

November 6 2016

Scripture Lesson

Ephesians 1:11-23

Luke 6:20-31

Sermon *Blessed Are....*

The Beatitudes that are found in Luke that Ann read for us this morning have a twist to them. Not only does Luke tell us who is blessed which is what we are used to hearing but he goes on to add woes to the blessings. “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” he writes but then he counters it with “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.” “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.” “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.” “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.” There is a trend there. We can understand the blessed verses for we know that Luke is telling us that God looks out for those who are less fortunate and takes care of them. But is He really saying that those of us, who are not poor, are not hungry, are not sad, are chopped liver so to speak? I think not. It is a way to warn us that what we have is not enough for the long haul. There is more to life than riches, more than laughter and good food, and more than cheap praise.

It is another way to tell us that we can be rich, we can, not want for anything, we just need to remember how we handle the blessings that we have already. What is the greatest commandment? We are to love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, with all our minds, and with all our souls. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

This passage intrigued me but I was curious, so I read further in chapter 6 of Luke. Verses 37 through 38, read as follows: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” I will read that last sentence again. “A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” What a great analogy. Can you visualize that? The more that we bless others; the more that we will be blessed in return. Now I know that sometimes it is easier said than done. It is really hard to not judge someone who is not the same as you are, it is really hard to not condemn someone who has committed a crime for instance, it is not easy to forgive someone who has hurt you deeply, and it is not easy to give at times. But we have to remember that God wants us to walk the same walk that Jesus did and go beyond

what we are thinking in our heads and do what we are thinking in our hearts. Be the one that doesn't judge, doesn't condemn, forgives, and gives.

Next in the chapter is the parable of the blind person guiding a blind person. Verse 39 says "He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?" Can you visualize that? It could be quite comical. I am thinking it would have been a great trick to play on my younger siblings but I promise you I wouldn't have let them fall into a pit or run into a tree or.... The parable goes on to read: "A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher." What Jesus is trying to explain to us is that a guide must be able to see better than those they are leading and a teacher must first demonstrate in his own life the truths he is trying to teach another. In other words, if you are going to talk the talk, you need to walk the walk. Before we can try to pass judgment upon others, we need to judge ourselves. Are we walking the walk or just talking?

Chapter 6 finishes with the parable of the house on a solid foundation. It reads as follows: "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house." This is another good example of walking the walk. The house built on a solid foundation illustrates those who read the word of God and follow it, our lives back up our beliefs. The house without the foundation is like a person who talks the talk but doesn't walk the walk. His life has no foundation. We need to remember to have our "house" be on a solid foundation because inevitably a storm will come and we need to be ready.

To close, remember the words of Luke as you go about your week to come. If you are leading someone, make sure you yourself are not "blind." As I told the kids make sure your tree is bearing good fruit. Make sure your "house" is built on a solid foundation. Finally "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Amen