

## Luke 6:17-26

<sup>17</sup>He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup>They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup>And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

<sup>20</sup>Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup>"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. <sup>22</sup>"Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. <sup>24</sup>"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup>"Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup>"Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

We are far more used to the wording of Matthew when it comes to the passage we know as the Beatitudes. They come across in Matthew as challenging to the way of society whilst not being threatening to those who are not hungry, happy or praised. Matthew gives a version that is spiritualized, words said on a mountain in the style of Moses proclaiming God's truth from on high.

In this record which Luke brings to us it is on a plain; very much at an earthly level and promising great things in heaven for those who have a hard life in the now.

Perhaps we are also more inclined to go to Matthew's version, as we do not like the woes, which Luke includes, the warning that those who have in the earthly realm will find things very different in the time ahead. Many of us who read this passage in Britain today are full and have nice things said about us, though we are perhaps too happy to complain about our lot rather than to think ourselves cheerful.

Is this what Jesus is really saying? Look at the context; he is speaking to his disciples who have given up their settled way of life with its security of food and find themselves ridiculed by some around them. He is addressing a crowd of others who want the healing but not willing to give up the comfort of normal life.

Taking this ideas of blessing and woes into everyday life, reflecting upon the ideas of blessings and woes today I ask are we people who count our blessings or are we people who rehearse our woes? Do we proclaim the good things we have in life or do we share our struggles and focus upon the negative in our daily living?

I know there are times when I can get into a position where the minor irritations can be blown out of all context and it seems that nothing is good and positive in life. That is far from the truth.

We know people who are always on the positive side and to get them to share any struggle they are going through is hard work. There are others who we know for whom nothing is right and all is woe.

Today think upon the blessings you have received and give thanks to God for them and if you are able share a joy and a blessing with someone else. Share a blessing with another and for today stay silent on the woes.