). I will add that I do not believe a spiritual novice, can properly use such provision. This is confirmed by the way the Corinthians were suing one another at the law (1 Cor 6:1-7). At all cost, we are to not bring reproach upon the Lord.

There is an example of offering the other cheek in one of Paul’s defenses. *“For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar”* (Acts 25:11).

As I see it, this confirms that Jesus is speaking of personal vendettas, as compared to legal abuses. Again, the point is not to let the oppressor do whatever he wants, but to lay the matter in the hands of the Lord.

Detailed teaching is provided on this matter by Paul: *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give*

place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:19-21).

Full provision has already been made for the punishment of evil-doers. That work has **not** been given to us. We must, however, be willing to patiently wait for it, all the while conducting ourselves in such a way as to bring glory to God.

If your garments are taken from you, God can give you another one. That is how you are to think. In the meantime, to guard you from a host of bitter experiences, pray, *“And lead us not into temptation, but **deliver us from evil:** For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”* (Matt 6:13). That is the safe course, and you will be the better for deliberately taking it.

GIVE TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH OF THEE

“³⁰ Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.”

Again, to the flesh, this all seems unreasonable. However, consider that God has already revealed how He feels about people taking something that belongs to others (Amos 2:7-8). The point is that God takes note of such things, and will adjudicate the cause justly. We are to depend upon that.

Even under the Law, this matter was addressed: "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land

which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth" (Deut 15:7-8).

Jesus adds yet another consideration. He revealed that some needs we confront are really set up by Him. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave ME meat: I was thirsty, and ye

gave ME drink: I was a stranger, and ye took ME in: naked, and ye clothed ME: I was sick, and ye visited ME: I was in prison, and ye came unto ME. . . "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME." (Matt 25:35-36).

Let the words of Jesus define more precisely what Jesus was saying.

DO TO OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT DONE UNTO YOU

"³¹ And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

Matthew gives this account: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for **this is the law and**

the prophets" (Matt 7:12). This also encapsulates the second commandment: "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt 22:39). Paul writes, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal 5:14). James writes, "If ye fulfil the

royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8).

The revealed standard for how you are to treat others, is how you yourself desire to be treated. That is the exact opposite of pride.

KINGDOM REASONING

"³² For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. ³³ And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. ³⁴ And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again."

The world has its own way of living. It lives purely out of self-interest, and is fundamentally self-centered. How

people treat them determines whether or not they will be received. They themselves are the ultimate standard of conduct. They are the supreme models to which they desire others to conform.

But believers think quite differently. It is how they desire to be treated that determines how they treat others. Their lives are centered in the Lord Jesus, for whom they live (2 Cor 5:15). Further, "Christ died for all" (2 Cor 5:14-15), which shapes how we think of others.

In addition to this, we perceive men as being in the image of God, and for that reason alone we choose to assume the very best posture toward them that is possible in Christ Jesus (James 3:9-10). We refuse to deride a creation that bears the Divine image. God Himself will hold all such individuals accountable – and we must be willing to live in view of that, not culturing bitter and hostile spirits. This is admittedly impractical and offensive to the flesh. However, this is the proper way as defined by our Creator.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD AND LEND

"³⁵ But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the

Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

You can only do this by faith – but

you must do it! The things we have accepted by faith mandate this kind of response. This world is not our home, we are "sojourning" through it (1 Pet

1:17). The possessions we have are only ours while we are in the world, and their source is our Father which is in heaven (1 Tim 6:17). We do have possessions that the world cannot touch (Eph 1:3; 2 Pet 1:3), as well as a "crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet 5:4).

While we are in this world, God has affirmed He knows what we need,

including food, clothing, and shelter. He has promised that if we will attend to living for Him, He will see to it we do not lack these things: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these

things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt 6:31-33).

Let these words be the lens through which you consider these otherwise difficult sayings. They will make such words palatable. These are the words of Jesus!

BE YE THEREFORE MERCIFUL

"³⁶ Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

Matthew records this statement, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt 5:7).

Looking at being merciful from the underside, Paul wrote, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and

clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph 4:31-32).

Being "merciful" is acknowledging the universe does not revolve around us. It is agreeing to yield to the Lord,

who will render judgment righteously. It also leaves the door of mercy ajar, so to speak, for those who sorely need it.

God is glorified when we are merciful, and our own hearts are made more tender and supple while we are in that stance. When we are merciful, we will receive more mercy. That is the promise of God, who cannot lie.

JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED

"³⁷ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt 7:2).

Paul also speaks of this kind of

simply this: God will judge us in the same manner in which we judge others. If we were merciful, He will be merciful. If we were **not** merciful, He will **not** be merciful. It is another fulfillment of the saying, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).

Some people use texts like this to say we must never judge anything or anyone. But that is not what these texts are saying. Paul spoke of inequities being judged by the church – judging those who are within (1 Cor 5:12). He further challenged by saying, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor 6:2-5).

Paul told the Corinthians to, as wise men, judge what he was saying (1 Cor 10:15). Prophets are admonished to

The kind of judgment that is forbidden is unrighteous judgment, of passing final judgment, or seeking to displace God, who is the "Judge of all"

JUDGE NOT

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned . . ."

Matthew records, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what

judgment: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom 2:1).

The idea in all of these texts is

judge what other prophets say (1 Cor 14:29). Further, Jesus Himself said, *"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment"* (John 7:24).

The kind of judgment that is forbidden is **unrighteous** judgment, of passing final judgment, or seeking to displace God, who is the *"Judge of all"* (Heb 12:23).

FORGIVE

" . . . forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

Providing further incentive, Matthew records Jesus saying, *"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matt 6:15). After relating a parable that spoke of an unforgiving man who himself had been forgiven, and later was *"delivered to the tormentors,"* Jesus said, *"So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses"* (Matt 18:35). Elsewhere Jesus also said, *"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any:*

that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

All believers are admonished, *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Eph 4:32).

It certainly ought to be clear that anyone who has difficulty forgiving must address that problem immediately. It will impact their future. God will not treat the non-forgiver amiably.

GIVE, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU

"³⁸ Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

This is one of the great promises, bounded by holy considerations, and fueled with hope. Make no mistake about this promise! Those who *"give"* have this Divine guarantee.

- ⇒ *"It [gifts ^{AMPLIFIED}] shall be given unto you."* The person gave out of his own resources, but God will not allow his resources to be depleted! His gift, so to speak, will come back to him multiplied.
- ⇒ *"Good measure."* A full and overflowing measure.
- ⇒ *"Pressed down."* Like grain being pressed down so more can be placed in the container
- ⇒ *"Shaken together."* Shaking the container so the grains can settle, making room for more to be added.
- ⇒ *"Running over."* There will be more on the ground that belongs to you, and which you can gather in.
- ⇒ *"Shall men give into your bosom."*

This will not fall like manna, but men *bountifully*" reaping *"bountifully"* (2 Cor

It is possible to be an unfaithful steward of your resources, considering only yourself. In such a case, you may squander your goods on yourself, and never be able to assist anyone else in need. This is a posture of life that no believer can afford to assume.

will be inclined to give generously to you.

⇒ *"With the same measure."* The same kind of measure you used to dispense goods to others, will be used when others give to you. If you used a teaspoon, that is what they will use. If you used a cup, that is what they will use. If you used a large vessel, that is what they will use. If you were stingy, they will be stingy. If you were liberal, they will be liberal. If you only thought of yourself, the others will think only of themselves.

Paul referred to those who *"sow*

9:6).

It is possible to be an unfaithful steward of your resources, considering only yourself. In such a case, you may squander your goods on yourself, and never be able to assist anyone else in need. This is a posture of life that no believer can afford to assume.

When gathering a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, who had suffered during a prolonged drought, Paul reasoned about the matter of giving.

"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your

abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack" (2 Cor 8:15).

This is how God equalizes the needs and adequacies of the saints. He tells the Corinthians that at that time, they had an abundance, while the poor saints in Jerusalem were lacking., Their

abundance was **intended** to meet the need of those poor saints. Conversely, there would come a time when the Corinthians were lacking, and the saints in Jerusalem would be flourishing. Then, the Jerusalem saints would supply the Corinthians needs.

In this manner, all of the saints would effectively learn how to be abased, and how to abound, how to suffer need, and how to supply need.

Paul used himself as an example. *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil 4:12-13).*

This is the sort of thing Jesus is addressing in our text. It is the outworking of a humble spirit.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/4/15. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The twenty-third lesson will cover verses 39 thru 49 of chapter 6: "SUNDRY PARABLES." In parabolic form, Jesus teaches the people concerning self-centeredness, and giving unwarranted criticism. He then delivers a parable that underscores the absolute necessity of taking His words seriously. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.