

The Paradox of Blessedness

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- [0 : 00] Good morning. Good to see you. We are glad to be back in Colorado. Where weather makes more sense.
- Sometimes. Now we're glad to be here. We're grateful, grateful for your prayers and we feel it. We sense God helping us in the direction we're going.
- Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6, as we continue to walk through Luke's Gospel, as he presents to us Jesus.
- And as we know, his desire is in writing these things that we might have certainty. That we might have certainty about the things that we have been taught specifically about Jesus and his teachings.
- And so Luke presents for us or records for us here in Luke, chapter 6, a sermon of Jesus, a sermon, he calls it the sermon on the plain, sermon on a level place.
- [1 : 14] It's different from, I believe, from the sermon on the mount that Matthew records in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. And there's a number of similarities between the two sermons, but there are many more differences than there are similarities.
- So I believe this is a sermon that, a type of sermon that Jesus preached pretty much everywhere he went. With that, we want to read the text. We're going to be looking at verses 20 to 26.
- And I want to read from verse 17 through 26. So if you're able and you desire, please stand as I read Luke, chapter 6, beginning verse 17.
- It says, Right after he chose the twelve apostles. And 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 and Jerusalem, even the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases.
- And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him for power came out from him and healed them all.
- [2 : 45] And he 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 hungering now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who are weeping 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 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.
- [3 : 59] 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.

So it reads, let us pray. Father, guide us today. Open our hearts and minds. Help us to see what you want us to see. And let Jesus' words fall upon us the way it must have fallen upon his first disciples.

May we be overwhelmed by them and then let them sink into our hearts. And then bring us to live by them.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. We hold these truths to be self-evident.

that all men are created equal. And they are endowed by their creator with unalienable rights.

[5 : 20] Among those are life, liberty, and something else. Oh, you know this.

Pursuit of happiness. Pursuit of happiness. Yeah. Yeah. Well, we're not going to get into whether God endowed us with the right to the pursuit of happiness, but that's a different sermon.

But the pursuit of happiness. Okay. What is that? That's the American dream. That's the American dream. That's why people are coming here still. Send us your poor.

Right? But is the pursuit of happiness the dream that it's all cracked up to be?

Can it be found in worldly accomplishments, possessions, and wealth? Can happiness really be found there?

[6 : 33] This is what our forefathers believed in. This is what America believes in. And yet Jesus' words confront that thought.

Is there a better way than the pursuit of happiness? Is there another pursuit that actually brings lasting fulfillment, deeper satisfaction, and real security?

This is what Jesus offers us. Jesus promises real, lasting, rich rewards.

The question is, do we believe that? Do we trust that? And if you're a believer in Christ, of course you do. But do we believe it today?

Or more importantly, do you believe it tomorrow? When things start getting... What was that? What did we say about the billows coming over?

[7 : 50] Jesus... It's hard for us to imagine how radical this is, what Jesus said to a first century Jew.

Okay? Because not only are riches and fullness and laughter happiness, and all speaking well of you, the American dream, it was also the Jewish dream.

Because that's what the Old Covenant promised. Please understand that context. because Moses said, if you keep this covenant, you will be what?

Blessed. You will have wealth. You will have health. You will have security. And here Jesus says, woe to the rich.

Woe to the wealthy. So, I just want us to understand. Remember, to help you grasp that, remember when Jesus said, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to what?

[9 : 19] Enter the kingdom of heaven. Do you remember the response of the disciples when Jesus said that? Did they all go, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

No, what did they do? They said, then who can be saved? If the wealthy, if the rich, if the well-off can't make it, who can be saved?

See, their understanding, I want you to understand, the first century Jewish understanding is wealth is good. It's a sign of God's blessing, which is based in the covenant.

covenant. What they did not understand is they can't keep that covenant. They never could. So, so what Jesus says is quite radical.

I want you to grab that. It's radical, not just to our ears because, yeah, we hear the, you know, yeah, the American dream, you know, it's all, everything's good. What Jesus is presenting as the real way of life is opposite to what they thought and opposite to what we think naturally.

[10 : 29] So, let's look at first the first word, blessed, verse 20, blessed. He's going to say blessed four times. He's going to say whoa four times. Blessed.

So, what's blessed mean? It's a paradox. I call this the paradox of blessedness because the way Jesus defines what we might say is happiness seems senseless, right?

Happy are the sad, happy are the poor, happy are the hungry, happy are the suffering, doesn't make any sense, right? It just sounds silly. So, based on the Greek word, if we just looked at the Greek word, which we often do because the New Testament is written in Greek, if we take the Greek word, the Greek word means fortunate, lucky, happy.

So, it's a legitimate translation to say happy are you who are poor and hungry and suffering and sad.

So, happy. What's happiness? Many preachers, in fact, some Bibles do translate happy instead of blessed. So, it's almost an odd that they at least translate it blessed, giving us a clue that it's something different than happiness.

[11 : 43] But what is happiness? Happiness is something that is based on what happens. You're happy because things happen that make you feel happy.

Things are going well. Are you happy? How's the happenings? Right? That's what happiness is. It's conditional.

It's based on your circumstance. Jesus did not think in Greek he thought in Hebrew. And I believe that when he talked about blessed, though he may have preached this in Greek, he could have preached it in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek.

And since there were people from Tyre and Sidon, it's possible that he preached it in Greek so that he knew all three languages. Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew.

And I think Jesus was probably thinking in Hebrew when he said blessed. Why do I bring that up? Because the Hebrew word for blessed is much different than the Greek word for blessed.

[12 : 55] The Hebrew word ashar means go straight. Hebrew is a picture language. It means go straight. Blessed means go straight. It's a roadway language.

It's how you walk. It means going straight. It has nothing to do with your circumstances. It just means going straight. You're blessed if you go on the right road. So we just sang Psalm, or read Psalm 23, right, that talks about the path.

Even if I go through the path of the dark, in the valley of the darkness, right, or he leads me in a path of righteousness. So it's about a pathway. So think about, so Psalm 1 talks about blessed is the man, right, who does not, okay, I always get the order wrong.

Somebody help me. It's sit, stand, walk, or something like, walk, stand, sit. Walk, thank you, brother. Walk, stand, sit. It's kind of where you are, right? Blessed is the man who's in that right place.

So Psalm 119 says the same thing. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimony, who seek him with all their heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

[14 : 09] See, blessedness is about a way that we walk. It's about going straight. Jesus talked about the narrow way, right? Narrow is the gate and skinny is the path that leads to life.

Broad is the gate, right? Broad is the way that leads to ruin. So Jesus thought in terms of this roadway language. So I present to you that when Jesus is saying blessed here, he's thinking Hebrew.

He's thinking about a way that we go, a walk in a way. You're on the right road when you're poor, when you're hungry, when you're sad, when you're tormented for Christ.

You're on the right road. Okay? So let's look at this. So Jesus describes, I think, here in verses 20 to 26, two kinds of people.

He talks about on the one side, these who are blessed. There are people who are blessed. Blessed are these kinds of people. And then woe to the opposite of those, right?

[15 : 18] So there's two, he's separating people. There's either the blessed or those who are under woe. So we're going to look at these two groups in order. So verses 20, 23, here are the blessed people.

Here are the people on the right road. Here are the people going straight in God's path. Okay? They're the ones who will be blessed by God. They will be rewarded. And then 24 to 26 are the four woes.

These are the people on the opposite kind. They're on the broad road. They're on the way to destruction. Though they're enjoying life now, their end is ruin. Okay?

So let's look at this. And the other thing I want you to understand is that these four blessed, what he says, these four descriptions of blessed, we need to understand them as a whole to understand what any of them mean.

We need to understand them together. If we kind of separate out, you know, blessed are the hungry for they shall be satisfied. If we just separate that out by itself, we don't know what that really means.

[16 : 25] Is he just talking about the physically hungry and everyone who's physically hungry will be satisfied? Is that what he's saying? See, we don't understand that that hunger is probably a spiritual hunger because what does he say?

There's some distinctions. Verse 20, blessed are those who are poor for yours is what? It is the kingdom of what? Earth.

Oh, heaven. So there's a clue. Kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. This is a different dimension he's talking about. There's is right now. And then we go to, so blessed are the hungry now, you'll be shadowed.

Blessed are those who weep now. You should be, laugh. Verse 22, blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of what? The son of man because you're identified with Christ.

Right? And then 23, rejoice and be glad your reward is great. Where? Heaven. Right? So we have to understand all four together to kind of get where they all are.

[17 : 35] They're all about, certainly they can involve physical things but I think they're spiritual and in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Matthew kind of hints more clearly at that.

He records Jesus saying, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who hunger, what? For righteousness. So, so, so, um, and I think that's where Jesus is going here too.

If we put all four together. Okay. So let's define the blessed. Who are the blessed? How would we define all four together? The blessed are those living by Jesus's values and identity.

The blessed are those living by Jesus's values values and identity who will be richly rewarded. Okay.

Well, let's look at that. Verse 20, they have a distinct value. Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They have a present security. Though they're poor in some sense, they already have the kingdom.

[18 : 51] They already possess it. It's not future. it's now. They have it. Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of God.

What's the kingdom of God? Well, that's another sermon. But let me summarize it as Paul does in Romans 14. 14, 13 to 14, 17.

I think it's Romans 14, 17. He says, the kingdom of God is not not eating and drinking. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in, anybody know?

The Holy Spirit. That's what the kingdom of God is. Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace that passes understanding, joy inexpressible in the Holy Spirit.

That's what the kingdom of God is. That make sense? So whoever this poor person is, is already possessing the work of the Spirit in them.

[19 : 57] They've been born again. They have a new heart, new spirit, new desires, new values. So what's poor? So poor means, there's different words in Greek for poor.

This is the word that describes somebody who's in desperate need. need. They're not just needy and they need a little bit of help. They can't help themselves.

They're absolutely desperate. They are driven to dependency because they can't help themselves. They are helpless.

They are broken. I like the term broken. Spiritual brokenness. I can't fix myself. I can't make myself better. Before God, I can't do His will.

I can't obey Him blamelessly. Blessed are those who walk blamelessly.

[21 : 03] Really? Can we be honest? I can't do it. I can try. I can mean well. I can commit and have some progress, but before the light of God, it's I'm poor.

It's the word that describes the widow. When Jesus sees the widow, He's watching people put money in the treasury and the rich people putting in all this money and then He sees this poor widow, this poor widow who puts in her final two cents.

That's poor. That's all she had. It's also described in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Remember Jesus told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

In the world, the rich man had all this lavish stuff and Lazarus is described as this poor man who's just wanting the crumbs from the rich man's table.

That's how desperate he is. He's desperate. And then in the parable he shows that in the afterlife they're on different sides of the great chasm, right?

[22 : 17] And Lazarus is over here with Abraham and he's now comforted. Now he's good. And the rich man's over there shouting across. I don't know how that, you know, this is Jesus' parable, so he's shouting, hey Abraham, you know, get Lazarus to go and warn my family so they don't end up where I am because he's in torment.

And remember Abraham says, you've had your fill, you've had your good things, you've had your comfort. Woe to those who are rich for they have had their comfort.

And now Lazarus has, he didn't have anything, now he has everything. That's the idea of poor here. And I think he's talking about poor in spirit, poor in spiritual condition.

My poverty before God is, it's not God helps those who help themselves, God helps those who can't help themselves. So then we see the next two, verse 21, 22, or verse 21 talks about, where am I?

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. This distinction of those living by Jesus' values and identity have a worldview that looks to a future reward, not a present reward.

[23 : 52] Their worldview has a presupposition that this world is not my home. This world is not my reward. My reward, my real life isn't here.

It's not my best life now. It's my worst life now. My best life is coming. That's what I'm living for. That's my worldview.

you. So he talks about you hunger now, but you shall be satisfied. You weep now.

You're hurting now, but you will laugh. you'll have that laughter. He's not saying we never laugh now. He's not saying that we're always just, you know, you know, but there's something that we're hungering for that we don't have here.

And I think like Matthew's version, it's we're hungering for a righteousness that we don't have. We see our poverty before God and we know, and we're honest, we can't.

[25 : 01] And so it brings us to a hunger for what we don't have and it makes us weep because we don't have it. It makes us weep because I've let my Savior down, because I've fallen short.

And that's a good weeping because he will comfort that. He will comfort that. That's part of repentance. We continue to repent because we continue to fall short.

And so we condone, and that's good. We hunger for more righteousness. Isn't it odd that the longer we're a Christian, the more we're aware of our sinfulness? Shouldn't that go away?

Shouldn't we just kind of finally get to the stage where good and that don't happen, does it? It's like the Lord will be like, oh, we haven't gone into this corner lately.

Oh, come on. Can we focus on what I got, you know, where I feel okay? Little stuff becomes bigger.

[26 : 09] Yeah. That's the road we're on. The road is this one of seeing my poverty before God. This road is because of that I hunger for his righteousness and I weep because I have broken.

That's the right road. And so he says in verse 23, this is odd now, isn't it? Rejoice in that day and leap for joy for behold your reward is great in heaven.

Your reward is great in heaven. Rejoice and skip literally skip the Greek word is skip skip I don't know if that's a transliteration is skip for joy when you have been found worthy to suffer for Jesus because your reward is great in heaven.

So they have this distinct worldview that looks toward the future. And then finally verse 22 kind of comes to the center of the whole thing. It's our identity.

We have a distinct identity. We live not just by Jesus values but we live with this identity that's linked to Jesus fixed to Jesus and because we have a distinct identity fixed to Jesus it is to everyone else a hated association.

[27 : 39] We are associated with Jesus whom the world hates because his light shines on their darkness and we reflect that light not because we're holy not because we look there so good but simply because we're associated with Jesus which means that we know that we're sinners and that that's our only hope and they know they're sinners too but they don't want to go there so he says blessed are you when people hate you and they exclude you and they revile you and spurn your name is evil on account of the son of man just because you're associated with Jesus they will hate you just because you're associated with Jesus they will exclude!

you and even say that you're a hater you're a hater you spurn your name is evil you're you Christians you're intolerant you're unaccepting right because we speak what's true it's not because we go out there and try to shame people not by enemy please don't do that that's not our job it's not our job to condemn anyone they're already under condemnation it's our job to shed light and that light hurts and so they will hate you it's hard not to take that personally isn't it especially when they revile you and slander you when you've actually done what's right it's really hard and not many will see that but guess who does see that the

Lord sees it the Lord sees it and that should be good enough I'm sorry for saying should it is good enough what does that mean that we're associated with Jesus what does that mean well it means that we're known to be his followers which means that we must have a public identity with Jesus it means people in our neighborhood and people that we associate with regularly in public know that we are a Christian we're not secret agents I remember somebody was coming to our church was looking at becoming a member and part of our membership process is to share your personal testimony your walk with God this person like oh that's private not if you follow

Christ it's not oh I don't want to share that that's private well if you keep it private here Jesus will keep you know if you don't what did Jesus say anyway yeah if you don't oh forget so you get for sharing something that's not in your notes but my point is simply that we if you're not hated and being excluded and being reviled and spurning your name as evil then maybe you're not out there maybe you're because that should be the norm and it's not because you're being wicked in some way excuse me not because you're being self righteous in some way it's simply because they know you are a

Christian now there are some that will be attracted to you because that light will draw it will be welcoming but for many that light will be offensive even if you're being gentle okay I mean look at Jesus right okay those living by Jesus values and identity will be richly rewarded because they're on the right road so let's talk about this rejoicing he talks about verse 23 rejoice in that day and leap for joy in the day that they hate you leap for joy in the day that they spurn your name as evil leap for joy right you can get into that can't you it's exciting isn't it it's like makes you want to leap for joy when they tell lies about you!

[32 : 44] how do you do that? how do you rejoice when you are suffering? how do you rejoice just in the hardship of being on the right road?

how do you rejoice it's it's not natural I mean who does that? and why do you do that?

well here's Peter Peter wrote a letter that apparently his followers and the people he was leading and teaching and preaching to were suffering a lot because in five chapters of Peter he talks about I don't know how many times he mentioned suffering about 80 or 100 no I don't know I mean the whole book just it's a theme here's what he says 1 Peter 4 12 he says beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you so in other words believers in the first century thought it was strange and abnormal to be persecuted just like believers in this century believe it's just I don't like it can't we just all get along don't regard it as something strange it's not strange but what so here he's going to talk about rejoicing but rejoice insofar as you share the

Christ sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed if you are insulted or reviled for the name of Christ you are blessed well that's exactly what Jesus said in Luke 6 I wonder where Peter heard that because watch this now you're blessed if you're insulted for Christ you're blessed why because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you the spirit of God rests upon you when they revile you the spirit of God is resting upon you do you feel that no it's not something you feel it's something you trust it's like Jesus saying I will never leave you forsake you do you believe that I feel very alone no you're not alone it's not a feeling the spirit of glory rests upon you that's amazing statement but let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or a meddler yet if anyone suffers as a

Christian interesting let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in that name for it is time for the judgment to begin at the house of God and if it begins with us what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God if it's hard for believers imagine what judgment will be for unbelievers and if the righteous is scarcely saved the righteous are scarcely like the eye of the needle what will become of the ungodly and the sinner therefore I mean what Peter's really saying is it's hard the road we walk is hard the road we walk is hard therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while they keep on doing good following

[36 : 44] Jesus is not easy Peter calls it a fiery trial don't be surprised at the fiery trial because it's there to test you in other words God has sent it he's still conforming us to the image of Christ he's still knocking off the edges rejoice because you share Christ's sufferings remember in Acts when the disciples were preaching in the name of Jesus and they were told not to and they kept preaching in the name of Jesus so the authorities bring them in and they beat them and whip them and knock the snot out of them and remember when the disciples left remember what they said they were like oh man I don't want to do this anymore what they say they were leaping and rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer for him that's a whole different attitude that's a different worldview isn't it rejoice because not only because you're counted worthy to suffer for the name that you bear but because you have the kingdom now your values are not in earthly treasures but you seek like

Abraham you seek a better city you seek a better country you seek a better something deeper and more satisfying than what this world offers blessed are those who live by Jesus values and identity because they'll be richly rewarded let's look at the other side the woes four woes summarize this group it's not a group but really four descriptions of the same group of people instead of living by Jesus's values and identity these are people that live by the world's values and identity and they will suffer ruin they're just the opposite so they have values in an earthly security so woe to you who are rich for you have received just just like it's the opposite of blessed are the poor for they have the kingdom woe to the rich because they have the consolation they've already been consoled by their riches and it's not that rich is evil we have rich people in the

Bible who are believers Abraham was extremely wealthy Job was extremely wealthy you have Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man now he's quiet about his discipleship at first if Zacchaeus is it's not that you can't be rich and be a believer but the scriptures tell us over or New Testament tells us over and over again that the riches are a snare we tend to trust in our riches even if you're not rich you want to be rich because you think that will give you security and the rich that Jesus is talking about here are those who trust in their wealth they think they need nothing they think they're okay it's kind of like the church of Laodicea you think you're rich you think you're full you think you have all it but really you're poor and you're miserable and you're right think you're okay but you're not the rich are those who seek earthly treasures for that consolation they want that consolation now but Jesus says you know woe to those who store up riches on earth where rust can corrode and thieves can break in and steal you know put your treasures in heaven where rust and thieves cannot touch your security in heaven for wherever your treasures are there your heart will be because

Jesus was about where your heart is so these folks not only have an earthly security but their world view has a present focus see verse 25 woe to you who are full when now where you shall be hungry woe to you who laugh now oh sure you're laughing now but there will come a day they have a present focus they want the rewards now they covet so they are full now they laugh laugh could be they're laughing now could refer to levity could refer to a laughter of gloating right or pride or looking down on others it could just simply be that they have a life that's just about having fun and nothing more deep than that and understand there's a lot of people that live for the right for the weekend TGIF thank God's

Friday to get this work out of it so I can go now have fun I can go relax I can go kind of think of other things I can just go laugh and drink and ease and escape and all that right or live for the vacation I can't wait for the vacation oh it's a three day weekend oh I'm not making fun of that I mean because there's times I could use an extra day but that's not what we live for there's people that live literally live for that that's it that's their joy that's their peace that's it that's as deep as it goes that's no way to live because it's all temporary the pleasures are temporary they want gratification right now there's no sense of no way of waiting I want what I want now I don't have enough money to make ends meet but as soon as

[42 : 56] I get money I'm going to spend it on my pleasure because I need a break I need something to not think about what I got to go through every day it's a life of emptiness that's focusing on the present and then finally we see in verse 26 woe to those when all people speak well of you it doesn't say when just some people speak well of you I mean hopefully one or two people speak well of you right I mean hopefully your wife speaks well of you maybe not your kids right now but you know hopefully somebody speaks well of you but Jesus is talking about when you're just so popular that everybody likes you that's not a good sign that's not a good mark if everybody likes you then what does that mean you desire to be loved by the world you live by the fear of man not the fear of God and notice

Jesus says what do you when all people speak well of you well why because who are you compared to for so their fathers did to the false prophets that means if you're somebody that everyone speaks well of that everybody likes that you offend nobody that's not good because that's how the false prophets were treated because they didn't tell anybody bad news they didn't tell anybody!

I think this is Joel Osteen right here you like Joel sorry Joel's a false prophet but he's very well liked I think even Oprah likes him right sorry if you like sorry I don't care so in other words it's about message their identity is based in a false message if they all speak well of you it's about what your message is it's about what if you speak what the world wants to hear then they're going to like you if you speak what Jesus speaks the world is not going to like you it's rude to draw lines today although it's oddly okay for the world to draw the line about!

Christians but nobody else but and Jesus knew this Jesus already experienced this Jesus is already being this is only about one year into Jesus ministry here Luke 6 he's already being opposed we know that they're already asking questions why do you eat with sinners why are you you know why aren't you keeping the law why aren't you fasting why are you doing all these things and I bet by the time he does this sermon it's going to be you are not preaching Moses buddy well thank God we all we all just live on the blessed side right thank God we never are tempted by wanting riches or wanting to be happy today or you know wanting everyone to like us thank

God we don't have any of those temptations right I mean thank God we're so holy and so perfect in our Christianity right no no am I lying yeah thank you for catching me obviously we're not obviously we struggle with this don't we when it's a hard day no when it's a hard no not week not month when it's a hard season because we could do a day maybe we could do a week you know the Lord's really good to us maybe we can do a month but how about a season how about 12 years of depression that's just me I couldn't hack it for 12 years and it's easy to go back there what about then then you want some relief just a little relief then you want a little bit of escape you want to can

[47 : 42] I just watch a comedy show can I watch a fun movie so I can laugh a little bit I won't tell you what I watched to laugh you'll make fun of me that's absolutely natural for us to want to do that right I mean who wants to always be poor who wants to always be hungry who wants to always be sad we don't let everybody see our sadness but when we're alone that's hard and then you get punched in the gut because they know you stand with Jesus so thank goodness James recognized that we struggle with that James says in chapter four of his letter James four he's speaking to

Christians about this struggle he says what causes quarrels and what causes fights among you imagine that Christians fighting can you can you no that doesn't happen right is it not this that your passions are at war within you you desire and do not have so you murder ow now he's speaking like John first John you murder by not loving right you covet and cannot obtain so you fight and quarrel you do not have because you do not ask oh and you ask and do not receive see so some people you don't have because you don't have you just don't pray other people well you're praying you're asking but you don't receive why because you ask wrongly to spend it on your pleasures you James winning friends and influencing people here you adulterous people do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity toward

God whoever therefore wishes to be a friend of the world and naturally we want to be a friend of the world whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God now he's going to get to a deeper level here or do you not do you suppose that it is to no purpose that the scripture says he speaking of God yearns jealousy over the spirit that he has made to dwell within us God is very jealous for the spirit that he has put in us he is very jealous for this new life that he has given he wants us he wants our relationship he wants us but he gives here comes the gospel but he gives more grace therefore it says

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble submit yourselves therefore to God resist the devil and he will flee from you draw near to God and he will draw near to you cleanse your hands you sinners purify your hearts you double minded be wretched and mourn and weep wait a minute where do we hear those words Luke 6 be wretched and mourn and weep for what well obviously over your selfish hearts your sinfulness your prayerlessness the adultery your adulterous to be friends with the world be wretched and mourn and weep let your laughter be turned into mourning laughter and mourning there we go some more words reflected from Luke 6 let your laughter be torn to mourning and your joy to gloom that's all repentance language summarizes it this way humble yourselves before the Lord and he will crush you right because he just wants to knock out your light what's all this submitting and cleansing and all this repentance all about so just

God want to put me down right humble yourselves before the Lord he will lift you up that's how it works we go low he brings us up we go high he brings us down it's a spiritual economy it's just just it's poor yours is the kingdom hungry you'll find deep satisfaction mourning he'll bring the laughter suffering suffering the reward is great because you're living just like Elijah you're living just like Jeremiah you're living just like Isaiah I don't want to live like them no now that you follow Christ that's how you live read

[53 : 06] Lamentations 3 it's so fun poor Jeremiah but Jesus is saying that's the road I want you on that's the road I want you on because it's the road that Jesus walked it's the same road he wants us on that road because it's not about your best life now it's about your glorious life that starts now in part but will be filled beyond your wildest dream forget the American dream take the gospel dream desire something much much bigger than the American dream sorry

Thomas Jefferson no so what do you value are you living for temporary things of the world or do you live for a future hope and identity in Christ you seek security in earthly treasures or do you entrust your security to God and the experience of his kingdom now are you experiencing hardship today I know that we we've talked about as a congregation some of us going through hard seasons some hard stuff going on part of it's just the season part of it's culture are you experiencing hardship now is it hard to follow Christ right now I call you to resist the temptation to seek relief and empty short lived hopes of this world draw near to him and he will draw near to you turn from your friendship with the world and humble yourself before the

Lord and he will lift you up let's pray father we pray as David prayed that you would create in us a clean heart renew in us a right spirit sustain us with a willing spirit help us to go on the path Lord that you want us on make us in fact as Psalm 119 says cause us make us to walk in the path of your commandments for we delight in that path incline our hearts to your testimonies and not to the selfish gains turn away our eyes from looking at vain empty things and revive us in your ways your paths establish your word to your servants as that which produces fear of you behold we long for your words revive us through your righteousness that comes by grace alone through faith alone in

Christ alone we pray in Christ's name amen amen amen!