

Happiness Is an Inside Job

Luke 6:20-23

The word *blessed* is a great word. Unfortunately, it is often misused and misunderstood. Sometimes we use it to terminate a conversation - "Well, that's great. Wow. Hey, praise the Lord and *God bless you.*" Common translation: "Please stop talking now." Our culture understands the word 'blessings,' but *blessed* is something only a child of God truly knows. This word, used four times in our text, is the Greek word *makarios*, which means to be happy or blissful, or more precisely, *self-contained happiness*. The Greeks called the Island of Cypress "*the happy isle.*" The ancients believed that because of the island's perfect geographical location, climate, and fertile soil that anyone who lived on Cypress had it completely made! The term they associated with the island was *makarios*. So, too, those who follow Jesus 'have it made!' We are self-contained and happy regardless of what is happening to us externally.

I. This principle of happiness being an inside job is declared by Paul.

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in" (Phil. 4:11). The word *circumstances* is not in the original. I have learned *in what (who) I am* to be happy. Question: "Who are you?"
"But by the grace of God, I am what I am: and his grace given to me is not in vain" (I Cor. 15:10).
 It is only in Christ that you can be genuinely happy. It is only because of God's grace true pleasure is realized. The word "learned" means "to unlock the mystery of." That's the 'mystery of His grace!'

II. This principle of happiness being an inside job is described by Jesus.

(A). He speaks of a *blessed beggar* - "*Blessed are you who are poor (in spirit).*"

Matthew makes it "poor in spirit." Most of the early disciples were physically poor, but Jesus is speaking of spiritual poverty. *The greater part of mankind are insensible of this their condition.* They think themselves rich (before God). Those *blessed* are those poor in their own spirits, in their own sense, apprehension, and judgment: and are called beggars - "God be merciful."

(B). He speaks of a *blessed starver* - "*blessed are you who hunger (for righteousness) now.*"

This is mourning for the sins of others, for the sins of the world, the profaneness and wickedness that abound in it; and more especially for the sins of professors, by reason of which, the name of God, and ways of Christ, are evil spoken of. here in this life, by the God of all comfort, by Christ the comforter; by the Spirit of God, whose work and office it is to comfort; by the Scriptures of truth, which are written for their consolation; and they shall be comforted hereafter.

(C). He speaks of a *blessed mourner* - "*blessed are you when you weep now.*"

Under afflictions and pressures of life, and mourn for sin, their own, and others: be filled with spiritual joy and pleasure, and be comforted with the consolations of the Spirit; For sin, for their own sins; the sin of their nature, indwelling sin, which is always working in them, and is a continual grief of mind to them; the unbelief of their hearts, notwithstanding the many instances, declarations, promises, and discoveries of grace made unto them; their daily

(D). He speaks of a *blessed sufferer* - "*Blessed are you when men hate you...for the sake of the Son.*"

For the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: They will cast you out (Jews casting followers of Jesus out of their assembly). They will cast your name into reproach and attempt to ruin your reputation.

III. This principle of happiness being an inside job is dramatic for us.

It takes away the ability to point your finger and blame somebody else for your pain. When I can take complete ownership of the troubles within me, then I'm on the road to real recovery in life. "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion to the day of Christ" (Phil.1:7). This is a message of hope, confidence and encouragement. Ask Christ to do the dirty work inside.