

Daily Discipleship

November 1, All Saints Day (C) – Luke 6:20-31

Discipleship: *A New Blessing*

Focus Question: *What surprises you about the way Jesus blesses you?*

word of life

“Then he looked up at his disciples and said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.’” Luke 6:20-21 (NRSV)

Read Luke 6:20-31

Jesus had spent the night on the mountain in prayer, discerning which of his followers to choose to be his twelve disciples. (Luke 6:12-16) After extending a call to them, he descended from the mountain and stopped at a level place where a large crowd gathered around him. They came to hear Jesus and to be healed by him. Many in the crowd tried to touch him, confident a mere touch would ease their troubles.

Jesus is direct as he blesses and warns the crowd. The Gospel of Matthew describes this scene as taking place on a mountain. Take a moment to read the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5:1-12. (Note the spiritual emphasis found in Matthew’s sermon.)

1. *Compare and contrast the blessings found in Luke 6:20-23 and Matthew 5:1-12.*
2. *The Gospel of Luke contrasts the blessings with woes, but the Gospel of Matthew does not. Which is more effective—to include the woes or not? How so?*
3. *In your own words, describe that scene as Jesus teaches his followers about blessings.*

The blessings by Jesus are in the present tense. “Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20 NRSV) Luke’s gospel is particularly attentive to the poor and disfranchised. No doubt the poor in the audience would have listened with great interest.

4. *How are the poor blessed now?*
5. *Why does Jesus take such an interest in the poor?*

Jesus continues his blessings by including the hungry, those who weep, and those who are rejected. Twice he uses the word *now*, but Jesus also shifts to the future. There is a perplexing present reality about his words, but he leaves the door open for future blessing. For those who are poor, hungry, or weeping, the immediacy of blessing might be hard to identify in tangible ways.

6. *How do you explain the present tense of the words of Jesus?*
7. *How might the blessing occur in the future?*

In addition to the blessings, Jesus warns the people. Again the language is direct and includes a realized action. Jesus warns the rich, those full of food and laughter. Because they have experienced those things, the future is full of the opposite for them—hunger, mourning, and weeping. It sounds bleak without hope. Yet, if people are so full of themselves and the things of this world, there is no space for God and a relationship with Jesus Christ.

8. *How might you express these woes in today’s language?*

Jesus is not done and has more to teach. He wants his followers to follow a radical path by loving enemies, blessing those who curse them, praying for those who abuse them, turning another cheek, and giving generously.

9. *How are people blessed if they do these things instructed by Jesus?*

word among us

Marcus was a college graduate working his first job. A promising future was in front of him. He loved making money, but loved spending it even more. It became a race – to have the best car, clothing, computer, and sports equipment. Then all came crashing down around him. He felt blindsided when he was fired. Since he chose to blame everyone else, his exit from work was not a pretty scene. One thing led to another, and after about one month, he had managed to offend and abuse all of his friends. He was alone, grieving, and hungry for something, but he did not know what.

1. *What do you believe was the heart of Marcus' problems?*
2. *What was he hungry for?*
3. *What might you ask Marcus?*
4. *What blessings might come out of this experience for Marcus?*
5. *What would prevent Marcus from experiencing a blessing?*

Hardships such as poverty, hunger, and grief can strip a person bare. Where is there hope? Many have learned to rely on God to sustain them through trials and tribulations. No longer able to rely on themselves, those who go through hardship can experience God and the love of Christ in new ways. They become dependent on God's grace to get them through the day.

6. *Have you ever been poor, hungry, or grieving? Describe that experience.*
7. *How were you blessed by God in that experience?*
8. *What tough questions did you ask God during that time period?*
9. *How did God respond to you?*

The witness of those who keep their faith in times of difficulty can be inspiring. Yet, most people would not choose to go through poverty, hunger, or grief in order to be blessed and to deepen their faith. And, if the poor, hungry, and grieving people of the world would be interviewed, it is doubtful many would willingly choose to remain in their current state. Instead, they would choose to change their status quo and be removed from their pain.

10. *What might we learn from the poor, hungry, or grieving?*
11. *Do all people who experience poverty, hunger, or grief turn to God? Why or why not?*
12. *What are the dangers of romanticizing poverty, hunger or grief?*

Jesus is very direct with his woes to those who choose to place their security in riches and good times. It might be easy to generalize about the rich and pronounce a final indictment against them. But in reality, by the world's standards, we in the United States of America are the rich. This is a wake-up call—for us. These words of Jesus serve as an important warning to all who get caught up in the activities of this life, full of self-gratification. Jesus is calling for a radical life of prayer, love, and generosity.

13. *What changes does Jesus expect from us because we have been blessed?*
14. *In what ways do you expect to be blessed in the future?*

Prayer

O Blessed One, you bless us as you walk with us in suffering and pain. Continue to be with us and remind us of your presence. Show us ways to walk with others in their journey. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Psalm 149

last word

Count your blessings.

Consider how you might be a blessing to others.



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