

Luke 6:17-26. *¹⁷ He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, ¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all. ²⁰ Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. ²² 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. ²³ "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets. ²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. ²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶ Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.*

Jesus comes down to meet our need.

Jesus comes to comfort the uncomfortable.

Jesus comes to make uncomfortable those living in comfort.

I want to ask you two questions to start our time together today, "*Do you need Jesus?*"... If you answered yes (which I pray you did) then consider this question, "*Why do you need Jesus?*" Let's answer that question together today. *Why do we need Jesus?*

Possible answers would certainly include: We need forgiveness for we are sinners. We need Jesus to make us right with God. We need him to take away our sins and the punishment that we deserve. We need his righteous and perfect life. We need his gift of reconciliation with the Father. We need his gift of eternal life. We need his help in our time of need. When sickness and trouble, anxiety and trouble surround us we have a friend in Jesus who we can go to with our prayers. We need him, to care for our needs of both body and soul. We need him to guide us through life, to teach us how to live for the glory of God. We need his victory over sin and death and hell. We need his gift of heaven.

We need... We need... We need. When we consider that question, "Do we need Jesus?", to those who know anything about God's Word, it becomes rather obvious, rather quickly, that we do need Jesus. As those who recognize that we are sinners living in a terribly broken world we most certainly need Jesus our Savior. However, we live in a world where many people ignore or suppress that need or look to other things to fill that hole in their soul. And so it is a good thing for us to know, to recall, to remember, to relearn and to hang onto always: I need Jesus. You need Jesus. That's why we are here. That's why we come here in this place where we can regularly gather together around his Word. We are broken, needy sinners, who need Jesus daily.

There are some who might take such an admission as a sign of weakness. Or they might label it as unnecessary, or negative or foolish talk, but what does Jesus say to those who know and believe that we are in great need. He calls us blessed. We are blessed for Jesus in his grace and mercy comes down to meet our need. In fact, he comes to meet the need of all sinners. And as he comes, ***Jesus comes to comfort the uncomfortable. And Jesus comes to make uncomfortable those living too much in comfort; as he sends out his Word to the World.***

As Jesus comes down the mountain on this particular day, he comes down from a place of prayer. He has been praying for a good amount of time, praying for his disciples, whom he would

soon send out as apostles to share the good news of rescue and deliverance through Jesus the Messiah. On their way down the mountain, they come upon a level place, which would serve as an ideal place for many people to gather around Jesus. Luke describes the scene in this way: ***A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon,¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured,¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.*** All these people had come from far and wide to hear him and to be healed by him, and Jesus met their every need. He healed their diseases, he even casts out demons that disturbed both body and soul. Jesus healed many throughout his ministry, in this case the method he chose was striking as we are told that power was coming from Jesus and healing them all. What an incredible scene this must have been! Jesus came with his almighty power and his mighty Word to bring healing and comfort for those suffering body and soul under the curse of sin.

Remember again why they were coming down the mountain in the first place. Luke tells us in the verses prior to this account that Jesus had prayed a great deal for his disciples and then subsequently had designated these twelve disciples to be his apostles to go out into the world. Jesus had a desire that all people would come to the knowledge of the truth, and he recognized that not everyone would travel in a large crowd to meet him on a mountainside, and so he would send out his apostles out into the world with his Holy Word. But the world wouldn't always be so willing to admit that they needed Jesus, and so what was his instruction to these disciples? What would he want to tell them that would prepare them for a life of living in such a world and sharing the word with its people? Jesus takes this time to speak powerful words of blessing and comfort as well as words of warning and woe.

First of all, he speaks words of comfort to those who were uncomfortable. These were those who were well aware of their sin, the curse of sin on their lives, and their need for help. ²⁰ ***Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.*** But he also speaks to those who are all too comfortable and he says things that are designed to challenge and awake precious souls to their spiritual need. ²⁴ ***"But woe to you who are rich, for you, have already received your comfort."²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.***

As Jesus speaks about those who are poor, as he speaks about those who are hungry, as he speaks about those who are weeping, he is speaking about those who are aware of their need. For those you who are poor in spirit, you are blessed because you recognize that we are but beggars before a holy God, with nothing to give. We are in dire need of his mercy. Yet we are blessed, for God in his grace will share with us the kingdom of God. Through faith in Jesus, he will place into our empty hands his gifts of grace. For the King of the Universe sees our great need and he leaves his throne in heaven and becomes one of us. God's Word would go on to remind us, ***"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich."*** - 2 Corinthians 8:9. Jesus comes down to meet our need, he stoops down and enters our existence in humility as he serves as our substitute, as he lays down his life so that we might share in his glory forever. He comes down and meets our great need as he opens the kingdom of heaven for all those who look to him. To

those who live with this uncomfortable awareness of our need and our poverty of sin, Jesus gives us comfort. Jesus gives us hope. Jesus gives us joy that will not fade or disappoint.

For those who have a hunger for more than just the stuff of life, Jesus offers himself and his Word to satisfy. Those who would have a hunger to hear and learn more about the Word, about Jesus, about his love, about God's will for our life, you are blessed for you will be satisfied. We have been given a glorious taste as we are invited by the Bread of Life to draw near and receive the nourishment that he gives. Each day he gives us satisfaction as his mercies are new every morning. He gives us his word and we are blessed in every bite, every morsel, every helping that we take in, whether it is in individual portions at home or in banquet form when we come together for public worship. What a blessing to have a hunger for more than just the stuff of this world, what a blessing it is to have that bread of life offered to us as we learn more about God. What a blessing to know that one day that daily hunger will be fully satisfied in the presence of God as we feast at the wedding banquet of eternal life in heaven. All our questions will be answered; and we will be satisfied in the presence of the eternal God. The apostle Paul who had a great hunger to know more about God and to share his knowledge of God's grace with others reminded the Corinthians that one day we will know God, and his will, and his Word, and all his promises in full. ***For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known - 1 Corinthians 13:12.*** Our hunger for more will one day be fully satisfied, what we know in part now, we will fully know in heaven and we will not be disappointed.

For those who weep over sin, and weep over the heavy curse that hangs over our whole existence on earth. For those who are troubled by sin, and death, and pain, Jesus speaks words of serene comfort and peace. Not only do we have the wonderful promise from God's Word that Jesus will greet us in a place where there is no more crying, or mourning, or pain, and he will wipe away every tear from our eyes; but here Jesus promises that we will laugh. As those who understand and experience daily that there is plenty to grieve about in this world of sin, we are given great joy in knowing that Jesus gives us joy that will last for all eternity. Our Savior blesses us who mourn over sin with the promises of eternal pleasures at his right hand!

We need... We need... We need... And we are blessed for Jesus gives, and he gives, and he gives. His gifts are like none other. He gives us a place in his kingdom, he satisfies our hunger, he gives us joy and fulfillment that will never end, that does not leave us lacking or disappointed.

As Jesus meets with this crowd, as he heals and helps, he also equips his disciples to go out to the world; and this is the message that he gives them. He points them to eternal blessings that faith embraces even when they are contrary to what we see. As human beings, we naturally search for the comforts that we can quantify. Things that we see, and touch, and pile up. And it is not just an unbelieving world that coldly underestimates or passes by those spiritual blessings that Jesus offers, but we too can be so easily duped into investing too much time and energy and attention to the shiny yet flimsy offerings of the temporal world which can never fully satisfy. Therefore, just as Jesus warns his disciples, he also now warns us. Woe to you and me when we focus our attention and when we base our happiness on material possession and work, when we base our satisfaction and fulfillment on health, and health and entertainment and leisure so much that spiritual blessings are crowded out of our lives. These are all blessings from God, but they become a curse when they take our attention away from the creator. Woe to you and me when we convince ourselves that we are satisfied in our knowledge of God and his Word that we no longer hunger to hear more. For if we fill our plates so full with the stuff of life that we have no

need for spiritual nourishment today or tomorrow it becomes all the more possible that one day after pushing away that bread of life for so long we will go hungry. Woe to you and me when we laugh in merriment over sinful activities that fly in the very face of God and his will. When we revel in excessive gambling and drunkenness gossip, coarse joking, and other forms of immorality, God promises only weeping and mourning for those who continue in such foolish ways which make a mockery of the very words and ways of God. That is the warning that Jesus gives to go with his promise. These are his words of woe that are designed to make uncomfortable those who are too comfortable in their way of life: Including you and me.

And so as Jesus prayed for his disciples and then he encouraged and equipped them to go out as his apostles to preach the good news of salvation, this is the instruction of blessing and woe he gave. Jesus modeled for them and then gave them specific instructions to bring healing and help and comfort to those who are made uncomfortably aware of their great need. Jesus also instructed his apostles to reach out with words of warning and woe to make uncomfortable those who have become too comfortable in this life.

Our Savior's Word endures, and thus his messengers and his message continue to be sent out to meet our needs today. Because it is such human nature to live in the moment, to live by sight and not by faith, we need to be reminded daily that the blessings of this world will never fully satisfy. Instead, they come and go, they do not last to eternity, and none of them can meet our greatest need as Jesus can. Conversely, the blessings that the LORD gives us in Jesus, meet our needs so faithfully that even when troubles upend and greatly disturb our daily well-being we are still held firmly by the blessings of God. When disappointment comes, when our business falters, when our health fails, when family and friends hurt and betray, we are still blessed for we have the eternal blessings that Jesus gives. That is why when a Christian who is suddenly overcome by the troubles of life, remains filled with the hope and joy that Jesus brings. This is why a Christian who is unexpectedly on her death bed can express a quiet peace and confidence in her Lord. This faith made confident in Christ can give thanks for the gifts of heaven and peace and joy in Jesus in all circumstances. This is also why a Christian man can face ridicule and persecution for his faith and yet he still rejoices in the Lord. He can do this for the blessings that Jesus brings do not disappoint. Jesus loves and comforts and heals with an unfailing love. He alone satisfies our needs in the present day and onto all eternity.

We need Jesus, and we are blessed as he comes to us through his holy Word, and he comes with blessings that do not disappoint. In his unfailing, steadfast, eternally reliable love he brings healing, hope, comfort and peace that satisfy us now and throughout eternity.

Give thanks to God, that you know that you need Jesus. Give thanks to God, that God has revealed to you in his Holy Word how Jesus comes to meet your need. His love is even so great that he continues to come through his Holy Word to make us uncomfortable when we get too comfortable with the things of this world. In love, he comes to us to comfort us when we are made uncomfortable by sin and its heavy curse. Jesus meets our need and gives powerful healing and comfort, joy and hope, that lasts for all time. Know dear Christian, in good times and bad, in joy and sorrow, in fellowship and suffering the Lord Jesus comes near and gives us his word of comfort and hope, of joy and praise. And these and all the blessings that Jesus brings, they will not disappoint, but they will satisfy us in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, and unto all eternity: ***"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.*** Amen.