

The Upside-Down Life

Luke 6:17—26 (v. 20—26)

Introduction

On February 6th, President Trump signed an executive order to form a task force that would “eradicate anti-Christian bias” within the federal government. This is in line with the First Amendment, which prevents congress from making laws respecting an establishment of religion; prohibiting the free exercise of religion; or abridging the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, or the right to petition the government. While, on the surface, this seems like a victory for the church, it is really government (God’s left-hand kingdom) doing what it’s meant to do—stay out of the way of the church (God’s right-hand kingdom) as she spreads the Gospel.

Not an End of Opposition

While this should put an end to the organized persecution by the government, such as unjust laws that can cost Christians their jobs or businesses because of moral practices based on their faith, it doesn’t change the mind-set of people. In a fallen world you can’t legislate morality (Read **John 15:18—21**). We can still expect hatred because the world hated and still hates our Lord.

The Good News

We live an **UPSIDE-DOWN LIFE** in a fallen world. The good news is that the bad things that happen to us in this fallen world are good. In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus pronounces four blessings upon those who follow Him and four corresponding woes upon those of the world.

Poor Or Rich

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God ... Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation (v. 20, 24). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “*poor in spirit*” (**Matthew 5:3**). But in Luke, the woe indicates this has more to do with actual material wealth and poverty. However, a deeper look at the woe shows that there’s more going on. There’s nothing inherently good about being poor. Not every poor person is good or moral. It’s a good thing when the poor accept their lot and are not bound by money. The account of the Rich Young Man in **Mark 10** illustrates this: *He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions (Mark 10:22)*. Bound by his wealth, the rich young man couldn’t put his faith in Jesus and follow Him. The moral—put your faith in Jesus, not wealth.

Hungry Or Satisfied

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied ... Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry (v. 21a, 25a). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “*those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*” (**Matthew 5:6**). Once again, there’s nothing inherently good about being hungry. Hunger can drive a person to do some terrible things. Think of the Donner party. The key here is the word “satisfied.” Where do you find your satisfaction, in things of this world or in the kingdom of God?

Weep Or Laugh

Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh ... Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep (v. 21b, 25b). This one is simple. Where do you find joy? Have you seen any movies recently? Have you heard any of today's comics? What passes for humor in the world is really tragedy. The joy in the kingdom of God is true joy, joy in our salvation.

Persecuted Or Praised

Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets ... Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets (v. 22—23, 26). How should we handle persecution? Jesus says, "leap for joy." This is not just bearing up under persecution. It's more like laughing in the faces of our persecutors. How can we do this? Remember, the world hates the truth and loves lies. It loves its lies so much that it calls them truth. But we have two reasons for joy. It puts us in good company and our reward in heaven is great.

Now and Then

This brings us to the main concept here. Life is a matter of now and then. Are we tied to the here and now or are we pilgrims here, knowing our home is waiting for us in heaven?

The One Constant

This is all based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was hated, persecuted, and killed for us. Only by His death on the cross do we have forgiveness of sins. Only by His death do we have access to the kingdom of God. Only by His death do we have a new spirit placed within us to live for Him. And only by His death can we live this **UPSIDE-DOWN LIFE** in this fallen world.

**And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**
