

Blessed Are the Weeping

Luke 6:21

June 25, 2017

"Luke 6:21, Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh." Want to begin though, as we have been doing, by reading the whole section, the beatitudes in Luke's gospel, "Luke 6:20-26." And, I think probably by now you ought to have these beatitudes memorized, because we keep reading it week after week. And I, personally, never get tired of that. And I hope that, hope that you've enjoyed this as well.

Let's look at Luke 6:20-26. It says that, "Jesus lifted up his eyes on 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 shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day, and leap

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

for joy, for behold: your reward is great in Heaven. For so their fathers did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.'"

I'd like to remind you, as I, we taught last week, and I showed you something last week, regarding some of the grammar in verse 21. And this is going to be the focus of our study today, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh." And so, before we clarify Jesus' meaning with that sentence, let's observe carefully first what Jesus said. And again, this is just a quick reminder of some things we observed last week, so this is a bit of a review.

First, notice in verse 21 that Jesus identifies two classes, or groups of people, in that verse using participles. He's talking about "those who hunger," and he's talking about "those who weep." That is the same group of people that he identified as "the poor" in the previous verse, verse 20. So, what Jesus said

about the poor, it carries into what he is saying here about "the hungering" and "the weeping."

We said a few weeks ago that Jesus has used poverty as a metaphor for those who are true citizens of the kingdom of God, because they, and they alone, have recognized their spiritual destitution before God. They have realized that the world has nothing to contribute to them, and so they come to God, before him as beggars. Having let go of the world completely, they've extended empty hands up to God, reaching out to him for mercy, for divine mercy, and God is very pleased to give it to them. When God gives, he gives without measure. He doesn't hold anything back. He lavishly supplies them with the entire kingdom, which is a complete reversal of fortune.

But these poor, as you see in verse 20, even as actual possessors of the kingdom of God right now, they have not yet entered into the full inheritance of that kingdom, and that's what verse 21 is talking about. This is the already/not yet aspect of these kingdom promises, which is a common theme throughout the New Testament. Jesus had already, he has already

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

inaugurated the kingdom of God, but he has not yet introduced the fullness of the kingdom of God in all of its power. So, verse 21 pictures the current condition of the poor as those who are hungering now and those who are weeping now.

And that brings us to a second observation we made, the participles there are in the present tense. This group of people are those who *are* hungering. They are those who *are* weeping. That is present tense, means like a continuous state of being. It's an ongoing condition of their experience in reality. And that means, at present, for those who are, the poor, there is no lasting relief here in this life, here, now, from hungering and thirsting. Their full consolation and the permanent change in their condition, that's not yet. But it will come later.

And that brings us immediately to a third observation, which is this confident hope that Jesus gives for a change in their present circumstances in reality. You may remember how we talked last time about that three-letter temporal adverb, now. You are all grammar experts, so none of this is lost on you. You love talking about temporal adverbs and present participles, right? I

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

know, amen, there's, see! That's why I love Chuck, right there. He amens at all the right things, so.

You know what else you like about grammar, though? You also love future tense verbs. Future tense verbs like, "You shall be satisfied." And, "you shall laugh." You love future tense verbs! Because with them, Jesus communicates to us the full assurance of our hope which is this: The now conditions of hungering and weeping, those conditions will one day be completely erased. Those conditions will one day be utterly forgotten in a total eclipse of God's abundance. The magnitude of future blessing is so staggering and the reversal of fortune, here, is so drastic. It's almost like a reversal of what Joseph interpreted for Pharoah. It's like the seven fat years swallowing up the seven lean years. And those years of plenty are not just seven, but they will never end.

And that, really, brings us to our fourth observation, that Jesus gives not just confident hope, he also gives abundant hope. Our current condition of hunger is going to be swallowed up by full satisfaction, and our condition of weeping will be engulfed in

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

pure delight, in righteous laughter. And when the kingdom arrives in its fullness, fortunes will be reversed, as those who are now hungry are filled with complete satisfaction, and those who are weeping now are overcome with joy.

Now, here's where we need to make a, a clear, significant distinction between the second and third beatitudes. Those two beatitudes in verse 21, "Blessed are you who are hungry now," and, "Blessed are you who weep now," they are truly and fundamentally connected as already/not yet realities. They're current circumstances combined with future fulfillment promise. But there's a fundamental difference in the cause of those ongoing experiential realities for what we might call, the blessed poor, that's us.

We talked last week about the reason why we are hungry, and now we want to talk this week about the reason why we are weeping. What makes the blessed poor weep? But what is this promise of laughter? That's what we're going to take time to understand, this morning about "blessed are those who are weeping." And here's where we're going to jump into our outline first point,

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

which really does give away the punchline right away: sin is the cause of all of our weeping. Sin is the cause of all of our weeping. The blessed poor weep because the abiding presence of sin makes us weep.

The word weep, there's not a lot of mystery to that word at all. It's, it's crying. It's, it's shedding actual tears. It's an outward expression of sadness. There are a number of words in the New Testament to express grief and sadness and lamentation, but the word, here, here is *klaio*, the verb, most common verb in the New Testament for weeping by a very wide margin. The noun form is *klafthmos*. But what you need to keep in mind here is that this is the kind of weeping that you can see and hear. This is something that you can observe. Someone who is weeping like this, it's not just kept on the inside as sadness, though it's there. Jesus uses a word that causes us to picture somebody who is obviously crying, making audible noises, showing visible signs of sadness, and, and sorrow, and distress. Again, it's something you can see and hear.

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

I'm reminded of, especially in the connection here between the Sermon on the Mount and Mary's Magnificat, which connects back to Hannah, and her song of praise to God in 1 Samuel chapter 2. Do you remember Hannah? She came to God weeping in the temple. And everybody could see that she was distressed in her soul, sad. Something you can observe.

Volume isn't as much the issue, here, in this, in this verb. But there's a different set of terms that refer to loud wailing or beating the breast, even ritual expressions of mourning and lamentation. Those are public displays of grief that are loud and dramatic. And, especially in Jesus' day, there, there were expected rituals after death, and, and public mourning at funerals and the like. And there were actually professional mourners back then that you would, you would hire to display the appropriate level of sorrow fitting the honor that was due to the individual who had died. So, not much lamentation, loud lamentation, beating the breasts and all that, nah, guy's, you know, we could do without them, you know. But if there's a lot of loud lamentation, well that was a very significant man. You can see Jesus confronting that public display sometimes. His

sincerity in the face of death provides such a sharp contrast that exposes the hypocrisy of all that.

But this weeping here, this verb *klaio*, and the noun *klafthmos* it refers to a sincere, a heartfelt sorrow that's expressed outwardly in crying, in weeping, shedding of tears. So, that's the language used here.

Now let's try to understand Jesus' meaning. And, for that, we have asked the question: Why are these blessed poor weeping? What makes them cry, so that we can see it? As Leon Morris points out, he says, "This cannot mean those who cherish some personal grief." He isn't promise, Jesus isn't here promising to settle all of our scores, to, sattle, satisfy all our personal grudges and the things that make us cry because we're angry at so-and-so, and so tears come out. Morris, Morris says that, and rightly says, he says, "Those who weep are those who are people who are sensitive to evil, to the world's rebellion against God, and to the world's consequent suffering. It is those who see these realities of life who will, in the end, laugh."

That's exactly right. And I want you to understand something very important here. This beatitude about what causes us to weep, this gets to the very heart of our affections, what we truly love, and on the other hand, what we truly hate. What we love causes us to rejoice and even to laugh out loud, and what we hate causes us to mourn, perhaps even to shed tears, to weep. This beatitude has to do with our affections. It has to do with that which affects us and moves us from the inside to what is expressed on the outside. You can tell a lot about someone's affections by observing what makes them laugh out loud, and also what makes them mourn and weep. Just by observing someone for a time, what they laugh at, and what they weep over, you can read that person's heart like a book. And that's how Jesus sees it.

Look at verse 45, here in the same chapter, Luke 6:45, he says, "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. The evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." What comes out of a man's mouth: expressions of joy or expressions of mourning, his laughter or his crying, that brings to the surface an expression that reveals what is often buried deep within his heart, hidden, for all to see. But we know by what comes out.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

For those with regenerate hearts, good treasure in good hearts produces good. They love what God loves, they hate what God hates, they rejoice over that which makes God rejoice, and they sorrow over what grieves God. For those with unregenerate hearts, though, with hearts that are bent and inclined toward sin, evil things come forth. They laugh at the things God hates. As Paul puts it in 2 Thessalonians 2:12, "They are condemned people, because they do not believe the, true, truth, but they have pleasure in unrighteousness." They laugh out loud at the things that God specifically says, I hate this. This is an abomination to me. They laugh out loud at it. Not only do they not sorrow, but they take pleasure in it. They don't grieve, they don't mourn, they don't weep as they should do.

Listen, godly people: the poor, the hungry, the weeping; they hate sin. And it grieves them to see sin indulged and coddled and tolerated, or ignored or celebrated. For those who profess Jesus Christ, if they're soft on sin, then they are revealing their spiritual immaturity. And it is to them that James says in James 4:9, Look, you who don't get this, if you profess Christ, "be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

mourning and your joy to gloom." Listen, that's not a, that's not promoting grumpiness. It's a pastoral exhortation to hate sin, to let it affect you, and to mourn over that which grieves God. And that, beloved, James 4:9, comes directly from this beatitude, Luke 6:21, "Blessed are you who weep now."

So, why are they weeping? Because of sin. And this is where we begin to see the distinction between the second beatitude, "Blessed are the hungry," and the third beatitude, "Blessed are the weeping." Fundamental difference and I'd like to show you that starting back in Genesis. So, if you could take your Bibles in hand and turn back to Genesis, chapter 2. Genesis 2. We'll take a look at where weeping began.

You remember last week we talked about the condition of hunger. God created hunger from the very beginning. God created us with digestive tracts and mouths and teeth, a tongue with tastebuds. He gave us a brain to interpret all that stimuli coming in our mouth, and to release chemicals that cause us to enjoy the pleasure, the contentment, the comfort of eating. God designed our bodies to digest food regularly to keep us alive. He, he, he

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

designed our bodies with palates to discern good food from bad food. Remember how we talked about that, how many lessons we learn by regularly consuming food? This is a part of God's design. We're dependent on God. We have humility before God because we're dependent on him. All his provision and blessing, which we taste, actually taste and enjoy regularly in our meals, all those lessons we learn from the reality of hunger. And they are, as we've said, by divine design as a part of the original creation.

Jesus, though, combines this hungering, which is a good thing, with this attitude of sorrow, this disposition of continual weeping. And this is where we see the key difference between these two beatitudes. Because, unlike our hunger, weeping...; our hunger, God created for our good, and for our instruction. Weeping is not a product of God's original creation. Why? Because all weeping is fundamentally caused by sin. Sin was planned for in God's eternal sovereign decree, but sin was not a product of his creative activity. You can see that for yourself in the biblical record prior to The Fall. We find no evidence of mankind weeping.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

We do, however, discover the source of our weeping. And look, if you'll notice there in Genesis 2:9, it says, "The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." There's the first hint, right? Prior to The Fall, an object that could become a source of weeping. God's stated intention for mankind, it was quite the contrary of weeping. The forbidden tree was an object of testing mankind, which is holy, and righteous, and good. Testing and training mankind, that was according to God's goodness and wisdom.

And, by the way, it's not like that forbidden tree was the only thing he gave them to eat. Look at verses 15 and 16. The Lord God took the man, put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and keep it. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree in the garden." Look, we saw last week, God created man with a body that needed to be replenished by energy, which required the consumption of food. He created a food supply in his perfect world, even before he created mankind. When he created mankind, he created them with bodies that could consume and digest food, extract the nutrients, turn them into energy. God created the palate to taste food. He gave us the pleasure of

GRACE CHURCH

enjoying food. Not just one kind, but, as we read there, many varieties, "You may surely eat of every tree in the garden."

My wife and I once had the opportunity to visit the Philippines, and we both thought we knew what fruit tasted like. We thought we'd eaten mango and pineapple before, but we were wrong. The Filipinos introduced us to real mango and real pineapple. They were luscious, juicy fruit that burst with flavor. The similarly named fruit we had eaten here in the States probably had some molecular identity with mango and pineapple, but someone had gone in and we, this is a scandal, this is something we need to write about, they'd gone in and extracted all of the actual and wonderful taste. Why did they do that? We're being scammed and robbed, I can tell you that.

But those mangos and pineapples in the Philippines, they're grown, bear in mind, in a post-Fall, sin-cursed world. Look, we can't even imagine what food tasted like in a pre-curse, pre-Fall world. The varieties of foods and flavors that God created for Adam and Eve, how full they were with richness and nutrient and goodness. As long as Adam and Eve continued trusting God,

they would find full contentment in him, in what he created for them, in what he gave to them, in his provision, in his immense goodness.

We get a hint in the narrative that, prior to The Fall, foreshadows and predicts the reality of the world that we're now living in. Look how the narrative continues in verse 17, "The Lord God commanded the man saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" Adam has God's instruction right there, both the promise and the warning. And he is to pass that on to his soon-to-be created wife. Which is, as we say around here all the time; God created men and designed them to be leaders and teachers. God gave this command to Adam before Eve was ever on the scene. What does he expect Adam to do with this life-and-death information? Pass it on, teach, instruct, give, lead. And the wife, she's created to learn and follow. He's to pass this on.

God created the woman. He brought her to the man. He's absolutely thrilled, and the two of them begin to enjoy the perfect world that God created for them, the one that God himself called in Genesis 1:31, he called it very good. So, they enjoy pure, holy fellowship with God and with one another. They talk together, they discover together, they learn together, they're trusting in God, they're enjoying the goodness, the full bounty of his perfect creation. It is all going according to God's stated desire and intention, until we turn the page to Genesis 3:1.

Turn the page there. "The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?"' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die.'

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

That, folks, is where weeping began. It began with a lie, which mankind believed. It began with sin. It began with the transgression of God's clear word, which began when the heart of mankind unhitched itself from the true supply and became shackled and enslaved by a lie. And the cruel tragedy of it all causes us to weep even now, as we reread this familiar story. It is tragic to be set up so well by God, elevated so high, with such promise, such a future, and then to fall from that lofty height, descending into this lie.

Notice Satan's lie, his so-called promise in verse 5, it's a bold, audacious contradiction of the Word of the Living God. Satan told Eve an unfounded, ungrounded, and even a, an utterly ridiculous lie about the forbidden tree, didn't he? "You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Just stop on that. Think about those sentences and phrases. Unpack them a little bit. Satan's narrative completely unravels on scrutiny, just disintegrates back into thin air, which is what he used to weave this lie together, this wicked tale, in the first place, thin air.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

"You will not surely die." Oh, really? Satan knows this how? Ah, there's never been a creation, never been a garden, a mankind, trees. He's never observed anyone eating the fruit and living. He is lying! Turn away, Eve! In fact, even more audacious than that, he himself had experienced the death of sinning against God, as he's cast out of heaven. Death, fundamentally, in biblical, biblical terms, is separation. And Satan was separated from God when he sinned in heaven.

Look at the next phrase, "For God knows." Huh-huh, oh, really? Here is a creature in the form of a serpent, pretending to have special access to the Divine mind, that mind that produced the ground upon which the serpent and the woman are standing, the trees of which they are speaking, the breath that fills their lungs. And the serpent pretends to know what God knows.

He says, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened; you'll be like God knowing good and evil." Not only does Satan pretend to know the mind of God, he pretends to know his motives as well. And here he is insinuating what is contrary to all the, the very goodness of the created order, which is plain

for us to see. There's goodness all around. This wicked little creature tells Eve, contrary to what you can easily see for yourself about God's bounty and God's provision and God's supply and his goodness, God's keeping something from you. What is it? Satan's telling Eve that God has a selfish motive. He wants to keep the knowledge of good and evil all to himself. Why? Because, again, this is completely contrary to the eternal power and divine nature so readily evident in the world God created, Satan wants Eve to believe that the knowledge of good and evil is the only thing that puts God above mankind.

Probably wouldn't be far from the truth to say that Satan is here projecting upon God all of his own sinful, small-minded thinking. I mean, as if the immortal, eternal, measureless, and unchanging God could ever be threatened by any human being who would ever venture to rival him in any way. It's absolutely ridiculous. But he's trying to pawn that lie off on an unsuspecting Eve. And tragically and sadly, it worked.

Not only that, but how exactly, Eve, how exactly does eating a piece of fruit transfer this God-like knowledge of good and evil

to the consuming creature? I mean, is she to think this is like some kind of magic pill? Is she to, is she to think this is where God gets his superpowers from and all his omniscient knowledge, by visiting this tree every day? If so, and if God is wary of rivals to his sole sovereignty, well, it wasn't very smart of him, was it, to put this divinely, divinity-producing tree within the reach of a human couple, right? Listen, this lie is so utterly real, unrealistic, so completely ridiculous here.

But notice, that doesn't stop Eve from considering it, from pondering it, and eventually believing it. If you'll notice in verse 6, the transgression of God's command comes at the end of the verse, but the transgression is just really the culmination of a sin that started with unbelief in the beginning of the verse. Look at verse 6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." Good for food? Maybe.

But how did she know that? She never took a nibble. She see other animals maybe crawling up there, eating, and not dying? That's not really a good way for her to test this before eating, right? Delight to the eyes, look at the next phrase. Perhaps. But see, that phrase right there, delight the eyes, that reveals just how far her heart had already moved.

Vipers and constrictor snakes, I guess they can be attractive to some, right? I wanna shoot every single one of them I see, but, other people, they really like snakes. I guess they can be attractive, quite captivating, alluring. But doesn't the knowledge that they have, they possess the power to kill you, doesn't that make you despise the very thing that makes them alluring?

The fact that this fruit no longer produces the fear of death in her, but is a delight to her eyes, that very fact shows how much her heart has already changed. How she's living by sight, and no longer by faith. That last phrase, "The woman saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise," well that's a conclusion that was fed to her already from the pit of hell, by the prince

of darkness. She's just taking the word, the conclusion, of the greatest mass-murderer who ever lived. Jesus called Satan a murderer from the beginning, and Jesus said in John 8, "He lies, he speaks out of his own character for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

So, she bought the lie, which means she stopped believing in God and started believing in a creature, that which is not God. The sin of unbelief, inevitably led her to transgression, which is what we see. And after taking a moment to contemplate all this for Eve in verse 6, eventually you see she ate the fruit. And she gave some to her husband, who had the clear command from the mouth of God, himself, and he ate the fruit. Thus, the entire human race was plunged into this irreversible state of sin. That's cause for weeping.

Paul said in Romans 5 verse 12, "Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men." Verse 15, "The many died through one man's trespass." Verse 16, "The," judge, "judgement following one trespass brought condemnation." Verse 17, "Because of one man's trespass death

reigned." Verse 18, "One trespass led to condemnation for all men." Verse 19, Romans 5, "By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."

And finally, verse 21, "Sin reigned in death." That's a lot of ugly language in that verse, isn't, in that passage, isn't it? What we read there is what we have seen, you and I, we have seen and experienced all of our lives. When God said, Genesis 2:17, "In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die," he was not kidding. And that's something to mourn, and weep over, isn't it? That we would turn away from that good God, and turn to death, the reign of sin and death. Look, the reality of sin is what makes us weep.

Not everyone though, wants to acknowledge their sadness and sorrow over their sin. Many people want to do what Adam and Eve did after committing the transgression, that is, to cover over the shame of their guilt with that which cannot cover us: More lies, more distractions, more pleasures. We put Band-Aids on our cancer and then we wonder why, why do we still feel ill? Another

evidence of our descent into the state of death that God said would result from transgressing this clear command.

Notice what happened in Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve transgressed. How they experienced the separation of death that God promised would be the consequence of their sin. Genesis 3:7, we see they felt the immediate shame of their guilt, they hid from one another. That's shame, folks. Whenever you see people blame shifting, denying, lying, that's called shame. And, they sense their guilt and they want to hide.

So they hide with words, they hide with putting you off, they hide with making you feel bad for confronting them, all of those things. That's shame. It says in Genesis 3:7, "The eyes of both of them were opened, they knew that they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths." Look, hiding, was futile. Fig leaves don't last.

And yet, how many react today to the shame of sin's guilt in the exact same way? They cannot keep covering their sin, they have to keep finding different distractions, different things; more

alcohol, more drugs, more perversion, whatever it is their chasing to cover over the shame of their guilt.

Relation to God, look at Genesis 3:8, "They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day."

Sounds like a typical cool of the day afternoon. The man and his wife, they didn't run to him. It says, "They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

That doesn't make sense, at all! He's the Creator, he made the garden, he probably knows every leaf on every tree. Really hard to play hide and seek with the omnipresent, all-knowing God.

But that just tells you and shows you how their minds were immediately affected by sin, immediately darkened. They're no longer, here, able to think clearly, to reason accurately. This is called the noetic effects of sin. *Noe* comes from the word *nous*, refers to the mind. Sin distorts our rational thinking, which is what we see in the attempt of Adam and Eve to hide from the all-knowing, ever present God. The death of relationship with God and with mankind.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

That was the immediate result of The Fall. To be cut off from the living God, that is the essence of all death. That is the reason for weeping, folks. As we keep reading the Genesis account, we see the account of the curses on man and woman. For the woman, pain in childbearing. For the man, toil and pain in providing for the family, sorrow, weeping. As we keep reading in Genesis, we read the tragic news headlines. Adam and Eve's firstborn son, Cain, killed their second born son, Abel. More sorrow, I should say, more weeping.

We continue in Genesis. Lamech, one of Cain's descendants, he decided to depart from the one man, one woman pattern of creation. He took for himself two wives. One's not good enough. And then he became boastful. "I've killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is seven-fold then Lamech's is seventy-seven fold." He's taking the curse and turning into a reason to boast. Self-centeredness, arrogance, and pitiless vengeance. More sorrow, more weeping, all due to sin.

More death ensued from there. You trace the genealogy of the human race in Genesis 5, and that refrain is relentless, and he died, and he died, and he died, and he died, all through the chapter, verse 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, and on and on through the rest of the chapter. Such corruption filled the earth in Genesis 6:5 that God sent the worldwide flood as a judgement. He started over with Noah and his sons.

But then, when you, when you read what happened after they all emerged from the ark, you quickly discover that sin was a stowaway on the ark. Sin got aboard the ark with them, hiding out in the recesses of their hearts. No sooner had Noah disembarked but he planted a vineyard, he got drunk, he inadvertently exposed himself, he brought shame and ridicule from his son, Ham, who in turn dishonored his father, and a curse ensued, and so the long tale of sin, it started in Genesis 3 continued, and it still continues.

On it goes through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, all the way through the law of Moses. On into the former prophets, the latter prophets, the entire Old Testament, every book in it, the

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

consistent, relentless testimony of Scripture is this connection between sin and sorrow, between sin and weeping. Sin, folks, is the cause of all of our weeping.

As a pastor, God has allowed me the privilege of seeing people at their very best, as the Spirit and the Word work to regenerate them, to convert them, to snatch them from eternal death. And then after that, to watch the Spirit use his word, use God's word to renew their minds, to transform their lives, to make them productive and fruitful and joyful Christians with life and blessedness. That is such a joy to me!

Even in the face of what Jesus describes here in Luke 6:22-23, when Christians experience even hatred and exclusion, revulsion, spurning for the sake of the Son of Man, I have watched people, Christians, stand firm, strong, and confident, emboldened by the grace of God, it hurts, yes, but they stand firm. And blessed are they, for their reward in heaven is great.

But beloved, as a pastor, I've also witnessed the tragic effects of sin, and how it causes such profound sadness and sorrow. I'm

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

not trying to be dramatic here, but like every shepherd, I've experienced many long and weary days, many restless and sometimes even sleepless nights because of the weeping over sin. I've watched people depart from the truth, because their, their minds have been poisoned by lies, or because of petty offenses. Their hearts become embittered against somebody else. I've watched necks stiffened by pride, ears becoming dull, eyes becoming blind, because they had no love of truth, they had no humility to receive it. It causes me to weep.

I've watched marriages ripped apart. Prideful, angry, embittered husbands. Rebellious, headstrong wives. I've watched the young children, whose world has been torn apart, completely overturned, as the two most precious adults in their lives spew out hatred toward each other. I've seen the devastating effects of, of adultery. I've, I've seen the enslaving degradation and the shame of people caught in pornography.

I've watched people love the world, and turn away from the truth they understand, refusing to look ahead to the consequences that they know they are going to face one day. And they give

themselves fully to the fleeting pleasures of sin. All the while you watch as the chains of their enslavement to sin and Satan and death grow tighter and tighter and more constricting and suffocating. And they seem afraid to leave the enslavement, the bondage.

You don't have to be a pastor to see all that. We can all bear witness if we look closely enough. If we know people well enough, we can look closely and see the devastating effects and patterns of sin. As they play out in our world you can even see it in the headlines. You watch it in the culture around you, you see it in your workplace. We've all seen the sorrow that sin causes in our families, in our own lives, in our marriages.

We read earlier in Psalm 119:136 as we're meeting for elder's prayer, "My eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law." Beloved, does other people's sin as you see it, does it cause your eyes to shed streams of tears? If it doesn't, you really ought to check your hearts.

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

We've seen, as sin rears its ugly head in children raised in the church, injecting it's poison into their veins, we've watched children who once professed love for Jesus Christ, they attended Sunday school, they played on the front lawn, they memorized all the verses, it's so sad to see when some of them grow up and their lives show no evidence for the love of Christ, but they embrace a lie, they pursue that which does not please God. By their deeds they reveal hearts that have never been truly regenerated by the Spirit. They've never been truly converted by Christ. They may still claim Christ as their savior, but they deny him as Lord by their behavior, which means they don't know him at all. Jesus said at the end of Luke 6, "Many will say to me 'Lord, Lord,' but they do not do what I say."

We see in them what breaks our hearts. As we watch, our flesh and blood relations have denied the Lord who saved us, the one we have come to adore. We're, so we're weeping over the sin of others. Again, beloved this beatitude gets to the very heart of our affections, and when we weep it becomes clear what we truly love, what we truly hate. Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

And while we do love Jesus more than our family relations, it doesn't ease the pain when our family is not walking with Christ. In some cases, it just makes the sorrow even more acute. When Jesus says, "Blessed are you who weep," listen, beloved, that's you. If, by loving Jesus Christ, you've suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish in comparison to Christ, there is a promise here for you who weep. You're separate from the world, you're separating from the world, you hate its sin, you hate your own sin. Especially, in the sin of others you see and love so dearly because you see it tearing them apart.

The mourning and the sorrow, the weeping and the sadness, it's so profoundly tragic and heartbreaking, and that brings us to a second point. Which, because of the sake, for the sake of time, I just have time to state it, read a supporting scripture to it, and then move on for the sake of time. So, point two, Jesus has entered into all of our weeping. As I was preparing this point, it kind of became its own sermon, so, another time, perhaps. Okay? But Jesus has entered into all of our weeping. I want you

to turn over to Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14. I want to read a section to you there.

But then you can also jot down some important supporting passages for your own further study and reflection. The supporting passages, as you're turning to Hebrews chapter 2, they just show us how Jesus has entered into our weeping and has wept alongside of us. And first, if you want to jot down John 11:35, as every kid growing up in AWANA, or whatever the program was, that was the first verse we memorized, because it's two words, "Jesus wept." Love that one, because you get credit for it.

But Jesus wept, what, what we didn't know though when we memorized that verse is why Jesus wept. That's what we didn't understand. And as you read the passage and study it for yourself, you'll see that he wept at the sin, and the hardness of heart exhibited by the Jews as they publicly mourned the death of Lazarus while they rejected him, who is the resurrection and the life.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Jot down Luke 19:41, which says this. It's right after Jesus' triumphal entry, when their pr, proclaiming praises to him and laying down palm branches and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Jesus drew near the city, he saw the city of Jerusalem, and he wept over it. Saying this, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace. But now they're hidden from your eyes." It grieved his heart to see this city say with their mouth, "Hosanna to the Son of David," but a couple days later their going to kill him, crucify him. God's judgement will come on that city. A.D. 70, horrific judgement from the Romans. God sent it.

Look at this. Jesus entered into our weeping. Look at Hebrews 2:14, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the Devil, and deliver all those," through who the fear of death, "who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely, it's not angels that he helps but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, to make

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

Listen, it's faith in Jesus Christ, that is what makes for peace. That is what Jerusalem as a city, as its leadership rejected. But it's through faith in Jesus Christ that God delivers us from the wrath to come. And Jesus chose to enter into our weeping, and weep over sin along with us, and even to endure it, Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows." It says, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed," it's a reference back to Genesis 3:15, the promise of the gospel in Genesis, even in the midst of cursing, "he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

Look, Jesus has entered into our weeping that he might rescue us from our weeping. And that is the promise of the gospel which comes, and you can turn back to Luke 6, it comes in Luke 6:21, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh." And that

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

promise forms our final point, that God himself will put an end to all of our weeping. God will put an end to all of our weeping. As I said, God did not create sin, or weeping, or pain, or suffering, but he did decree it. He didn't create it. But it was God's purpose in decreeing all that has happened, and it was so he could bring all glory to himself by introducing Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ, he is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. God's plan was never for humanity to stay in the Garden of Eden. The failure of Adam was intended to make way for the last Adam, his one and only son, Jesus Christ. When Adam's righteousness was tested, it failed, didn't it? And if you'd been there, you would've failed too. So would I.

But Jesus is the one whose righteousness would be tested, time and time again, his righteousness would last all testing, his righteousness would fulfill all the law of God, and would triumph through the testing. His righteousness becomes our righteousness when we embrace him by faith. Jesus is the one who came to crush the serpent's head, to lead believing children of

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Abraham back to the father, to be reconciled to the life-giving God.

The departure of Adam and Eve from God, it began with unbelief. The sin of unbelief led to the transgression of God's command resulting in death and sorrow. And that is why our reconciliation with God starts with repenting of our unbelief and putting our faith in God. We left through a departure from believing in God, we reenter through believing in God. We trust God wholly. We believe in Jesus Christ, whom he sent to save us, and in Christ, we're reconciled to God, we're restored in relationship with God, in whom is no death or sorrow or weeping, but in whom is life eternal.

Now look at Luke 6:21 again. The fulfillment promise that Jesus gives us in the second half of the sentence, "Blessed are you who weep now," for what? "For you shall laugh." The word for laughter, it's the word *kalao*, and it refers to an external, outward expression of joy and happiness. There's a laughter, here, of relief and delight. Again, it's not just an inward

smile, but it's something you can see, something that is visible and audible. It's laughter.

The outward expression of sorrow in the first part of the verse, our weeping, our crying, that's replaced by outward expressions of joy in our laughter. I'd like to call this, holy laughter, but for Rodney Howard Brown reasons I'll call it righteous laughter or pious, godly laughter, okay? That's what we'll call it. I'd like to take back the term holy laughter, though. I, I don't like it when heretics get good terms like that and rob them of all their meaning, so, holy laughter? Could we do that?

In the parallel text, in Matthew chapter 5 verse 4 the beatitude reads, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." The word for mourn there is different than what we see in Luke 6:21, it is the word *pantheo*. *Pantheo*. Which refers more to internal sadness and profound sorrow. So instead of laughter, the fulfillment promise in Matthew's beatitude is comfort. There's an internal aspect of Matthew 5:4, so there's an internal *pantheo*, a sorrow of internal sadness and mourning,

and it's replaced, or overcome, by an internal comfort, the word *paracaleo*.

Now we've said before, Jesus said both things on this occasion. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted," that's applicable to everyone but it's targeted especially to his Jewish audience. The Jews would recognize a clear allusion, there, to Isaiah 61:2 of a Messiah who comes to comfort all who mourn. Same language. Same wording. And that made that promise unambiguous to the Jews.

But Jesus also said on this occasion, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh," which is what Luke records. It's applicable to all, Jew and Gentile alike, but it's targeted to Jesus' Gentile audience. In fact, if you look at Luke 6:25 in our passage here, Jesus combines both the words *pantheo* and *kleio* in the woe and the warning to the rich. "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn," *pantheo*, "and weep," *kleio*.

And the contrast is so vivid. It's one that people could picture in their mind's eye as they listened to Jesus. Those who're

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

characterized by regular crying and weeping now, their weeping will one day be replaced by laughing. Visible, audible, external, outward expressions of joy. By contrast, though, those who are characterized by regular laughing now, they'll one day, it'll one day be replaced by internal sorrow that will never depart, and an external crying, visible, audible weeping. For them, the party is over. An eternity of relentless judgement begins.

There is a, in a fundamentally spiritual nature, as we've said, to our hunger and our tears. The satisfaction and comfort that Jesus promises when the kingdom comes in glory, we need to understand that it's not only spiritual, it's not merely spiritual, as if we're somehow disembodied spirits that are satisfied and comfortable as we inhabit the, the ethereal nothingness, and a spaceless and bodiless existence, we can't think of it that way. We need to understand that this is physical, too. Literal laughing. There's a physical and spiritual element to this. Our actual, physical weeping will be replaced by actual, physical laughter.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

And I want to show you a couple passages as we wrap up today that illustrate the promise of Christ, we see in Luke 6:21. This is the joy part, right? This is where we need to camp on, even as we weep now. This is what we read earlier from Psalm 126. There was an actual, literal experience of joy and laughter as the exiles returned to the land in Psalm 126. And that forms the basis for understanding other promises of restoration in the major prophets.

Turn to the end of Isaiah's prophecy, Isaiah 65:16-19. And while you're turning there I'll just read a couple of others. This is a, here's a New Covenant promise in Jeremiah, Jeremiah 31:13. God said, "I will turn their mourning into joy. I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow." Isaiah also says, Isaiah 51:11, "And the ransom of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, sorrow and sighing will flee away." Those are interpreted as being fulfilled in the millennial kingdom, when Christ comes to ascend David's throne, to reign as king literally on this earth for a thousand years.

But listen to this promise in Isaiah 65:16-19, "The former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And the former things shall not be remembered," or, or, "or come to mind, but be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create, for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people. No more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress."

Listen, when's that going to happen? Not during the millennial kingdom. New heavens, new earth, all my exegetical research tells me this is something new, right? There will not be only a future for Israel, fulfillment of restoration promises in an earthly, millennial kingdom, but also a future for all God's people who are in a new, eternal kingdom.

So, with that in mind, turn to the end of your bibles to Revelation chapter 20 and we'll wrap this up. This is so, so good. Revelation 20 verses 7 and 8 says, "When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of

the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their numbers are like the sand of the sea. They shall march up over the broad plain on the earth, surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city." What is that? More sadness and sorrow, right? After the millennial kingdom, more weeping, because the presence of sin and rebellion remains.

Look at verse 9, God is going to bring a full and final end to all of that. They'll march up, they'll surround the camp of the saints, the beloved city, but "fire came down from heaven and consumed them." Battle over. "The Devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were. And they'll be tormented day and night forever and ever. And then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away. No place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

"Books were opened. And another book was opened which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the

dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. And then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life he was thrown into the lake of fire." "Then I saw," Isaiah 65, right? "A new Heaven, and a new Earth. For the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'"

Now, look at this, "He will wipe every tear away from their eyes. Death shall be no more, neither shall," they'll be, "there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." I love that promise, don't you? Jesus said, "Blessed are those who weep now, for you shall laugh." And when we come to Revelation 21, we find out here that it's God himself who will personally wipe every tear of weeping, of crying, of sadness, of mourning, away from our eyes.

When the former things pass away, including sin and death, and all the attendant mourning and crying and pain, all of that's not only gone, but it's replaced by rejoicing. There's the deep comfort for those who mourn now, Matthew 5:4, as well as the levity and the laughter for those who are now weeping, Luke 6:21. Beloved, that's us. We're going to stand one day at the brink of God's judgement and destruction and realize, hah! We've been rescued! Laughter will ensue, rejoicing as the battle is over, the victory is won, and there is no more pain, or crying, or mourning anymore.

For those who are, of us who are characterized by weeping and hungering now. Those are the poor that Jesus describes here, listen, the more you know him, even though it makes your hungering and thirsting for him more acute, even though it makes your weeping more frequent, more sorrowful, more profound, because you see sin now the way God sees sin, you know what? You can be of good courage because your Lord has said, "Blessed are you, for you shall laugh." Believe him in that, and you'll be blessed.

Let's pray. Father, we want to give ourselves completely and joyfully to the promise that you have written here, that Jesus proclaimed when he said, "Blessed are you who mourn, blessed are you who are weeping, for you shall be comforted and you shall laugh." We want to fully embrace that reality now and that promise.