

November 12, 2023
 IBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship)
 Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Who is the Blessed Person?"
 —A Wise Way of Living—

Text: Luke 6:20~26

6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

6:21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

6:22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

6:23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

6:24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

6:25 "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

6:26 "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

What kind of people are blessed? There are certain people in the world who seem to be happy on the outside but have problems. On the other hand, there are certain people who have suffering inside but seem to be happy on the outside.

How about you who come to attend Sunday worship service? How many of you can say loudly that you are **blessed**?

{Illustration}

The other day, I found the following letter to the Yomiuri Shimbun's Life Consultation Room.

I'm a housewife in my 40s, married 20 years. My husband has never returned a basic greeting such as good morning.

I was very confused at first because greetings were everyday things in my family. I have been patient with it until now because my family environment is different. At home, he

just sits on the couch like a big man and watches TV and does nothing. He is exactly like a stubborn farther in the Showa era.

He always watches TV with an angry face. When I told him before that I couldn't talk to him because he looked so angry, he arrogantly said, "This is my own face. It can't be changed!" I was so stunned.

I am worried that his attitude will affect my daughter's personality. I really need some help. How should I deal with him from now on? (Saitama Prefecture, Ms. Y-ko)

Human beings are a mysterious thing. There are various kinds of people in the world. Ms. Y-ko has a problem that she cannot directly discuss with others. I am sure she wishes to lead a blessed family life.

Then, who is a blessed person? Is the person blessed if he/she has no problems in life? Or are they blessed if problems are solved? Certainly, that would be the blessed case.

However, as time goes on, other problems can arise. A certain person said, **"People live their lives with their own problems."**

By the way, Jesus Christ said a strange thing. That is today's text. The theme is "Who Is the Blessed Person?"

Let us study today's text that Jesus taught.

Main Points

1. **Two Perspectives**

1) **The Blessed People who See From Jesus' Perspective**

① **The people who are poor**

6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

② **The people who are hungry**

6:21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

According to Jewish tradition, **the poor and hungry** does not simply mean hungry, but rather a humble person who is poor in heart.

③ **The people who are weeping**

6:21 "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Sadness turning into laughter means that sadness can be beneficial.

④ **The people who are persecuted**

6:22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!”

My friends, this is not what we usually think of as a **blessed person**. However, Jesus called those who have these four kinds of pain, **blessed people**.

Jesus said as below,

6:23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

Jesus said the strange thing, **“Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy.”**

That day is the day when **the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and the persecuted** will experience great blessing. Jesus taught, **“Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy.”**

Why are they able to leap up and rejoice?

The reason is ⇒ Jesus said, **“your reward is great in heaven.”**

Jesus said that there will be a great reward in heaven on that day because they experienced those four things. His perspective is different from ours.

Generally, we do not have this kind of perspective. But Jesus teaches us that our life does not end with this life alone. He teaches that there is life after death. Our present life is shorter than the life after death.

The Psalm records as below,

Psalm 90:9 For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

90:10 The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Jesus taught from a heavenly perspective, not from the limited, short life on earth. But on the other hand, Jesus also taught that there are **wretched people**.

2) The Wretched People From the Perspective of Jesus

① The rich

6:24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

② The people who are full

6:25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

③ The people who laugh

6:25 “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

④ **The people who are spoken well of by other people**

6:26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

My friends, Jesus said these four types of people are **the wretched people**. The criteria for the blessed people according to Jesus’ perspective is quite different. Why are there such differences (discrepancy)?

{Illustration}

I am sure you are all familiar with the game called the Chinese Whisper. For example, 10 people are lined up in a row. The first person passes on a sentence to the second person, who passes on the sentence he or she heard to the third person. The second person then passes on the sentence he/she heard to the third person.

In this way, the message is passed on in sequence to the tenth person. Then, the sentence passed on by the first person and the sentence heard by the tenth person are often very different. The words may even be completely different, which may surprise us.

Why does the Chinese Whisper make such a discrepancy? It is because the last person did not hear the text directly from the first person.

The transmission of lore and texts changes in this way. The reason is that we are imperfect and unable to hear things accurately.

In the same way, the Word of the Bible will make a difference unless we hear it directly from Jesus. It is essential to hear the words of Jesus directly.

The one standard that will never change ⇒ the Bible, the Word of God.

The Word of the Bible never changes.

1Peter 1: 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls,

1:25 but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

Where do we put our perspectives and what do we hear in life? It is important. We see things differently depending on where we place our perspective.

We learn here are two contrasting views.

2. Two Contrasting Perspectives

1) The Perspective Concerned About ‘The Now’

I am rich now. It is good to be rich now. It is good because I am valued now. I am stable now, I am good, etc.

It is important to consider the perspective concerned about **now**. However, how long will 'the now' continue? Do you focus on only now? Is there any guarantee there?

{Illustration}

One of the major problems of today's youth is that they do not understand the purpose of life. What purpose were we born for? For what purpose do we study? Why do we work? And why do we get married?

They do not have any answers to the basic questions of life. Neither their schoolteachers nor their parents teach them. Therefore, young people of the same generation tend to fall into the ephemeral thinking that all they have to do is to enjoy the now.

According to data released by the National Police Agency in 2022, there were 161 middle and high school students who were caught in possession of marijuana. This number has rapidly increased approximately 16-fold in the past 10 years.

Lots of false information that marijuana is safe have been posted on social networking sites. The spread of marijuana among young people is becoming more serious. Experts say that false information such as marijuana is safe is spreading and people are becoming less aware of its illegality.

As you know, some members of Nihon University's athletic department were found to have possessed and used marijuana, which has now become a major problem that is shaking the entire university. Young people must be momentarily intoxicated with the happiness of the moment from 'the now' point of view.

We see only from the perspective of **now**. Those who can only see 'the now' may experience company bankruptcy, separation from close friends, etc., because they see only now and easily trust others.

There is no guarantee that everything will be okay in this world. There is no perfect guarantee except from God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. There is no perfect and complete society on earth. Why is this? It is because what we think and measure in our hearts is not right. Please remember that it is only a temporary aspect if we only look at **the now**. And there are no guarantees there.

Let us consider another point.

2) The Perspective of 'In Due Time' —Eyes to See the Future—

The human perspective tends to focus on a single point, **now**. And we tend to compare ourselves with others and can become depressed.

The Bible teaches that **God created the world and human beings**. On top of that, He has the master plan. ⇒ **The plan of salvation by Jesus Christ**

Those who believe in God are able to receive the immeasurable wisdom of God. And their lives come to begin in a new way. Because they start to see things with different perspectives.

Even if their lives seem to be unhappy now, God will bless them.

How should we, who can only see the now, live our lives?

How should we live, who can see only now?

⇒ Jesus taught us how to live.

We are able to learn the truth from the natural world.

Proverb 6:6 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

6:7 Without having any chief, officer, or ruler,

6:8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest

God teaches us to learn from the diligent ant. ⇒ It is the perspective of 'in due time.'

① In the heat of summer, when no one wants to work hard, the ants are still working to secure food. And in the fall, when the harvest is ready, they gather food! ⇒ **Wisdom**

② A way of life that has the viewpoint of 'in due time' can provide wisdom for living even in a society that is chaotic and full of sorrow and suffering.

"Who is the blessed person?" ⇒ The person who lives a wise life with the perspective of an ant.

* My dear friends, what perspective do we have ?

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Who Is the Blessed Person?"

—A Wise Way of Living—

Today we have learned from Jesus' teachings and messages.

It is the way of life that shifts from 'the **now**' perspective to the 'in due time' perspective. It is the life of a wise person.

The life of **'in due time'** creates the next life of **now**.

That person will be the one who lives with a good rhythm of life. It is these people who are blessed.

6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

* God bless you!