



## **Luke 6:22–23**

22 Blessed are you when people 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 ancestors treated the prophets.

# Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Justin Mof-fatt)

Our passage today, in the middle of this famous sermon from Jesus, is classically dissonant. Meaning, it jars with our experience of life and it jolts our minds. It is counterintuitive. Perhaps irony is the right word for this text, and the context of this passage. Listen closely. It's in Luke 6:22-23. Just two verses:

22 Blessed are you when people  
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 ancestors treated the prophets.

'Blessed' is the counterintuitive word here. Followed closely by 'rejoice'. Let me read verse 22 out to you again, but this time, I'll replace the word 'blessed' with the word 'miserable'.

22 [Miserable] are you when people hate you,  
when they exclude you and insult you  
and reject your name as evil,  
because of the Son of Man.

That makes more sense and accords more

strongly with our experience. It's simply not fun to be hated. It is not fun to be excluded or insulted. It's not fun to have your name rejected at all, let alone as evil. Isn't that one of the most obvious things to say?

And yet Jesus says the opposite. It is the same as he has just said (listen to yesterday's message and listen again tomorrow). You could do the same thing in Verse 20-21.

20 Looking at his disciples, he said:

'[Miserable] are you who are poor...

21 [Miserable] are you who hunger now...

[Miserable] are you who weep now...

The reason you are blessed is because

of God. God is looking. And God notices. And God takes care of your future. His Kingdom is now, and his Kingdom awaits you. So you can experience pain now – even walk towards it – knowing that the pain and suffering, and persecution, will end. And you will be on the right side of History because of the Son. Listen again:

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.

And in our text today, but our ‘because of’ comes last:

22 Blessed are you when people  
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 ances-  
tors treated the prophets.

One writer was very helpful for me: he re-  
called a movie he saw many years ago.  
It was a movie about the first test pilots  
to break the sound barrier. No plane had  
ever flown faster than the speed of sound.  
And every plane that did lost control of  
the steering and disintegrated. Finally, at  
the climax of the movie, a test pilot took a

counterintuitive guess. It seemed that every time the plane hit the sound barrier, the controls worked backwards.

So, with great daring, when the pilot approached the sound barrier, instead of pulling the lever up, he thrust it forwards, which would normally make the plane go into a dive. But his hunch was correct: He thrust the controls forward, the plane's nose lifted, and he went faster than anyone had been before.

Now, the story is profoundly inaccurate. I wish it were true. But if it were accurate, it would be a graphic illustration of what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is taking the normal controls, and making them work backwards. Jesus is taking his people through a 'sound barrier' to a new place.

Somewhere they had never been before. Somewhere that is counter to culture. So different. So new. He is taking them to the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of the Son. But the path there is through suffering. That was true for the prophets of old:

23 'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

As the writer of Hebrews says:

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.' Heb 12:1



But it's not just the Prophets. It's Jesus himself, your saviour and your model:

22 Blessed are you when people hate you,  
when they exclude you and insult you  
and reject your name as evil,  
because of the Son of Man.

Because this (suffering, then glory) is the path of the Son of Man, who 'for the joy set before him, endured the Cross, scorning its shame, and then sat down at the right hand of God' (Heb 12:2)

## **Think & Pray**

Do you want to be blessed? The Gospel starts with you being 'unhappy' about

the way things are, and 'thirsty' for God to change things, and being prepared for persecution. Are you ready for pain? If persecution were to come, are you ready, and willing to stand? John Bunyan: 'God's people are like bells; the harder they are hit, the better they sound.'

Ask God to make you ready. Ask him to make you more like the Son. Ask him to give you strength not to fade the moment persecution comes. Ask him to make your heart 'good soil', as in Mark 4, which bears fruit. For Jesus warns us in the Parable of the Soils:

Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short

time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Mark 4:16

May it not be so for us. May the Son of Man be alive in our hearts.