



Luke 6:24–26

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 everyone
speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors
treated the false prophets.

Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

I was struck some time ago when I watched a video on YouTube of a man who was colour-blind. He was given these glasses which apparently allow those who are colour-blind to see the world in its true brightness and clarity. At first the guy was pretty sceptical. He was outside in a park when he received the gift and laughed at the idea that these glasses would do what they promised. None the less, he was being a good sport and he went along with it. He was chattering away to his friend who was filming, but as soon as the glasses went on he went silent. He swore and looked over to the cameraman as if to

seek reassurance that this was really happening. He then starts to shift his gaze to the trees, the sky, the lake, the grass and before long he starts crying. To see the world as it really is, is a rare blessing. To see true colours for the first time brought tears to this man's eyes.

It was the British novelist, poet and academic C.S Lewis who wrote: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

The Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Luke in his sixth chapter is just this. It is Jesus, the Son of God, giving us a lens through which to see the world as it really is. And what is so confronting is that it's not what we thought. Once we've adjust-

ed to it, there is a beauty that will bring a tear to any eye, but first there is silence as we calibrate ourselves and try and piece together what Jesus is actually saying.

Jesus has just bestowed a word of blessing on the poor, the hungry, those who weep and those who are hated because of him. “For great,” he says, “is their reward in heaven.” Not so with those who think that this life is all there is and have thus structured everything accordingly - around comfort, wealth and status. For those people Jesus declares ‘woe to you’.

In a city like Sydney, this seems almost laughable, doesn't it? You're telling me that everything we hold up to be true and meaningful is off course? That comfort, wealth and status are the wrong horizon

to be setting my sails for? It's interesting that here in Luke 6 Jesus is quite upfront that there are good experiences to be had in comfort, wealth and status but his point is that these things are temporary and if they fill up your horizon now, you will lose them for eternity.

I guess that's the thing about God's upside down kingdom, it looks so different to our kingdoms that at first we are forced into silence as we try and make sense of what it's all about. Could it really be that we have mixed up what's really important? For some of us this silence may need to be sat in for a while. These words from Jesus today are confronting and unsettling. But as we start to see the real shape of God's Kingdom where does this leave us? What is the line that separates those who are

comfortably heading for destruction and those who are being changed by God's upside down Kingdom?

Jesus doesn't give the answer here.

Perhaps that is because these words are for each one of us to mediate over and respond in our own way? For some Christians it has meant stepping out of their employment and pursuing full-time ministry as a vocation. Others have remained in their professions seeing themselves 'on mission' in their workplace, subverting the Sydney landscape with God's upside down kingdom. Others have responded to God's kingdom by moving overseas to share the message of Jesus in other countries and still others have stayed here but chosen against pursuing their career to the very top because they foresaw it

would strip them of the time, space and humanity they needed to love their families and be a blessing to their church.

There is no one way to respond to God's upside down Kingdom because each of our lives are so very different. But the key is that we are allowing God to redefine what we see as most important. And with our new Gospel lens we start to make new daily choices.

If nothing else from this passage today we hear Jesus dire warning to those of us who are focussing on our own kingdoms now, that this course of action will not end well.

Think & Pray

Why not take some time today to reflect and pray over this warning from Jesus. It's not comfortable but it is necessary and I think that once we can see the colours and contours of God's Kingdom it may give us a whole new lens through which to revalue our lives, our purpose, our workplaces, our friends and our ultimate horizon towards which we set the sails of our daily lives.