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SERMON TITLE: **Be Blessed!**
SCRIPTURE: **Luke 6:20-26**
DATE: **May 8, 2022**

Online service at www.fpcd.org/live-stream

Read also Psalm 1.

What blesses you?

Your spouse? Family? A sunny day? Vacation? Winning the lottery? When politics goes your way? A new house, car, outfit, or dinner out?

What blesses you?

When things go right? When everyone gets along?

That works for me! But Scripture informs us that there's more:

- It says, "The wise man builds his house upon the rock."
- A parable talks about the man who "built bigger barns to store his riches," only to shockingly find out that his life was required of him the next day.
- It says, "Don't worry about what you will eat, drink or wear because there's more to life than the eating, drinking, and clothing."
- It says, "Worry cannot add a single hour to your life."
- It says, "Don't even worry about tomorrow."

What blesses you?

A worry-free life?

Jesus has something to say about God's blessings. This lesson is from Luke 6. Let's hear it:

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours. God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied. God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh. What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way. What sorrow awaits you who are rich, for you have your only happiness now. What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now, for a time of awful hunger awaits you. What sorrow awaits you who laugh now, for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow. What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds, for their ancestors also praised false prophets." (Luke 6:20-26).

Let's list God's blessings:

- ~ The kingdom of God, is more than riches we can acquire;
- ~ The kingdom of God satisfies, like the richest meal;
- ~ God replaces sorrow and sadness with laughter;
- ~ When you are hated, excluded, mocked, and cursed as evil because of Jesus, a great reward awaits you in heaven. So be ecstatic! ☐
- ~ Being scorned for your faith affirms your reward.
- ~ Earthly riches end when you die. You take nothing with you, so do not pour yourself into gaining wealth. (Your family will argue over them anyway.)

If you live only to "eat, drink, and be merry," remember that "tomorrow you die." If you concentrate only on your physical desires, you will be spiritually bankrupt. The same for entertainment. If you spend all your efforts on being entertained, you will be sad when heaven comes. If you focus solely on being popular or well known, you miss the kingdom values of eternity.

These are kingdom realities.

They are different from what we see and value when we only have a "this-world" view. Christians have a bigger worldview, which includes the heavenly or the spiritual realm. Jesus' view is a much bigger, broader view of life.

He says, you can choose to seek God and work to see Kingdom Reality. Or, ignore it. But the Bible calls ignoring God's kingdom 'resisting God.' So there are two kinds of people and two attitudes.

Those who seek God are blessed! Those who do not, miss the blessing. **Are you embracing the blessing?**

So how do we begin to see Kingdom Reality?

I thought of people whose circumstances are adverse. People who have times of lack or loss—not enough money even to buy food. Even still, Jesus says,

God blesses you with the riches of God's Kingdom.
God blesses you and will satisfy you.
God blesses you in your grieving, and in due time you will laugh.

Jesus said to them, *in your loss, in your lack, you will be utterly blessed by God no matter your circumstances.*

There's a woman you've all heard of who wrote a song about that. She was born in a one-room cabin, in Tennessee, one of twelve children. Her father was a sharecropper, and her grandfather a pastor at a small country church. She was raised on Scripture and Gospel hymns. The stories in the Bible encouraged her. Here's the lyrics to one of her songs. **Look for the blessings.**

*Back through the years I go wonderin' once again,
Back to the seasons of my youth
I recall a box of rags that someone gave us
And how my momma put the rags to use.
There were rags of many colors, every piece was small
And I didn't have a coat, and it was way down in the fall.
Momma sewed the rags together, sewin' every piece with love.
She made my coat of many colors that I was so proud of.*

*As she sewed, she told a story from the Bible, she had read
About a coat of many colors Joseph wore and then she said--
Perhaps this coat will bring you good luck and happiness
And I just couldn't wait to wear it, and momma blessed it with
a kiss.*

*My coat of many colors that my momma made for me.
Made only from rags, but I wore it so proudly;
Although we had no money, I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors my momma made for me.*

*So with patches on my britches and holes in both my shoes
In my coat of many colors, I hurried off to school--
Just to find the others laughing and making fun of me
In my coat of many colors my momma made for me.*

*And oh, I couldn't understand it, for I felt I was rich!
And I told 'em of the love my momma sewed in every stitch.
And I told 'em all the story Momma told me while she sewed.
And how my coat of many colors was worth more than all their
clothes.*

*But they didn't understand it and I tried to make them see
That one is only poor only if they choose to be!
Now I know we had no money but I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors my momma made for me
Made just for me.¹*

The Scripture lifted her up. The love of her mother lifted her right out of her physical poverty and **when you are rich inside, you have everything.** She sang in her grandfather's church beginning at age six, and eventually became famous. She is a generous philanthropist and supports those in need through her Dollywood Foundation.

If you are a mother or a grandmother or if you have nieces or nephews—or a neighbor of children, or are a childcare provider—but you do not feel rich or significant, or that you can help, take heed. Rather than looking at what you lack, be assured that because you have the Lord, you have riches untold. Lift up your eyes to HIM! Live into the blessing!

What did our Psalm say?

- Oh **the JOYS of those who follow the Lord**, not the mockers.
- Oh **the delight of those who take the Scriptures to heart.**
- **You are the strong ones!** You will bear fruit each season of your life.
- **You will prosper in all you do!**

Moms and grandmothers, aunts and neighbors, are you living into the Scriptures and loving your children through them? Men and women alike, this is the blessing that is laid before you. Are you embracing it?

AMEN

¹ Dolly Parton, "Coat of Many Colors," from album Coat of Many Colors, © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, 1971. lyricsfreak.com/d/dolly-parton/coat-of-many-colors_20041950.html, accessed May 4, 2022.