

“Living as God’s People”

Luke 6:20-31

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Introduction

What does Christianity look like? To some it may seem to be a list of do’s and don’ts. To others, it may seem the religious thing to carry a certain righteous air about them, separateness from the common man, so to speak. But, as was becoming custom, Jesus’ view of what it really meant to be God’s people differed from what most preconceived ideas believed. And the awesome thing about Jesus’ view, He didn’t just teach it, He lived it.

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.”

With the controversy of last week’s lesson behind: Honoring the Sabbath, Jesus is propelling His teaching ministry full speed ahead.

In between last week’s and this week’s lesson, Luke 6:12-19, records that Jesus drew away into an all night prayer meeting with God the Father. The Son and the Father communed together on an intimate level that no one else was privy to; just they by themselves, one on one. Oh, to be a fly on that wall.

Following, Jesus chose His twelve disciples and began to heal the multitudes that have already begun to gather and follow Him.

The first words He spoke to them when coming down in the plain is so similar to the words He spoke in the Sermon on the Mount that many Bible students are unable to decide if these two messages are one and the same, or are they separate occasions.

He said, **“Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.”** When someone says something is **“yours”** it means they are passing ownership of said item to you. They are giving you the right and the privilege to operate in what was given.

It’s the **“poor,”** the impoverished who truly appreciate what is given to them both in the physical and in the spiritual. One who is **“poor”** realizes they have nothing in and of themselves. They are totally dependent. They agree with the Apostle Paul when he wrote, Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God,” (2 Cor. 3:5); but they are **“blessed;”** who are happy and find joy and acceptance in God’s kingdom. They are the appreciative because they know before Christ they lacked spiritual vitality and were **“poor.”** Now, they enjoy a new experience of blessedness.

Luke 6:21 “Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.”

Living as God’s people brings an expectation of being **“filled.”** These verses really hone in on our life with and without Christ. Without Him it is truly a lift of lack compared to being spiritually satisfied and complete in Him.

One that **“hungers”** has not yet retained enough to turn over the plate and say, “That’s it, I’m done.” Spiritually speaking, he that **“hungers”** has a need for more of Him. His soul doesn’t rest until it finds that “ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power,” Colossians 2:10. This is where the malnourished soul is embraced and filled with the satisfaction of the Savior.

“Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.” Many of us have been well acquainted with tears on more than one occasion. Tears, or weeping are most often shed for times of sorrows; for times of hardship and anguish. Crying gives one an opportunity to release those pinned up emotions that stress the body and soul of man.

Whether this weeping is associated with sorrow of sin or because of adversity of the wicked, those that endure through it now will find a time when, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying . . .,” Revelation 21:4.

“For ye shall laugh.” Where there is laughter, joy has replaced the sorrow once felt. Where there is laughter, release is felt from the oppression of the wicked. David once wrote, “Fret not thyself because of evildoers . . .,” Psalm 37:1. If they are the source of tears, forget about it. He goes on to say, “The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming,” Psalm 37:13. When God laughs, living as His people, we will share the same joy as our Savior.

The Bible says, He will “appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . .,” Isaiah 61:3, and they will be able to **“laugh!”**

Luke 6:22 “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.”

Acceptance, a lot of people live for it. Being a people pleaser has drained the efforts of some to no avail. When we live for Christ, as God’s people, it brings contentions and misunderstandings in relationships. It draws a line in the sand between two lifestyles and those lifestyles are always in battle against one another: those that live for the Spirit and those that live for the flesh.

Others may not understand why you can’t run with the old lifestyle that you used to. They don’t understand that things one used to run after to satisfy the flesh is not precedent any longer. This brings a backlash of ill-feelings toward the Christian. They experience hatred, separateness and reproach; three words that describe being **“cast out.”** You don’t live like them anymore. You are not part of the status quo or the normal clique, and they count your name as **“evil, for the Son of man’s sake,”** because you are working to line your life up with Him, and not them.

Luke 6:23 “Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.”

By far, one of my favorite Christian contemporary songs is “We Won’t Be Shaken” by Building 429. This is one of those songs that draw me in at the first line which says, “This world has nothing for me, This life is not my own . . .,” (Lyricsmania.com).

God loves His people and we receive blessings while here on this earth. That fact is sprinkled through His Word. But, a Christian’s permanent **“reward”** will never be found on this side of glory. Jesus said, **“Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.”**

It may not feel like it at the present moment but the day when they cause you harm; the day when they come against you is a day for rejoicing because God sees and knows and God will repay. “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us . . .,” 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7. Your **“reward”** is coming! “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!” Psalm 58:11, NASB. This life has nothing for me! My **“reward”** is coming! “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” Psalm 30:5.

“For in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” It’s so hard in the midst of trials and troubles to see that you are not the only who has ever gone through this or are going through this now. Jesus reassured His disciple that those that have gone before them had to endure the same controversy of people not understanding their relationship as God’s people.

The book of Hebrews holds a treasury of people who have endured in the faith despite their adverse circumstances, and yet held on and believed God every step of the way. Hebrews 11 is what some refer to as the Hall of Fame of faith. Immediately, crossing over into chapter 12 we are told, “Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” (vs.1). **“Prophets”** and people who have gone before us can testify that the road wasn’t easy. They can tell their story of how they tried to do the work of God and people not respond

the way they had hoped. They can let the cat out of the bag about how they were mistreated, used and abused because their desire was to fulfill the call of God on their lives. They already experienced in **“like manner”** what Jesus is preparing His disciples for.

Luke 6:24-26 “But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

“Woe” and **“for”** are the marks of these verses. Remember how I quoted 2 Thessalonians 1:6 which said, **““Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you?”** Here is the undeniable truth that those who inflicted harm to God’s people will have the same troubles come back on them. Did not Galatians 6:7 warn, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap?”** However one treats the people of God, the same will come back on their heads. They will receive their just deserts.

“Woe” is not a word that you want to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak over your life. Nothing good ever follows a **“woe.”** **“Woe”** to me means you better watch out now, calamity is sure to follow. This will not be the last time Jesus uses the warning of the **“woe.”** Later, during His earthly ministry He tries to shake the scribes and the Pharisees out of their ways to listen to what the Father is now establishing using the word **“woe”** (see Matthew 23). When we travel even further in the future, there are even stronger **“woes”** that appear in the book of Revelation. The point is, if Jesus is saying **“woe,”** one better watch their step and get it right.

Luke 6:27-30 “But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.”

Now Jesus presents a responsibility shift to those who would live as God's people. It is not only the evildoer that needs to mind his step, but the Christian has to live and love people as God Himself does.

When someone has been hurt and broken the last thing on their mind is the benefit of the one who has inflicted the harm. Jesus, knowing what He was going to accomplish on the cross was teaching His disciples to operate in this world as if He would. Years ago the WWJD movement became very popular. It was based off the original book written by Charles M. Sheldon titled "In His Steps." The base of the book was that every thought and action was to be filtered through the question of What Would Jesus Do?

All of these things that He speaks of in the above verses were things that He did; they were things that He demonstrated in His own life. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," Isaiah 53:7. Jesus was teaching His disciples that to live as God's people you will not only have to go against the status quo and cliques of society, but you will also have to fight against your own natural inclinations that don't want to seek the good of those who cause harm.

"Love your enemies." The words love and enemies do not coincide with one another according to human standards. But, Jesus is calling us to use God's Spirit within us to operate on a supernatural level that surpasses our view of the natural world.

When one is an enemy that means that they are against us. Yet, Jesus' command is to love them anyhow. Show them the same compassion as He did when He allowed them to drive the nails through His hands and feet. He told His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53, NASB. He could've taken care of His enemies with one swoop of a prayer, yet love compelled Him to offer Himself for their release from sin.

They cursed Him, yet He prayed for them, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,” Luke 23:34. They struck Jesus on the “cheek” (John 18:22, see also Matthew 5:39) and they divided His clothes (Luke 23:34). He went through it all and never sought His own revenge but continued forth in love.

Luke 6:31 “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

The Golden Rule, as we call it today. God’s people should know how to treat people in any circumstance, whether the times are favorable or in times of adversity. God’s people have to respond the same way Jesus did. Philippians 2:5 tells us, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” (KJV). The NLT says it like this, “You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.”

WWJD?

The greatest commandment that Jesus taught was, “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these,*” Mark 12:29-31, emphasis mine. Loving people, treating people as one would want to be treated is a priority for living as God’s people! It is one of the greatest commandments! That cannot be ignored!

Conclusion

What does Christianity look like to you now? My guess is some of our preconceived ideas have had an awakening so that we can be Living as God’s People.