



February 17, 2019 – “What is God’s word for us today” based on Luke 6:17-26

Lectionary readings

- Jeremiah 17:5-10
- Psalm 1
- Luke 6:17-26
- 1st Corinthians 15:12-20

Sermon Notes

Blessed and Troubled

This text will remind readers of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew’s Gospel. Luke gives a more abbreviated account and shifts the location from a mountain to a level place, a plain. This provides easy access to Jesus and, sure enough, a great multitude come from all over the region to be with him.

People in the crowd surely felt a sense of relief, even joy, when the sermon begins with a series of blessings, for the poor, the hungry, those weeping – Jesus was talking about them, he was there for them! What did they think when the message turned to curses, on the rich, those who are satisfied, those on top of the world? When we read this message today, what do we hear?

We want to assume that we are among the blessed but both messages are addressed to the same crowd. There is no bright line separating the two groups; we each find ourselves on one side or the other at different times in our lives. The lectionary selection stops abruptly, without resolution, as if asking us to reflect on which word we need to hear today. We find comfort knowing that Jesus is with us when life overwhelms us and reminds us, in our good times, to care for those yearning for the light.

Music Selections

Traditional

- Leaning on the Everlasting Arms UMH 133
- Blest Are They TFWS 2155
- Lord of All Hopefulness TFWS 2197
- All Who Hunger TFWS 2126
- Canticle of the Turning Upper Room Worshipbook 18
- Arise, Your Light is Come Upper Room Worshipbook 138
- For the Fruit of All Creation Upper Room Worshipbook 193

Contemporary

- Blessed are the Ones Audrey Assad
- Counting Every Blessing Rend Collective
- My Lighthouse Rend Collective
- Oh Blessed Anthony Skinner, Stuart Garrard
- You Never Let Go Matt Redman

Call to Worship

Jesus called his disciples and gathered a crowd to a level place. He taught them that those who are poor, those who are hungry, and those who weep are called blessed.

O God, call us together as your disciples as you did so long ago. We are ready to listen and hear what you have to say to us.

Today, Christ brings us all together.

Teach us, O God, to love and bless others the way Christ loves and blesses us!

Prayers of the People

Holy God, we give you thanks for this day – for the opportunity to gather together as your people, to sing, to pray and to hear your voice speak to us. We hear your Word; how you say that the poor are blessed, and the hungry are filled, and those who weep will laugh, and we wonder whether you are speaking to us. And we also hear your Word say “woe” to those who are rich, those who are full now, and those who are laughing now, and we wonder whether you are speaking to us. Holy God, we are listening. We pray that you would help us to learn how to truly rely on you in good times and bad times; when we feel certain and when we feel uncertain. We know that you are always with us.

And we lift up those who need to hear your voice and know your presence more than ever:

Give grace to all those who seek to resolve conflicts with compassion and justice... between nations, within communities, businesses, families, and your Church.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Strengthen those who show mercy...to those who are ill, those who are hungry, those who are without a home, those who are dying, those with whom we differ, and those who grieve.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Bless the work of this church, keeping us close to the agenda of Christ... may worship be joyful, may fellowship be warm, may outreach be humble, and may our witness be authentic.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Holy God, we pray that you would come alongside us and all those for whom we pray. We pray that we would see your Son, Jesus, the light of the world, and hear him speak to our lives so that we might find peace, love, understanding, forgiveness, gratitude and hope. We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen.

Benediction

We are blessed because of God's love for all people,

We are blessed in times that are good and times that are bad,

God has been with us in all moments of our lives.

And God is with us now. Thanks be to God!

Go in peace.