

Right Attitude Or Resultant Woe

By David Lee Burris

The Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-23 // Matt 5:1-12)

20 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are **you poor**, for yours is the Kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are **you who hunger now**, for you shall be filled.

Blessed are **you who weep now**, for you shall laugh.

22 Blessed are **you** when **men hate you**, and when they **exclude you**, and **revile you**, and **cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake**.

23 **Rejoice** in that day and leap for joy! For indeed **your reward is great in Heaven**, for in like manner **their fathers did to the prophets**.

Jesus Pronounces Woes (Luke 6:24-26)

24 "But woe to **you who are rich**, for you have received your consolation.

25 Woe to **you who are full**, for you shall hunger.

Woe to **you who laugh now**, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe to **you** when **all men speak well of you**, for so did **their fathers to the false prophets**. NKJV

<p>#1 WOE HYPOCRITES!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •TRANSGRESSORS/REBELLERS WHO PRIDEFULLY BOAST OF THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS ... •THEY TAKE FROM THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST & MAKE FEIGN PRAYERS-HEAVIER JUDGEMENT... "DO AS I SAY NOT AS I DO"..."FRAUDS" 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE POOR IN SPIRIT- MATT.5:3 & PSALM 34:18</p> <p>HUMBLE & GRATEFUL CHARACTER</p>
<p>#2 WOE HYPOCRITES!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CONTENTIOUS ABOUT SCRIPTURAL TRUTH UNKNOWN TO THEM...."STUMBLING BLOCKS" •TAKE AN ADVERSARIAL APPROACH TO THE WORD OF GOD UNKNOWN TO THEM 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE MOURNERS- MATT.5:4 & ISAIAH 61:1-2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •BROKEN HEARTED FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN
<p>#3 WOE HYPOCRITES!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •COMPOUND THEIR ARROGANCE=CREATES APOSTATES.."APOSTACY/STAND AGAINST TRUTH" •NEED TO STAY HUMBLE & GRATEFUL..."YOU CAN NOT EDUCATE THE OPPOSER OF TRUTH" 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE MEEK- MATT.5:5 & PSALM 37:11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CALM STRENGTH & HUMILITY WITH CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD GOD
<p>#4 WOE BLIND GUIDES! & FOOLISH & BLIND!-MATT.23:16-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •NOT DOING WHAT YOU KNOW IS RIGHT EVEN MISSING THE OBVIOUS TRUTH..."IGNORANT TEACHERS" •DEVALUE THE TEMPLE & THE ALTAR=DISHONOR THE HOLINESS & REVERENCE TO THE LORD GOD 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THEY HUNGERING & THIRSTING RIGHTEOUSNESS- MATT.5:6 & ISAIAH 55:1-3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •STRIVING TO KNOW & EXPERIENCE THEIR FULL MEASURE OF GRACE & FAITH
<p>#5 WOE HYPOCRITES! & BLIND GUIDES!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:23-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LEGALIST MISS THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW...JUSTICE-PITY-FAITH...MISS THE WHY? •"SELF-ABSORBED" 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE MERCIFUL- MATT.5:7 & PROVERBS 3:3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •THOSE WHO PRACTICE EMPATHY & COMPASSION
<p>#6 WOE HYPOCRITES! SCRIBES & PHARISEES-BLIND PHARISEES!- MATT.23:25-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PURIFY THE OUTSIDE YET THE INSIDE ARE UNRESTRAINED DESIRES TO SIN...SHAME ON YOU! •VANEER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...PEOPLE WANT TO BE DECEIVED..."SELF-RIGHTEOUS" 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE PURE IN HEART- MATT.5:8 & PSALM 24:3-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SUBMISSIVE SPIRIT TO THE WILL OF THE LORD GOD
<p>#7 WOE HYPOCRITES!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:27-28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LIKENED TO WHITE SEPULCHRES...BEAUTIFUL ON OUTSIDE YET INSIDE IS DEAD/LIFELESS BONES •UNCLEAN & REBELLIOUS..."SUBVERSIVE & DECEITFUL" 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE PEACEMAKERS- MATT.5:9 & PROVERBS 12:20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SEEKING TO DWELL IN UNITY WITH THE BRETHREN
<p>#8 WOE HYPOCRITES! & BROOD OF VIPERS!-SCRIBES & PHARISEES-MATT.23:29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RELATE TO PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF THEIR FATHERS TO CONTRAST THAT THEY WOULD HAVE BEHAVED BETTER FINDING THEMSELVES ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF GOD'S WILL... •"COLLABORATIVELY CORRUPT"...HOW CAN YOU ESCAPE THE JUDGEMENT OF GEHENNA 	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED THE PERSECUTED- MATT.5:10 & PSALM 69:7-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SATANAS IS TARGETING YOU TO STEAL YOUR INHERITANCE
	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN THEY REVILE & PERSECUTE & FALSELY ALLEGE- MATT.5:11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •BRETHREN WILL REJECT YOU FOR THE DISTINCTIONS OF DETAILED SCRIPTURAL EXEGESES
	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED IS HE WHO WILL NOT STUMBLE IN ME- MATT.11:6</p> <p>BOAST IN THE LORD AND BE NOT ASHAMED OF THE MANIFOLD GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST</p>
	<p>HAPPY/BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES BECAUSE THEY SEE & EARS BECAUSE THEY HEAR- MATT.13:16</p>

The Eight Blessings and the Eight Woes

Blessings - Matt.5:3-12

1. The Kingdom opened to the poor in spirit - **V.3**
2. Comfort for mourners - **V.4**
3. The meek to inherit the earth - **V.5**
4. True righteousness sought by true desire - **V.6**

Woes - Matt.23:13-33

1. The Kingdom shut by Scribes and Pharisees - **V.13**
2. Mourners distressed - **V.14**
3. Fanatics compassing the earth - **V.15**
4. False righteousness sought by casuistry - **V.16-22**

The King's Manifesto for Life

The Eight Blessings and the Eight Woes

Blessings – Matt. 5:3-12

5. The merciful to obtain mercy - **V.7**
6. The pure within will see God - **V.8**
7. Peacemakers to be sons of God - **V.9**
8. The persecuted rewarded - **V.10-12**

Woes – Matt.23:13-33

5. Mercy omitted and left undone - **V.23-24**
6. External purity - Blind to internal corruption - **V.25-26**
7. Hypocrites & lawless - Divisive and destructive - **V.27-28**
8. The persecutors condemned - **V.29-33**

The King's Manifesto for Life

Woes	Beatitudes
1. "You shut up the kingdom" (13)	1. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:3)
2. "Devour widow's houses" (14)	4. "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (5:6)
3. "A son of hell" (15)	7. "Called sons of God" (5:9)
4. "Blind...blind...blind" (16-22)	6. "They shall see God" (5:8)
5. "Neglected...justice, mercy" (23-24)	5. "The merciful...shall obtain mercy" (5:7)
6. "Full of extortion and self indulgence" (25-26)	6. "Pure in heart" (5:8)
7. "Full of hypocrisy & lawlessness" (27-28)	6. "Pure in heart" (5:8)
8. "Sons of those who murdered the prophets" "righteous blood shed on earth" (29-36)	8. "Those who are persecuted" (5:10-12" 2. "Those who mourn" (5:4) 3. "They shall inherit the earth" (5:5)

Disciples or Pharisees: Beatitudes vs. Woes

Jesus' Beatitudes in Matthew 5 describe the kind of life he calls his followers into. It's not what the religious people of his day or our day expect. What Jesus calls a "blessed" or "flourishing" life is not a type for the prosperity Gospel of Health & Wealth. This picture of true versus false disciples becomes even more clear—and scary - when we read it alongside His pronounced woes against the Pharisee antagonists of Matthew 23. Whereas Matthew 5 paints a picture of true religion, Matthew 23 exposes false religion for what it really is. We need to read both the beatitudes and the woes of Jesus to see the kind of disciples Jesus does and doesn't want us to be. Together, these passages clue us in to what costly, compassionate, and Christ-honoring discipleship truly looks like.

Sermon on the Mount vs. Sermon on the Plain

– by Ralph Wilson

The differences we see between accounts in the four Gospels should not surprise us. There was variation in the form of the basic teaching. We should expect that. So we shouldn't be all worked up that in Luke we find both "blessings" and "woes," but in Matthew only "blessings."

Hebrew Parallelism

Instead of studying each of the blessings first and then each of the woes, we'll be looking first at a blessing and then its corresponding woe. They come in pairs.

The Hebrews often expressed themselves by parallelism. For example, we see:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me.
Bless his holy name." (Psalm 103:1)

Lines 1 and 2 are parallel. In the first line he uses the word "soul" (Hebrew *nephesh*), in the second a word meaning "midst, inner, internal" (Hebrew *qereb*).¹⁵⁸ Is the psalmist trying to distinguish between the words? No, he is saying the same thing another way. We find this often in the New Testament, too, even though these Hebraisms have been translated into Greek. For example:

"Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined,
and every city or household divided against itself will not stand."
(Matthew 12:25)

This is Hebrew parallelism, and you see it thousands of times in the Old Testament prophets, Psalms, and Proverbs especially. To rightly interpret the Scriptures we need to recognize it as a common form of expression.

Another variety of Hebrew parallelism is called "antithetic parallelism," that is, a positive paired with a negative. This is frequent in Proverbs:

"Listen to your father, who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she is old." (Proverbs 23:22)

Then you find examples of antithetic parallelism in whole passages, the first positive and the second negative. The best-known example is Psalm 1:

"Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish." (Psalm 1:1-6)

The "Blessings and Woes" passage we are studying in Luke 6:20-26 follows this sort of antithetical parallelism. First the positive, and then -- even more symmetrically than Psalm 1 -- a negative for each positive.


The kind of structure we see in the "Blessings and the Woes" are a big clue that this is a Hebrew poetic style. You can often see a similar kind of clear structure in many Old Testament passages. Several Psalms are formed as an acrostic: the first letter of each section starting with the next letter in order of the Hebrew alphabet. The creation passage in Genesis 1-2, also, is in a very structured format. It, too, is poetry, not prose, and is meant to speak to the heart as well as the mind.

Blessings and Woes

The word "blessed" is Greek *makarios*. In Greek usage, it expressed the happy, untroubled state of the gods, and then more generally, the happiness of the rich who are free from care. In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, it is used for Hebrew *'asere*, and is found in the form of "O the happiness of..." The reference is to the religious joy of the person who has a share in salvation: "Fortunate is X because"¹⁵⁹

The word translated "woe" is Greek *ouai*, "an interjection denoting pain or displeasure, 'woe, alas!'"¹⁶⁰ It is an expression of pity for those who stand under divine judgment.¹⁶¹

Biblical & extra-biblical Jewish writing has many examples of a combination of woes with blessings.¹⁶² What really sets Jesus' blessings and woes apart is that they are 180 degrees contrary to reason. You'd expect someone to say, "The rich are fortunate ... but alas for the poor." Instead, Jesus says just the opposite. He must have made a lot of ears prick up and people reevaluate their own value system.



“Money trouble begins when we trust in our wealth instead of God for safety and security. Riches become an idol when we worry more about money than how to use it to bless others. Money becomes a snare when we hoard it for ourselves instead of being generous to others. And we’re doubly damned if God has blessed us, yet we refuse to share those blessings with people in need. The Bible says, ‘But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?’ (1 John 3:17). Our souls are in danger when we revel in our riches and laugh about the good times, all the while forgetting that nothing lasts forever and **someday the music will stop.**”

Chris Matthis

Poor vs. Rich (Luke 6:20, 24)

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." (6:20)

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort." (6:24)

The first early shocker is Jesus' word of the blessedness of the poor, and a hopeless future for the rich. I'm not sure the poor would agree, and the rich would probably laugh.

But Jesus is talking about a different kind of wealth than monetary wealth. Jesus told a parable about the farmer who was so wealthy that he planned to tear down all his barns and build new ones so he had enough room to store all his grain. He measured his wealth by way of possessions, but Jesus' commentary on his life was that he was "not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). We in America are part of a culture that tends to worship money, and we Christians, too, can value life in monetary terms. But money is a very poor indicator of spiritual riches. What would we do in this life if we *really* believed that money had no lasting value and that serving God with all our heart accrues spiritual riches? In these Blessings and Woes, Our Savior is challenging our money-based value system and calling it worthless. True riches are spiritual.

Why does Jesus bless the poor? *Aren't there any rich believers? Of course; ...but* Jesus is using a sharp contrast to make a vital point to his disciples. Those who are wealthy feel insulated by their wealth. Their needs do not seem to be as acute as those of the poor, and they are less often desperate enough to change. **The rich tend to be self-satisfied.** The poor, on the other hand, are forced to trust in God, since they have no extra resource to trust in to tide them over. It really is a case that you can't have two masters -- God *and* Money (Matthew 6:24). Each master has a diametrically opposed value system.

Jesus' commission was "to preach good news to the poor" (4:18), and the poor heard Jesus' words gladly. It was the rich religious establishment that felt threatened and resisted his teachings.

Why are the poor so blessed? Because through their faith and trust in God, they are the heirs of God's kingdom. Why are the rich to be pitied? Because they have nothing to look forward to. They have already received their comfort. The Greek word translated "comfort" (NIV) or "consolation" (KJV) is Greek *paraklēsis*, "encouragement, comfort, consolation," from *parakaleō*, "to call to one's side ... summon to one's aid, call upon for help."¹⁶⁴

The rich have already received whatever comfort they can expect. Their comfort is from their wealth. When they die there will be no comfort. When they face eternity there will be no comfort. When they face everlasting punishment there will be no comfort. God will not welcome them into his home. Their future is bleak at best.

But what a blessing the poor have, for the whole Kingdom of which God is Master opens up to them. They are God's beneficiaries!

Hungry vs. Well-Fed (Luke 6:21a, 25a)

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied." (6:21a)

"Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry." (6:25a)

The second shocker is much less abstract than wealth. It refers to being hungry. Have you ever had to go without food? Have you ever had to cut down on what you bought at the grocery store because you just couldn't afford more? Have you ever had a crop that failed because of drought or blight, and you and your family had to eat the bare minimum to survive to make it through to the next harvest? That's what Jesus is talking about -- hunger.

He contrasts it with being well-fed. Cultures that are prosperous have many overweight people. But in a culture where poverty is rampant, only the rich are plump. It's easy to tell who is well-fed.

Jesus is appealing to the gut instinct to survive, the hunger for food that his listeners can easily identify with. As an agrarian society, all of them had faced very lean years where there wasn't enough food to go around. They knew what hunger is. And they have all felt envy for those who eat well during famine and drought. What is Jesus saying? He is saying that the tables will turn. There is a food that is even more important than bread. It is a spiritual food that satisfies the soul. In John's Gospel, Jesus says, "he who feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:58b).

There *is* something even more valuable than physical food. "Know that. Believe that, O poor of the world," Jesus says. It promises to leave you "satisfied" (NIV). The Greek word is *chortazō*, passive, "eat one's fill, be satisfied."¹⁶⁵ Hungry now? Perhaps. But in the future, you'll be satisfied.

Weeping vs. Laughing (Luke 6:21b, 25b)

The third blessing/woe pair is weeping and laughing.

"Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." (6:21b)

"Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep." (6:25b)

Who has not wept? Who has not felt the pain of disappointment and loss, of rejection, of struggle? We all have. But the caricature of the well-to-do is of those who are always partying & enjoying themselves. They aren't weighed down by the struggle to survive. They laugh and joke while tragedy takes place all around them. They are carefree, happy-go-lucky. They laugh now. **Jesus contrasts these carefree people with those who weep now.**

But I think Jesus is talking about a different kind of weeping than just from pain and struggle. We see a theme in the Old Testament and New of those righteous people who grieve for the unrighteousness they see all around them. God directs the Prophet Ezekiel:

"Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it." (Ezekiel 9:4; also 2 Peter 2:8; Psalm 119:36)

Those who share God's broken heart for his world now will in the future laugh and rejoice at the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9), when we sit down at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob - and Jesus -- in the Kingdom of God and enjoy their fellowship and feast heartily -- forever (Matthew 8:11).

Hated vs. Praised (Luke 6:22-23, 26)

The fourth Blessing and Woe couplet in the Sermon on the Plain differs from the first three. The first three contrast present struggle with future reward. **The fourth pair is not a now/later contrast, but a hate/love contrast.** Money is deeply entrenched in the average non-Christian's motivational system; so is popularity.

"Blessed are you when men hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,
because great is your reward in heaven.
For that is how their fathers treated the prophets." (6:22-23)

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you,
for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets." (6:26)

The desire to be liked is so strong. Our children long to be liked, our teenagers ache to be loved, and we adults still struggle with rejection.

Jesus makes it extremely clear in this passage that, if we are seeking popularity and acceptance, then we may be severely deceived.

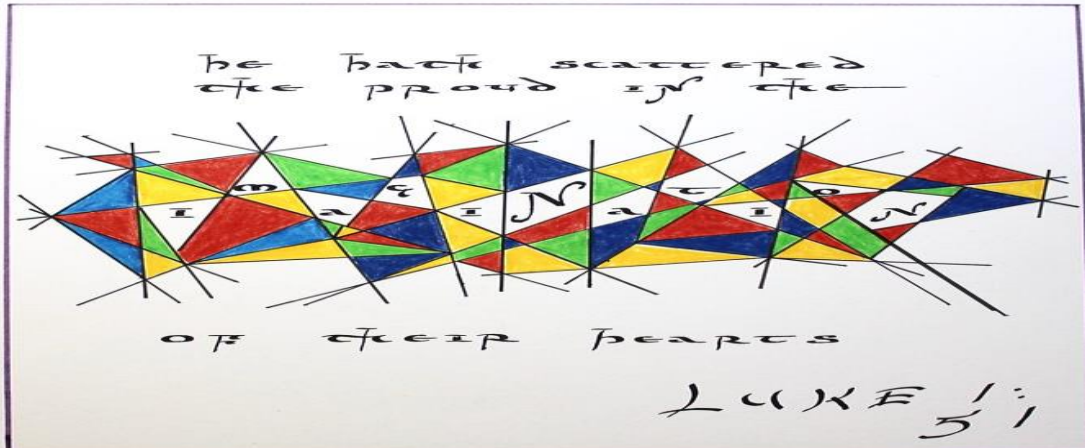
Jesus goes back to the prophets in Israel's national life. Their lives were mountain peaks in the history of the nation, but their tasks were *thankless*. They were faithful to the Lord, and often suffered persecution and death.

- Elijah's zeal for the Lord won a huge victory over Baal worship on Mount Carmel, but Elijah became a hunted man who had to flee Israel to survive, and was later accused of being the "troubler of Israel."
- Isaiah was called to call judgment down upon his own nation.
- Jeremiah's burden was to tell his people to surrender to the Babylonians -- and was branded a traitor.
- Ezekiel spoke fearsome judgment upon his own beloved land and was accused of being a false prophet.
- Daniel was thrown in a lion's den.
- John the Baptist was beheaded.
- Jesus was crucified.

Thankless Appreciation. Many prophets were killed when they faithfully did and said what God told them to. Being a prophet was never easy, but God honored those who spoke his words at great personal risk. There is a prophet's reward. "Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward" (Matthew 10:41). Prophets have a place of high honor in the Kingdom of God. Jesus warns his enemies,

"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out." (Luke 13:28)

THE SONG OF MARY



He hath
filled the
hungry with
good things and
the rich he hath sent empty away

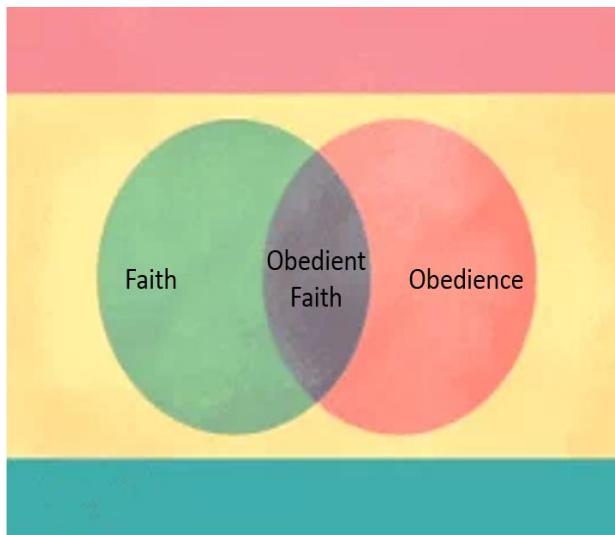
Luke 1:53

Woes	Beatitudes
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PHARISEE OR DISCIPLE?

Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



O That Will Be Glory

2. *Wh* O that will be glory for me, e grace,

I an Glory for me, glory for me; ce,

When by His grace I shall look on His face, e

That will be glory, be glory for me. me.

