

The Four Gospels of the Bible, Sermon on the Mount

Luke 6:20-49

²⁰ Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (NIV)

*You're blessed when you've lost it all.
God's kingdom is there for the finding.*

*You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry.
Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.*

*You're blessed when the tears flow freely.
Joy comes with the morning.*

*"Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don't like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.
Give Away Your Life*

*But it's trouble ahead if you think you have it made.
What you have is all you'll ever get.*

*And it's trouble ahead if you're satisfied with yourself.
Your self will not satisfy you for long.*

*And it's trouble ahead if you think life's all fun and games.
There's suffering to be met, and you're going to meet it.*

"There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

"To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person. If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, gift wrap your best coat and make a present of it.

Blessed when you've lost it all?

How can this be; to be blessed when you've lost it all? Sometimes we must lose in order to win; we must sacrifice much, in order to understand what love is in truth. Of course, Jesus suffered with his life; he died a sacrifice for each and all of us. He lost his life, so that we could find life. He lives by the power of God.

H. Kirk Rainer

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Tears flow freely...

Emotional release is a God-given gift – just as emotions in the first place. The body and soul benefits from the release or expression of emotions associated with sorrow, grief and other responses to our lives. As though some poison has entered our bodies, release is that emission of the trouble that, if left eternal, has a way of figuratively *eating away* at us...and destroying us.

Count yourself blessed when...

Notice the contradictions that these conditions have with our natural way of thinking; how many would think it blessed to be “cut down” or thrown out? What is it about the pain and suffering of life that makes someone blessed? I think what Jesus is telling us is that the world we live in very cruel; and to be reminded of this fallen world in very personal way is to react in greater wonder, anticipation and pursuit of God’s kingdom to come. Jesus told us that whoever wants to find his life must lose it. This apparent paradox signifies the exchange of a temporal fleshly life for the eternal and spiritual life of Christ. If you want to know Christ, you must die to self.

It’s trouble ahead when...

Not to contradict the scripture, but trouble is something that we all must face at some time in our lives. Whether we bring trouble or trouble finds us, trouble is going to happen sooner or later...and sometimes in between. I think what the scripture is describing is eternal trouble – or the trouble that never ends. To think *you have made it* is to believe that you have earned your righteousness or destiny; to be satisfied with yourself is to consider that you are without sin, therefore do not need God, forgiveness; and to think that life is a continual party is to live in folly.

How to respond to enemies that bring trouble?

By the power of God, through much prayer, believers are to forgive; yes, to forgive and to grow through the ordeal and treatment of enemies. Believers are called to love their enemies and to let such treatment *bring out the best*. Only God, through His grace, can enable such a reaction or response to such destructive behavior. And God is merciful.

H. Kirk Rainer