

Luke 6:20-26

Sermon: **The Sermon on the Mount #2**

2024.

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YAHWEH HOLDS US BY THE HAND

1. We now continue with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Last time, I spoke about the nature of the Kingdom of God — and how the biblical vision of that Kingdom, of eternal life, or what we often call heaven, is radically different from anything written in the sacred texts of human history.

1.1. Now, let's take a moment to define what the phrase "blessed are you" truly means. Who are those who are blessed? A synonym for "blessed" in this context is "lucky." So, every statement Jesus makes here could just as well be read as: "Lucky are those..." Why are they lucky? In several books of the Bible, the authors describe those who will inherit the Kingdom of God with the phrase, "Blessed are they..." They call them blessed — or fortunate, or joyful. One of those books is the Psalms. For example, **(Psalm 1:1)** says: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers." And in **(Revelation 1:3)** we read: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it."

1.2. When we become witnesses to our own transformation — when we begin to see that we are slowly becoming entirely different people from who we once were — then we become the very people Jesus describes in the Sermon on the Mount. And we do this not because someone told us we must, nor because God commanded us to obey, but because we desire to do it. In other words, it's not merely that our outward actions reveal who we are — it's that, deep within, we are that kind of person. This is not some side aspect of our identity; it's who we are at our core. Our hearts have been transformed, and they long to promote forgiveness, nobility, righteousness, mercy, and every other virtue that flows from the Spirit of God.

1.3. When, through our free will, we say "yes" to God, Scripture teaches that, at the same time, God has already decided that we would say "yes." Our free will is deeply intertwined with His sovereign will — and that is why we are the "fortunate ones," why we are "blessed." Because He chose us before the foundation of the world to be His children.

(Psalm 37:22–24) says: “For those blessed by the Lord will inherit the land, but those cursed by Him will be cut off. The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the one who holds his hand.”

THE PORTRAIT OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

2. 2. Alright, let’s continue — (Luke 6:20) “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

2.1. Who are “the poor”? I came across an interpretation online from a Bible teacher who said: “*The poor are those who are destitute, oppressed, and humiliated — people who seek no comfort in material riches but expect consolation from God, both now and in heaven. Jesus encourages people to desire heavenly and spiritual wealth rather than earthly gain.*” I believe this teacher is partially correct. If we had only Luke’s account, it would be easy to conclude that one must be materially poor or oppressed in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. But we also have Matthew’s account, which says: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

2.2. First, I want to point out what I do not believe Jesus means when He speaks of the poor. Being poor in spirit does not mean being literally poor. I believe a wealthy person can also be poor in spirit. I’m sure many of us — if not all — have met a poor person who desperately longs to be rich. There are poor people who harbor resentment toward those who have wealth, who envy the success of their neighbors, and whose mouths are filled with words of hatred toward them. There are also those who, in their poverty, commit immoral acts in pursuit of riches.

2.3. On the other hand, some of us may know people who are financially well off, yet through their lives we see that they love God with all their hearts, care little for their wealth, and understand that money cannot give them the deep joy every human soul longs for.

2.4. So, because of all this, I don’t believe Jesus was speaking of the materially poor. Rather, He was describing the inner condition of a person who, in the depths of his awareness and subconscious, recognizes his own spiritual poverty — that something vital is missing. In other words, this verse describes the state of the human soul.

2.5. Let me try to paint a picture of what such a person — poor in spirit — looks like and how he thinks. As children, we can’t really understand this. Children move forward with confidence, believing life will give them everything they desire. When we’re teenagers, nothing seems impossible — we’re certain our dreams will come true. Our culture teaches us that, our parents reinforce it, and our education system repeats it. Everyone tells us that life can give us whatever we want. But it’s only when we reach that inevitable point — when we realize that this life cannot, and never will, fill the emptiness inside — that we begin to understand what Jesus meant.

2.6. For some, that realization comes in old age; for others, through a family tragedy; for others still, through illness or near death; and for some, when they finally see how deeply this world is stained with human injustice — with greed, the lust for power, for war, for destruction, and so on.

2.7. When that realization dawns — when we see that this life cannot fulfill our expectations — we face a choice. That choice places us in one of two categories:

1. To be poor in spirit, or
2. To be rich in spirit.

2.8. So let's first describe the one who is poor in spirit. The poor in spirit is a person who has become aware of himself — who recognizes that the evil within him has contributed to the world's brokenness. He begins to weep; he mourns, because he realizes he has missed the very purpose of his existence. He understands that no pleasure this world offers can satisfy the deepest longing of his soul. He begins to yearn for something magnificent — for a perfect world that can give him what this one cannot: a morally good and perfect nature, and eternal life.

2.9. Therefore, he decides to see the world for what it truly is — a place tainted by human sin. And that realization grieves him, because he understands that human beings — beautiful creatures made in God's image — have, through their own choices, become morally corrupt. In other words, he begins to see that something is missing: the reality he longs for is one in which he can truly live and rejoice. He yearns for the Kingdom of God to come — and the sooner, the better.

WE CANNOT REACH PERFECTION IN THIS LIFE

3. Alright, let's continue. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes the kind of people who now strive to be what He calls blessed. I believe some Bible teachers have misinterpreted this — Jesus is speaking about us who live in this present age, about all God's children who have existed throughout human history. We are the merciful, the meek, the peacemakers; we hunger for righteousness, we mourn over our sin. We are those people now, while we live in this world.

3.1. And this is crucial to understand: although in this reality we can never completely overcome sin — we will always stumble, we will always miss the mark, we will always act selfishly while we inhabit this fallen age — deep in our hearts we no longer want to. We grieve when we fail, and that makes us utterly different from the world around us. Our hearts do not approve of sin, nor do they take pleasure in it. Instead, they long for mercy, for meekness, for peace, and for the courage to stand for God's truth and righteousness.

3.2. Once we grasp this — what it means to be poor in spirit — we begin to see how the rest of Jesus' words, "Blessed are those who hunger, blessed are those who weep," complete the portrait of the one who will inherit the kingdom of God.

THE HUNGRY KNOW, THE WEeping LONG FOR MORE

4. Now we move to the next verse, **(Luke 6:21)** **"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."**

4.1. Who are the hungry? They are those who long for God to establish His kingdom on earth. They hunger to see His righteous rule govern this world. They understand that apart from God, the human race has no hope of bringing peace or goodness to this planet. The hungry are those who endure to

the end, knowing that they will one day be filled — that the kingdom of God will finally give them everything their souls have ever longed for.

4.2. The hungry know that, in the end, they will find the true purpose of their existence. They will become magnificent human beings, rejoicing in a reality that provides everything they've ever desired: peace, justice, love, protection, dignity, perfect health, glorious strength — and above all, a righteous and merciful King who reigns forever.

4.3. And who are those who weep now? The hungry know that what they long for is not yet here — and that absence brings tears. If we are the blessed ones Jesus speaks of, then as our lives unfold, we will become increasingly aware of how false the promises of our culture really are.

4.4. The grand declarations of history — promises of a better world for future generations, for our children — have never been fulfilled. Even today, our governments assure us that “one day” they will deliver everything we dream of. What a lie! History itself calls them out as deceivers.

4.5. And those of us who see this truth — we weep. We weep because we know that, right now, our deepest hopes cannot yet be fulfilled. We know that without our King — the One we eagerly await — true peace will never come. We also weep over ourselves, because our human nature still leans toward selfishness, deceit, pride, false mercy, and false righteousness. We weep because we no longer want to be that way¹.

4.6. We weep over the injustice that floods the world because of human sin. We weep because we long for a different reality — for ourselves and for others. And yet, even as we weep, we begin to rejoice, because we know what is coming.

4.7. Jesus tells us: *“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.”* Yes — one day we will laugh without restraint. Our joy will have no end. We know that the Book of Revelation promises that Jesus will return to reign over this world as a righteous King. And when that day comes, we will laugh — our deepest desires finally fulfilled. We will cease to weep, for we will become a new humanity — the new Adam — reigning together with our King in this restored reality².

5. Alright, let's continue — **(Luke 6:22–23)** *“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you, and scorn your name as evil because of the Son of Man! Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For their fathers used to treat the prophets in the same way.”*

ONE OF THE GREATEST PROOFS

5.1. Here Jesus speaks directly to His people, the Jews, and promises them hardship. He tells them that those who believe in the Messiah will be hated, mocked, shamed, and cast out from the very culture in which they were born.

¹ Psalm 38:18-19

² 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 — Jesus Christ is the “new Adam,” the originator of a new human race, perfectly obedient to God.

5.2. Today, from our perspective, we know that this is exactly what happened to the Jews who believed in the Son of God. Throughout the New Testament we read of the persecution they faced from the religious leaders — the Pharisees and the chief priests. They were flogged, imprisoned, stoned, falsely accused, and even killed³.

5.3. To those who suffered, Jesus said: *“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for your reward is great in heaven.”* Humanly speaking, we might say: *“This man Jesus must be out of His mind — who could possibly rejoice in suffering?”*

5.4. But what Jesus was telling His people also speaks to us today, we who call ourselves Christians: when we endure hardship — whatever form it takes — and when we refuse to abandon our faith and our love for God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, even when every part of us wants to give up, that endurance becomes a miracle in itself. It is proof — proof that we are indeed among the blessed.

5.5. Those who are not among the blessed cannot and will not endure when trials come. But when we see that we do endure, that we hold fast through the storm, we rejoice — because our endurance is one of the greatest evidences that we will inherit the kingdom of God.

THE WORLD WILL NEVER LOVE US

6. Alright, let’s continue: *“For their fathers used to treat the prophets in the same way.”* Jesus knew that His people were well acquainted with the Old Testament. They understood the stories of how their ancestors had treated the prophets whom God had sent to warn them that they had strayed from the right path. Again and again, those prophets were rejected — driven out, mocked, and in many cases even killed by their own people⁴. The Jews listening to Jesus on the mountain knew this was true. They understood that Jesus was essentially telling them: *“If you listen to My teaching, if you believe the message I’ve brought to the world, and if you live according to My commands, you will be persecuted by your own fathers — by the rest of Israel who refuse to believe in Me.”*

6.1. Some modern forms of Christianity teach that the world will love you simply because you call yourself a Christian — as if that were proof of belonging to God. But we, who have lost friendships, who have been mocked by those closest to us, who have been rejected in one way or another because of our walk with Christ — we know that such versions of Christianity have strayed far from the original teaching of Jesus Christ.

6.2. Don’t misunderstand me — I’m not encouraging anyone to act irrationally or foolishly in order to earn the world’s hatred or to be labeled a fanatic. But there will come moments when a child of God must take a stand against the moral corruption of this world, moments when we must clearly reveal where our allegiance lies. And please remember what I’m about to say: when that moment comes, we must always — always — do it in love toward our enemies.

³ Acts 5:17–18, 40–41; Acts 6:11–14; 7:57–60; Acts 8:1–3; 2 Corinthians 11:24–25; John 16:2

⁴ 1 Kings 19:9–10; Jeremiah 26:20–23; 2 Chronicles 36:15–16

6.3. Why? Because even though they oppose us, we do not wish for their destruction. We long for them to become among the blessed — to inherit the kingdom of God as we do. And if, despite our desire to help them, they continue to hate us, that only proves that they are not among the blessed. In other words, we must never fear rejection — for that rejection is proof that we are blessed. The world will never love us, and life will continue to remind us of that truth again and again.

THEY LOWERED THE STANDARD

7. Let's move to the next passage — (Luke 6:24–25) **“But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry!”**

7.1. As I mentioned earlier, in every human life — past or present — there comes a moment of realization: this life cannot fulfill our deepest expectations. And that realization forces every person to make the greatest and most important decision of their life.

7.2. Those who are “rich in spirit” are the ones who choose, consciously or unconsciously, to deny that truth. They are the ones who, in one way or another, have deceived themselves — constructing a world of their own in which they feel spiritually rich. And how did they achieve that illusion? By lowering the standard of what they expect from the life they've been given.

7.3. Let me give you a few examples:

1. There are those who, once they realize that this life is all they have, decide to squeeze from it every drop they can — entertainment, travel, friendships... and some go even further into drunkenness, lust, or addiction.
2. Others decide that family is all that matters — that their children or grandchildren are reason enough to live — and for them, that is sufficient.
3. Some devote themselves to building great careers — philosophers, politicians, doctors, lawyers, priests — believing their work will change the course of humanity.
4. And then there are those who experience some form of spiritual awakening and join a church community — as members, pastors, or priests — convinced that simply belonging or serving is enough to please God. But sadly, many stop there. They are content just to be part of something religious, yet they no longer seek the kingdom of God.

7.4. All of these examples and many more, describe people who are rich in spirit — they have silenced the hunger that once called them to seek the true purpose of their existence.

7.5. Let me pause here to make something clear — God is not asking us to reject everything this life offers. He created this world as a foreshadowing of what it can and will one day be. But He also wants us to understand that even the most magnificent things in this life cannot fulfill the reason for which we were truly created.

7.6. Of course, it's good to dream great dreams. It's beautiful to be a grandparent, to help others, to travel, to dance, to enjoy life. But if, deep down, we believe that this is the ultimate purpose of our existence — then we have deceived ourselves. We believe we are “rich in spirit.”

7.7. To such people, Jesus says: “Woe to you!” — because they have already received their comfort. They have convinced themselves that their satisfaction here and now is the meaning of their lives.

7.8. Every following verse simply expands this truth: “Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry.” Those who are content and happy with their lives — that's all they will ever have. To be “hungry” means they will not inherit the glory that awaits beyond this life. They are satisfied, comfortable — and therefore, they do not seek the kingdom of God.

7.9. Having convinced themselves that they are “rich” in this world and that life has given them everything they hoped for, they laugh; they rejoice here and now. To them, Jesus says: *“You will weep.”* Every human being who has ever lived — or ever will — will one day stand before the visible image of God, before Jesus Christ Himself, and realize that they too could have been heirs of the kingdom of God. They will see that they could have shared in the glory of His eternal reign. But for them, by then, it will be too late. Their life will have come to an end. And in that moment of realization — they will weep.

THE WORLD LOVES ITS OWN

8. (Luke 6:26) *“Woe to you when all people speak well of you; for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.”*

8.1. By repeating these words, Jesus underscores how crucial it is for us — those listening to His Sermon on the Mount — to make a wholehearted decision not to become the kind of people He describes as rich in spirit.

8.2. The sad truth is that most of the world around us consists of those who are rich in spirit — and that's why the world loves its own. The world praises them; the world applauds their values and their way of thinking. Jesus draws a parallel for His audience: *“For their fathers did the same to the false prophets.”* The Jews listening to Him knew well that their ancestors loved false prophets — those who tickled their ears with pleasant words and comforting ideas that only confirmed what was already deeply rooted in their corrupted hearts⁵.

8.3. Jesus tells His people, *“You Israelites who refuse to believe My teaching, you who do not believe that I am the Messiah — you will be praised and exalted by the common people, by the Pharisees, by the chief priests — by your entire culture. But woe to you, for in the end you will weep and mourn, because you will not inherit the kingdom of God that you so eagerly expect!”*

8.4. And we, who call ourselves Christians — to whom do we really belong? Does the culture around us love us? Does it laugh with us? Does it praise us? If we're honest, we'll admit that deep down we

⁵ Jeremiah 5:31; Jeremiah 23:16–17; Jeremiah 14:13–14; Ezekiel 13:10–12; Micah 3:5 — False prophets offer false security and “peace” — they affirm sin instead of exposing it.

often desire to be loved and admired by others. Yet as we walk with Christ, we must slowly but surely reject and overcome that instinctive craving for approval that keeps resurfacing in our minds.

8.5. If, during our spiritual journey, we notice that we're gaining more and more recognition — from society, our church community, friends, or even family — then something is wrong. It likely means that God's glory and Jesus' teaching are no longer the most precious treasure we seek. In other words, our longing for the kingdom of God will appear foolish in the eyes of the world — and for that reason, the world will call us fanatics and enemies.

8.6. Sadly, many Christians today desire to belong more to a denomination — whether Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, or Jehovah's Witness — than to the kingdom of God itself. To them, the kingdom feels abstract, distant, intangible. They tell themselves, *"My church, my community — that's real, that's something I can touch and see right here."*

8.7. And because of that truth, they have become rich in spirit — deceived by their own contentment. They no longer seek the kingdom of God; they've found what seems to them a suitable replacement in this life. And I believe Jesus would say to them today, *"Woe to you — you will weep."*

8.8. Please, do not be among them. Seek the kingdom of God — and do so in hope that your brothers and sisters in the church will do the same. In other words, remain in your community, bear witness to your faith, and encourage others to do likewise. And if you are rejected for it, rejoice — just as the apostles rejoiced after being flogged and imprisoned by the priests who tried to silence their testimony⁶.

⁶ Acts 5:40-42