

Congregational Study: Luke's Epiphany

Luke 6:17-26

Sunday Class (2/2/25)

Today Jesus is telling his hearers about the kind of people he wants them – and us -- to be.

Read first Luke 6:17-19. Looking carefully at v. 17, who are the three groups whom Jesus is addressing? What's the distinction between the first two groups? Between the second two groups?

What kind of people does Luke tell us were being healed?

Luke was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, but he was a physician, a man of healing himself. How do you think he, as a doctor, felt about the countless miracles of healing that Jesus performed?

What do you make of v. 19? How do you interpret Luke's words? What was going on?

Read Luke 6:20-26.

This is Luke's parallel version of the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew's gospel (5:1-7:29). Luke has 30 verses, Matthew has 137. Do you think Luke is giving us an abridged version of the same sermon?

Matthew includes many references to the Old Testament Law. Why might Luke have left these out?

How many beatitudes ("Blessed ...") does Jesus speak? How many woes?

Who's the subject of the first beatitude? Of the first woe? What's the promise attached to the beatitude, and the warning attached to the woe?

Who's the subject of the second beatitude? Of the second woe? What's the promise attached to the beatitude, and the warning attached to the woe?

Who's the subject of the third beatitude? Of the third woe? What's the promise attached to the beatitude, and the warning attached to the woe?

Who's the subject of the fourth beatitude? Of the fourth woe? What's the promise attached to the beatitude, and the warning attached to the woe?

What do you think Jesus is implying with that word "Blessed"? From whom does the blessing come?



Is Jesus saying, in the first beatitude, that, for the poor, the kingdom of God is something that they're going to have to wait for? Or is he saying that it's a present reality? In what sense is the kingdom of God theirs already?

He seems to be talking about those who are poor, who are aware of their reliance upon God, and who are trusting in the Lord for help and relief. In other words, what some commentators refer to as the "pious poor."

Look again at the first of the four woes (v. 24). What's the basic message of Jesus to those who are rich? Might the Pharisees have been among the "rich" to whom Jesus refers? See Luke 16:14.

What do you think Jesus means by "consolation" (24)? Notice he's speaking of this in the present, as in the parallel beatitude.

Look again at the second beatitude (21a). Compare to Matthew 5:6. Again, Matthew's version seems "spiritualized," while Luke's seems to refer to those who are actually and physically hungry. In fact, notice the word "now."

In v. 21a, what's the promise to those who are hungry now? Do you think the promise will come true in this life necessarily? Or in the life to come?

Perhaps Jesus' parable in Luke 14:15-24 speaks of the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' promise in this beatitude, when he speaks of a heavenly banquet for all, including the poor. Notice, also, an earlier echo of this beatitude, in Mary's song of praise, in Luke 2:53.

Now look at the parallel second woe (25a). Again, is this reversal of fortune promised, necessarily, in this life? Or does this seem to be referring to the life to come?

Jesus is asking his followers – and those who are poor or hungry -- to begin to see what's going on in their lives in the way that God sees these things. He's calling for them to take on a new perspective, to view their sufferings in the light of God's promises, and to be patient.

A very similar expression is found in the third couplet of beatitudes and woes. Read again 21b and 25b. Those who "weep now" are not included in Matthew's version. Why might Luke have included this beatitude for his audience, when Matthew did not? What might be cause some to "weep" (21b)?

Read again the final beatitude (22-23). What specific kind of suffering is Jesus referring to in this statement? Might some in the crowd have already experienced this kind of suffering?

How might Jewish people, back in this day, have been treated if they had come back to their villages and synagogues filled with excitement and joy after hearing Jesus and

seeing him do miracles? What about it they came back professing to be disciples of Jesus? Is Jesus telling his listeners that these kinds of reactions from others should be expected? Was Jesus treated in the same way? Should we expect never to be treated like this?

In v. 24, we find the only command in this section. What does Jesus direct his followers to do, when persecutions and abuse come their way because of their connection with him? The reward is promised when? Why would God reward those who suffer for the sake of Jesus?

Of the four promised blessings in verses 20-23, which promise means the most to you now? Why? Which warning in vs. 24-46 seems the most frightening to you? Why?

Jesus is calling us to exceptional love in light of God's grace and blessings offered to us.