

EVALUATING OUR LIVES ACCORDING TO “THAT DAY”

Luke 6:20–23 (NKJV)

²⁰Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: “Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.

²²Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake.

²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

- “Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said...” – *The phrase “He lifted up His eyes” in Greek conveys the idea “to direct one’s attention to something by looking at it closely.”*
- *As Jesus turned His full attention toward His disciples, He conveyed some truths that would be very important for their lives and their future success in the calling God had for their lives.*
- *I can just picture Jesus with His eyes full of love and compassion for His disciples, looking up at them to share some foundational principles of the kingdom of God, beginning with, “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”*
- *This poverty is not referring to financial poverty, but the realization that without Christ we are incapable of doing anything.*
- *When the Holy Spirit drew us to faith in Jesus Christ the first thing He revealed was our sinful state and that we were morally bankrupt.*
- *This truth led us to confess that we were sinners.*
- *Recognizing our impoverished state, we turned to Christ and put our faith in Him and all He did for us at Calvary. As a result we received the blessing of salvation and became part of His kingdom.*
- *Without the blessing of realizing our impoverished state we would never have come to Christ and we would never have been saved.*

- *“Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God,” This principle goes far beyond just entering into salvation. It extends to walking in a lifetime of victory.*
- *The principle of “Blessed are the poor” really provides the foundation for us to do great things for God, because it causes us to be totally dependent upon Him for everything in our lives, so that we can accomplish “kingdom work.”*
- *In the kingdom of God the only things that can be accomplished are by the grace of God.*
- *Self-effort and man’s plans never produce eternal things nor will they result in the manifestation of God’s kingdom in our lives.*
- *Apostle Paul understood the principle of “blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” when he said in 2 Corinthians 12:9–10, “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*
- *In 2 Corinthians 12, Apostle Paul was sharing about a time in his life when he was faced with a persistent and difficult situation which revealed his weaknesses and frailty, and he “pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart” from him. (verse 8).*
- *We may rephrase Paul’s pleading with the Lord this way: “Just remove this thing or situation from my life and I will be so happy and carefree.”*
- *However, true happiness and contentment are never found in the circumstances of life, but in a vibrant and close relationship with Christ.*
- *God was about to reveal to Paul a precious truth that would enhance his spiritual life and launch him into a victorious life and ministry that would shape the Church.*
- *Paul’s ministry would result in him writing one third of the New Testament and laying out the foundation and framework to understand God’s grace.*

- *The natural man likes to feel strong and have self-confidence, but here Paul was faced with a situation that made him aware of his own weaknesses and frailties. After pleading with God three times, the Lord revealed one of the secrets of His kingdom, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”*
- *The Lord framed the answer to why God didn’t remove “this thorn in the flesh” with the principle “Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.”*
- *God answered “No” to Paul’s pleading. God wanted His grace to be perfectly and fully manifested in Paul’s life. This state of grace can only occur when one is totally surrendered and dependent on God.*
- *Once Paul understood why God allowed him to be aware of his own weaknesses, his response changed completely, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*
- *Paul didn’t embrace his weaknesses. He embraced the grace God had given him so the power of Christ could fully rest on him.*
- *Paul’s focus was no longer on his weaknesses or afflictions, but on the grace of God that was released in his life as he fully yielded to God.*
- *What joy and anticipation we can have as we look to God to do great things through us, so His kingdom can advance, storm the gates of Hell, and we’ll see many people come to Christ.*
- *The same circumstances, which once caused Paul to plead with God to remove, Paul now embraced saying, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses.” Paul was not masochistic “for Christ’s sake.” Paul now knew the secret, “For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*
- *One can see a familiar pattern in Christians’ lives and Christian ministries. When a person first receives Christ and is totally dependent and in love with Jesus, the grace of God flows beautifully through them. However, if they begin to feel self-confident and think they are the “man of God,” both their lives and their ministries will begin a slow downward spiral.*

- *They fail to recognize that it is total dependency on Jesus Christ that produces godly character and a fruitful ministry.*
- *God's answer to Paul was not that he wanted him to suffer hardship and trials. God wanted Paul to be fully dependent upon Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

- *Apostle Paul's life and ministry so overflowed with the grace of God that it powerfully impacted eternity and the kingdom of God, not because of his calling, but because of his response to God.*
- *Many Christians have been called to be apostles and to do great things for God, but because they failed to fully embrace the grace of God and be fully dependent upon Christ, their calling was not fully realized, but only partially realized.*
- *However, there have been countless unseen Christian men and women who lived simple lives of prayer and sought God with their whole hearts who have impacted eternity.*
- *These "simple" Christians are the true overcomers and their lives exuded the grace of God. They will be seated with Christ on His throne and crowned with His glory.*
- *This principle, "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God" helps to explain why the church is most vibrant and powerful in places where the church suffers persecution and hardship for the sake of the Gospel.*
- *In difficult situations the hearts of the believers are filled with prayer, praise, and the Word of God, with the result that they walk very closely with Jesus every moment of every day.*
- *Although Jesus is the Son of God, when He walked on this earth as a man, He said this about Himself, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (John 5:19).*

- *Jesus, our primary and ultimate example, demonstrated His total dependence and surrender to His Father.*
- *Jesus lived in unbroken fellowship with the Father, just as we must do.*

John 15:7 (NKJV)

⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

- *This verse is the key to living a victorious and joyful life—a life filled with complete confidence in God’s faithfulness independent of the circumstances we may face, “abide in Me and My words abide in you ”—unbroken fellowship with Christ.*
- *We are to come to the realization that we don’t do things for God, but with God.*
- *When we are poor and always fully dependent on Christ we are never alone. He is always with us “for ours is the kingdom of God” and the riches of His kingdom fill us.*
- *The second principle is found in Luke 6:21. “Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled.”*
- *The meaning of the word “hunger” in both Greek and English conveys the meaning of “avidly desiring something that is necessary for life.” It carries the idea of a strong driving desire and not just a wish or fancy.*
- *A hungry or thirsty person, although fatigued, will find strength to enable them to drive their tired aching body forward and to race toward a source of food and water.*
- *Often the things that hold believers back from experiencing a life filled with the grace of God are not great temptations, but simply being satisfied with the status quo.*
- *The rebuke that Jesus had for the first of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation was that they had “left their first love.” (Revelation 2:4). He rebuked the seventh church because they were lukewarm and satisfied with living spiritually miserable lives filled with creature comforts. (Revelation 3:15-17).*

- *Those two churches no longer hungered for righteousness or a deeper relationship with God.*
- *To properly understand the balance between hungering for righteousness and contentment, Apostle Paul stated that even in the midst of physical lack and hardships, “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” (Philippians 4:11).*
- *Jesus wants us to be content and thankful with His provision for our lives, but hungry to see the power and glory of His kingdom manifest, and to see His will done on earth as it is already being done in Heaven.*
- *Sometimes Christians are discontent with God’s provision for their lives, but do not hunger to see God’s will done in their lives. God wants us to be thankful and content with His provision for our lives, but also to have a deep hunger in our hearts to know and love Him more.*
- *The reason we can have a deep contentment in our lives is because, “For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”” (Hebrews 13:5-6).*
- *Our contentment is founded in the reality that He will never leave us nor forsake us. No matter what we face and nothing man tries to do to us can change the reality that the Lord Himself is our helper.*
- *The key to having a deep contentment in Christ is to have a compelling hunger for Him.*
- *A Christian will never experience true contentment in Christ without having a deep hunger for Him.*
- *Content Christians who hunger for God produce revival, transform nations, and see the glory of God manifest.*
- *The promise of this second principle is that if we hunger for God we will be filled!*

- *Those who hunger for God and consistently seek Him will not be disappointed, but will be filled.*
- *We are to hunger for God with a deep eager expectation that we will be filled to overflowing and God will show up.*
- *When Christians truly hunger for Christ they will not grow weary in seeking Him and they will not stop until they are filled. That is exactly the attitude that God wants us to have.*
- *The third principle is found in Luke 6:21. “Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.”*
- *Christ looks upon us in our times of afflictions, sorrows, and pain with tender love and compassion. He reaches out to comfort and help us through our difficult circumstances.*
- *We live in a fallen sinful world filled with many sad and painful experiences. Christ uses our times of tears to do a work in our hearts to shape us into His image and bring His glory and victory into our lives.*
- *Sorrow, pain, and trials are not good in themselves and they do not transform us into the image of Jesus or bring glory to His name. It is our response to God in the midst of difficult times that produces a glorious work in us and through us.*
- *Jesus never promised that once we receive Him, life would be without trouble. In fact, He said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33).*
- *Everyone in this life will experience times of pain, sorrow, and loss, both believers and unbelievers. However, Christ will redeem our weeping and tears and bring forth good fruit in our lives.*
- *When we turn to God in times of sorrow and tribulation we receive a double blessing.*
- *First, God personally “comforts us in all our tribulation” and second, “that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4).*

- *If we try to avoid suffering and difficulties in this life at any expense, it will lead us to a place of compromise and entanglement in sin, which will cause even greater sorrow and loss.*

Romans 8:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

- *“If we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together” indicates that our earthly lives have purpose and if we choose to walk with Jesus it will result in eternal glory.*
- *Apostle Paul connected the idea of enduring and suffering with Christ with experiencing His glory a number of times in his epistles. For example, “if we endure, we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Timothy 2:12).*
- *What form does this suffering take that produces this wonderful level of intimacy with Christ so that we can experience His glory?*
- *When temptations arise and we resist our sinful selfish nature our inner struggle results in suffering. However, if we endure and overcome it produces victory and purity in our hearts.*
- *If we give into the temptation, our inner struggle immediately ceases—but so does our spiritual growth.*
- *One cannot grow stronger physically without exercise. Exercise always entails working against resistance. We can’t grow spiritually without resisting temptation and compromise and saying “no” to our sinful selfish ways.*
- *“Blessed are you who weep now” – As we choose to walk with Jesus, whether our walk is easy or difficult, we are assured that the final outcome will be, “for you shall laugh.”*
- *Laughter reflects a hilarious joy, happiness, and triumph that will overwhelm our hearts because of all Jesus has done for us, in us, and through us.*

- *Our laughter speaks of a joy and happiness that it is impossible to contain, that spills over with the exuberant sound of us roaring with laughter in the presence of our Redeemer who walked us through this life into total victory.*
- *It is a laughter of thankfulness, joy, and appreciation as we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, when we hear the words “Well done my good and faithful servant,” where there are no regrets and no tears to be shed.*
- *The tears of our painful experiences and trials will cease, but the laughter and joy that our Saviour bestows on us will continue throughout all eternity.*
- *The blessings of the joy and laughter are contingent on our willingness to go through times of weeping as we say “no” to our old sinful man and say “yes” to Jesus.*
- *Jesus doesn’t want us to experience regret when we stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of our lives as believers. He wants us to be filled with joy.*
- *The fourth principle is found in Luke 6:22-23. “Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.”*
- *In these four principles we see an increasing intensity of blessings or rejoicing beginning with “for yours is the kingdom of God” to “for you shall be filled” to “for you shall laugh.” The final blessing declares, “rejoice in that day and leap for joy!”*
- *The blessings from this last principle are the result of men hating us, excluding us, reviling us, and calling us evil for the Son of Man’s sake.*
- *As the intensity of blessings increase so does the intensity of trials—from being poor, to being hungry, to weeping, to being persecuted and hated for the name of Christ.*
- *I believe the ascending order of both the blessings and the trials reflects a progression in our spiritual growth.*

- *“For indeed your reward is great in heaven” - The final outcome for each of these blessings is always directed toward eternity. Although we can partially experience many of these blessings now, the ultimate fulfillment of these blessings are reserved for eternity. Only in eternity and in Heaven will we be capable of experiencing them. These mortal bodies would not be able to endure the glory that we will experience in our immortal incorruptible resurrected bodies.*
- *For us to be able to walk in victory and go through the process of sanctification requires that we differentiate between the temporal and the eternal.*
- *This temporal life has true value, but it can only be properly evaluated from the eternal perspective.*
- *Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 puts our experiences of this life in the proper perspective, in the light of eternity.*

1 Corinthians 7:29–31 (ESV)

²⁹This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,
³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,
³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

- *Apostle Paul summarized the brevity of this earthly temporal experience with the words “the appointed time has grown very short.”*
- *The Greek word translated as “very short” means “to extend in time, with the focus upon the end point—to draw to a close.”*
- *Time on this earth goes by so quickly. It is as if those who have wives do not have wives, and those that mourn as though they did not mourn, and those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, and those who purchase possessions as if they own nothing.*
- *When we are focused on the temporal, we lose the sight of the eternal value of this life and we forget life’s real purpose.*

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- *Eternity is a central theme that runs throughout the Bible, and given more emphasis in the New Testament. Each believer must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of how they lived their lives.*
- *Many times Apostle Paul refers to the day we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ as “that Day.”*

2 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV)

¹²For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2 Timothy 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

2 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Philippians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

- *“Four centuries ago, Martin Luther said that on his calendar there were but two dates: “Today and That Day” He recognized that all the days of his earthly existence were preparation for that momentous day when he would stand before God in eternity and give an account for his life.”*
- *The carnal man only has one day on his calendar. “Today.”*

1 Corinthians 15:32 (NKJV)

³²If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

- *Live each day as if it were your last and as if tomorrow would be “That Day.”*

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

- *Everything God does in our lives is to prepare us for “That Day.”*
- *Our co-operation is essential for that process to take place in the life of a Christian.*

1 Corinthians 3:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.

¹⁴If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *Every believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ on “that Day” and his work will be tried by fire.*

Mark 12:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

³¹And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

- *By what criteria will our work be tested?*
- *Did you learn to love?*
- *Did you learn to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?*
- *Did you learn to love your fellow man?*

Matthew 5:44–45 (NKJV)

⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

- *Did you learn to love your enemies?*

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NKJV)

¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

- *If we haven't learned to love all our effort is for nothing.*

John 14:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments.

- *Obedience is the best way for us to express our love for Christ.*
- *Three things to evaluate our lives by:*
- *The reality of your mortality*
- *The return of Christ*
- *The Fear of the Lord*