

Riley Boggs – February 8, 2026

## **“In Light of Eternity” – Luke 6:12-26**

### **Introduction**

The Bible, and the Christian life, are full of paradox. A paradox is when something that seems to be contradictory, but upon further investigating, turns out to be true. It's when you hear something said and you immediately think, there is no way both of those things can be true at the same, and yet they are. In the Christian life we run into these ideas all the time. For example, we say that to die to ourselves is to live. At first glance that doesn't seem possible. How does dying to self, cause us to live? And yet, we know that to be true. When we deny our fleshly desires, die to ourselves, that is when we truly become alive in Christ. Paul goes even further than that and says what? He says that to die is to gain. Again, that seems impossible, and yet it is true.

There's a beautiful prayer about this paradoxical Christian reality that can be found in a collection of Puritan Prayers called the "The Valley of Vision". I'd like to read it for us this morning. And as I read it, I want you to think about this idea of Paradox. It says this,

“Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly,  
Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision,  
where I live in the depths but see Thee in the heights;  
hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory.  
Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up,  
that to be low is to be high,  
that the broken heart is the healed heart,

that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,  
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,  
that to have nothing is to possess all,  
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,  
that to give is to receive,  
that the valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,  
and the deeper the wells the brighter Thy stars shine;  
let me find Thy light in my darkness,  
Thy life in my death,  
Thy joy in my sorrow,  
Thy grace in my sin,  
Thy riches in my poverty,  
Thy glory in my valley.”

When we hear that, we can be tempted to think, but that can't be. Those things are opposed! That's the question I want to consider this morning. Why are these kinds of Biblical truths so hard to believe at times? After all, we are people of the Word. If the Bible says it, we believe it. So why do we struggle with the paradoxical truths? I think the reason we struggle to believe them at times is because most of these truths won't find their resolution until eternity. That is, we won't know the full blessing until we die, or the Lord returns, and we are with Christ. And so often, what happens is that we forget to live with eternity in mind, and as a result, we live as if these things are not actually true. We live as if

the only things that are true, the only things that really exist, are the things that I am experiencing right now.

This morning we are going to look at the first part of a sermon that Jesus preached. In verses 12-19 we read about how Jesus chose His 12 apostles, and the scene is set for this sermon. And then for the rest of chapter 5, verses 20-49, we see the sermon that Jesus preached. This morning we are only going to look at the first half of this sermon. And in this first half, as you just heard me read, Jesus preaches a sermon full of paradoxical truths. Not only that, but He tells those present to live with these truths in mind. So, that's my goal this for us this morning. My goal is for us to be reminded of what is true, despite our doubts and hesitations, and encourage us to live with these truths in mind.

So, the first thing I want us to see this morning is this.

### **1.) Jesus is able to, and does, bless with earthly blessings**

Look in your Bibles with me starting in verse 12. The text starts off by Luke telling us that Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and that He prayed all night. Now we don't know what it is specifically that He was so earnestly praying for, but the text reads as if He was praying concerning the decision that He knew He was going to make the following day. That is, the decision of who would be the 12 apostles among all of those who had been following Him.

Then we see the results of that decision starting in verse 14. Out of those following Him, Jesus chose these men to be apostles. <sup>14</sup>Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup>and Matthew, and Thomas,

and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, <sup>16</sup>and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” He chooses these 12 and then, in verse 17, we read that He comes down with them and stands on a level place, which is where we get the “sermon on the mount.”

But something happens before He preaches doesn't it? What happens? It says that people from all over had come to hear Him preach and teach. Not only that, but they had come so that they might be healed of all their diseases and unclean spirits. And in verse 19 we read that the crowd starts to press in around Him. They are pressing in, trying to get close to Him, because they know that if they can just touch Jesus, then they would be healed. So they press in and seek to touch Him, and when they do, they are healed. And in verse 19 Luke says that Jesus didn't heal some, but He healed them all. Power went out from Him as they touched Him, and He healed every one of them.

Now before we go on to Jesus' sermon, I want to establish this point well for us, because I think it sets up the rest of our text. When you read this and hear of Jesus healing all of these people simply by them touching Him, do you begin to think, “Man, I wish Jesus still did this.” Do you think, “If only Jesus still healed people like this. If only Jesus were still doing miraculous things for people who are troubled.” If that's you, if you read this and begin to think in those ways, I want to encourage you to reconsider. There is a sense in which Jesus is healing in such a miraculous way so that He can establish His ministry and validate the claims that He is making. You can find another example of this just chapter prior in Luke 5. Jesus says to the paralytic man, “Your sins are forgiven”. And then, to prove that He has the ability to forgive sins, He tells the man to stand up and walk, and He does.

He's demonstrating the fact that He is God and He is the Christ by doing these miraculous things.

So in that sense, yes, this is a unique time. But what I want to encourage you to remember is that though this time is unique, Jesus can, and does, still bless us with earthly blessings. He stills heals, He cleanses, and He still provides for us earthly pleasures. That has not ceased. Here's how I know this. I know this because Jesus is sovereign, currently, over every single thing in your life. And that means, no matter the "method" by which you were healed, it was Jesus working in and through it. Let me give you an example of what I mean by that.

Let's say that you get the diagnoses that you have cancer. You get the diagnoses and then you begin treatment. You go through the chemo and the radiation treatments for a while and then go back to see if the cancer has continued to spread or if it's going in remission. So you go and they check, and they tell you that it looks like the treatment is working and that your cancer is indeed in remission. In that moment, we could be tempted to think that it was the treatment that healed you. And in one sense that is true. But what I want us to see here is that the Lord is sovereign over the treatment. He is the one who caused it to be effective. He is the one who caused, through the treatment, for you to be healed and your cancer stop spreading. The Lord is the one who has healed you.

But so often we can be guilty of speaking in these scientific ways and leaving the Lord out of it. We think and say that it was the doctor or this medicine or this diet or whatever it is that brought about healing. Which, in one sense, is true. But what we fail to recognize, or at least momentarily forget, is that it is God who is using all of those things to heal you. And

if we do that, we can even end up directing our thanksgiving to other things, instead of directing it to the Lord who has brought us healing. We worship the means by which the Lord healed us instead of the Lord Himself. And not only that, but when we read stories like this one, we can think that Jesus has ceased to work in such amazing ways. That is just simply is not the case. Jesus has not changed, He is still able, and does, bless us with earthly blessings. He heals and He provides. Sometimes in the miraculous ways, but more times in mundane ways. In both, it is the Lord. We cannot forget that.

Now you might have a question pop into your head. You might begin to think, “Okay, but what if the Lord doesn’t bless us with earthly blessings? What if we aren’t healed? what if we find ourselves not having enough? What if we are sorrowful? What our life seems to have a serious lack of earthly blessings?” If that’s the case, and I know it has been and is and will be for many here, then I want you to know that even in that, you are still blessed. I think that is what Jesus is saying in the beginning of this sermon, and it is our second point this morning.

## **2.) Even when we lack earthly blessings, we are blessed**

This is one of those paradoxical claims, and I think it’s the one that Jesus is making in verses 20-26. It shouldn’t be lost on us that Jesus is trying to teach the apostles something right away. They have just seen Him heal all these people and then His sermon seems to speak in a totally different way. In fact I think that is precisely what we are supposed to see in this text. We could see Jesus healing these people and simply saying that Jesus is good and is demonstrating His power over demonic spirits and sickness. Both of things, and

more, are true and could be drawn out of this text. However, I think it's this contrast, this paradox, between Jesus healing and His sermon that makes this text so powerful. So what we have in this part of the sermon is 4 blessings followed by 4 woes, or troubles. Look at the blessings with me, starting in verse 20. Jesus says, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.<sup>22</sup> 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!<sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets."

When you think about the person being described here in these blessings, what do you think of them? If someone is poor, hungry, weeping, and hated, would you call them blessed? I know the world wouldn't call them blessed, that is certain, because the world equates blessing to earthly blessing, and this person seems to have none of it. And yet, Jesus says this person is blessed. He says blessed are you who are poor, hungry, weeping, and hated.

Then he flips it in the woes. He says these things in the negative. Look at it with me, starting in verse 24. Jesus says, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation."<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.<sup>26</sup> Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." Now, when you think about this person, what do you think of them? Would you call them blessed? Someone who is rich, full (not hungry), is

laughing, and who is spoke well of. Again, the world would. The world would say that this person has it all, they've arrived. Of course they are blessed. Would you think that?

If we are honest, if these 2 people were standing in front of us, we would call the second man blessed and the first man cursed. Why is that? It's because we have equated blessing only to what we can see. We have equated blessing only to what we have right now, in our possession. The reality is that things aren't always as they seem. Actually, Jesus tells us it is exactly opposite as it seems. The poor, hungry, weeping, hated, man is blessed. The rich, full, laughing, loved, man needs to walk with caution, for He is not blessed.

Now let me be clear on this. Jesus isn't that that if you want to be blessed, you need to make your life resemble that of the first man. He isn't saying that we need to impoverish ourselves and become hungry and hated. It isn't those things that cause the blessing. Rather, what He is saying is that true blessing is found by the one who knows Christ and therefore knows there future reality. To know, and to be known by, Christ is to know true blessing. And that person will spend all eternity with Him where there is no lack. This is why the poor man will inherit the Kingdom, why the hungry man will be satisfied, why the weeping man will laugh, and why the hated man will rejoice with great reward. Because He will be welcomed into the Kingdom of God because of what Christ has done on His behalf.

On the other hand, the one who has it all now, who does not know Christ, their eternity will be the opposite of what they have. For the rich man will receive no more, the full man will become hungry, the laughing man will mourn and weep, and the loved man will be

rejected. All of this because He has rejected Christ. So who is blessed here? What does true blessing look like? How then should we live in light of this?

That's how I want to spend the remainder of our time this morning, sort of applying this paradoxical truth that Jesus is laying out for us. The first way that I think we should apply this truth to our own lives is this, our third point this morning.

### **3.) We must guard our hearts in times of abundance**

This truth will be a theme throughout Jesus' ministry, and I think it is part of what He is trying to teach those listening here. It is easy to recognize the Lord's provision for you in times where you have run out and you must rely on Him. When you can't provide for yourself and you are forced to call out to the Lord to come to your aid, when He does, your heart is prone to thanksgiving. I know many of you have stories like this, where you have come to the end of what you have, turned to God, and He has made provision. When that happens, worship seems to naturally flow from us. We cry out, "Thank you Lord for what you have given me!"

On the other hand, when it seems that we have no lack, when we have enough, or even more than enough, our hearts are prone to self-exaltation and reliance on self. Both of which are like poison to the Christian. Self-exaltation and reliance on self are lethal to the believer and stand directly opposed to the Gospel.

This is why Jesus is giving these woes to those who think they have everything now. He knows that those who think they need nothing are the ones who will have a hard time seeing their dependence on God. They will have a hard time looking outside of themselves

for blessing and salvation. They think that they have it all, what more could they need? I'm rich, full, happy, and loved. What more could a man want, right? A man like this will not quickly look outside of himself for anything. And the issue is that if you look within, you will never find what you truly need. There is no salvation within us. There is no forgiveness of sins buried inside our hearts.

Later on in Jesus' ministry He will say, "<sup>25</sup>For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." He says this not because those who are rich can't be saved and can't enter the kingdom of God. No, the reason He says this is because in times of abundance the temptation is to turn from God and to turn to ourselves, and in that, there is no salvation.

For us, in a nation of great prosperity, we have to be very careful. We have to guard our hearts. We live in a nation that says if you work hard enough, you will have enough. And if you don't have enough, work harder. Now what I don't want you to hear is that working hard is a bad thing, it's not, it's a very good thing. It's what God has commanded of us. We ought to work unto the Lord and that means we work hard and we work well. I'm not trying to diminish that truth. But what I want you to hear this morning is that we do not work hard so that we can be a bunch of self-reliant people. We work hard because it pleases God. And do know what that means? It means that we work hard even when it means we don't have enough. Now I know that's hard for us to even comprehend in our context, because like I said, we live in a nation that says if you work hard enough, you will have enough. And if you don't have enough, work hard, and then you'll enough.

But the reality is that there are people throughout all of history and today who couldn't work any hard and they have never had enough. They couldn't get another job. They couldn't put in more hours. They couldn't work any harder. And those people, when they gathered around the dinner table with hardly any food, do you know what they do? They look to the heavens and thank God for everything that sits before them. Not because it's routine, but because they know that it was the Lord who provided for them.

I don't know what it looks like for each of you to guard your heart from this. Some of you have more, some of you have less, and neither are an indication of where your heart is. In the early days of our marriage, we had very little money. I mean we're church planters, we still have very little, but it was even littler then. But I remember the Lord showing me that I had such a tight grasp on what we did have because I thought that because I had earned it myself, it was mine. But isn't that what the heart will do? It's prone to self-exaltation. So no matter what your situation is, I would simply encourage you to think on these things and heed the warning that Jesus is giving here. Ask the Lord to instill a heart of thankfulness within, no matter your situation.

The other way I think we can apply the text, and our fourth point this morning is this,

#### **4.) We must live with eternity in mind**

Recently, I bought an old rusty truck with the intention of trying to slowly restore it. I have always wanted to do this, and the opportunity presented itself, so I went for it. But before I bought the truck, one of the things I told Shelby is that I didn't want to let it consume me. I wanted the whole restoration process to take time, maybe teach me some

patience. I wanted to have some problems that I couldn't fix immediately, that I just had to sit with and wait. I knew that I needed that kind of thing and I knew that I couldn't let my slightly addictive personality take over, so I told Shelby to help keep me accountable there.

So, I bought the truck and drove it all the way home, and immediately after I put it in park, the brake pedal went to the floor. The brakes went out. First of all, thank the Lord for not letting that happen any earlier than it did. Upon further inspection, one of the mechanisms in the wheel had corroded to the point that all the brake fluid leaked out and the brakes were completely gone. So, I took off the wheel and accessed the situation and was immediately overwhelmed. I felt in over my head. Everything was rusted to pieces and falling apart and I knew that this wasn't going to be an easy task.

Do you know what I did after that? I did exactly what I said I shouldn't do. I let it consume me. All I could think about was how I was going to fix it and the parts I needed and the tools I needed and so on and so forth. And as it consumed my thoughts, I found myself being a little more anxious than before, much quicker to respond in frustration, and not being able to do other things well. I couldn't stop thinking about this dumb truck. I was transfixed on it, and as a result, it negatively affected all different parts of my life.

Thankfully, Shelby helped me see this and it doesn't do this anymore. I can happily report that my progress now is incredibly slow, and it spends the vast majority of its time leaking oil in our driveway.

But the point is this. This same thing happens no matter what we fix our mind on. If you live your entire life with only this present reality on your mind, you will find yourself struggling. There's always going to be another problem, another pain, another something.

The brokenness of this world is going to weigh on you, heavily. Yes, there will be wonderful moments that will give you times of reprieve, but the hard things will indeed come. Our world is too broken and too sinful to allow anyone to be exempt from this.

And this is why we must all live our lives with eternity in mind. Though at times it might seem like this world is all there is, brothers and sisters, that is so far from the truth. The reality is that you are an eternal soul residing in an earthly body. And for those in Christ, there will be a day where your soul will be reunited with a perfected body, and you will live an eternity full of endless joy. That day is coming and what our Lord is telling us here is that we must live our lives with that in mind.

I was reminded by a great pastor by the name of Lee Tankersley that this means we must weigh and judge everything in this life with eternity. That is, take whatever it is you are experiencing right now and set it on one side of the scale. Then take what you know to be true for you for all eternity, because you are a child of God, and set it on the other side of the scale. Then step back and look. When you feel overwhelmed by the burdens of this world, consider your eternity to come where you will never be burdened again. When you are tired and weary, consider your eternity to come where you will never tire and never grow weary. When you are poor, consider that yours is the kingdom of God. When you are hungry, consider that you will be satisfied. When you are sad, consider that you will laugh. When you are hated and mocked, particularly for being identified with Christ, consider that God loves you, saved you, and that your reward is great.

If we live with these things in mind, eternal truths, then we will begin to live like the blessed people that we are. We will be more bold for the Gospel. We will take more risk for

the sake of Christ. We will be more ready and willing to sacrifice for our brothers and sisters. All of those things will come more readily for the one who lives with these eternal truths in mind.

I'd like for us to look at Psalm 126. If you would, turn there will me and follow along as I read. The Word of the Lord says this, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. <sup>2</sup>Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."<sup>3</sup>The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.<sup>4</sup>Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! <sup>5</sup>Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! <sup>6</sup>He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

Those who sow weeping, will reap endless joy. If you are in Christ, that is true of you. Every single moment of your life, no matter how difficult, no matter how deep the pain, no matter any of that, every single moment of your life does not even budge the scales when weighed against the joy of eternity before us. Let us live with this in mind.