

**Luke 6:22-23**  
**December 2, 2018**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

If you were here with us last week, Luke recorded what we commonly call the Sermon on the Mount. We covered three ways in which we are blessed: Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. And blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. As you can imagine, what these disciples heard was quite opposite of what they thought it meant to be blessed. To most Jewish people, the word “blessing” evoked images of a long life, wealth, a large, healthy family, a full barn, and defeated enemies. God’s covenant with Israel did include such material and physical blessings (Deut. 28; Job 1:1–12; Prov. 3:1–10)

**Transition:** Let’s keep working through the Beatitudes. We want to be dialed into how Jesus describes the *inner ATTITUDES* we must have if we are to experience the blessedness of the Christian life. We’ll begin where we left off. Would someone read Luke 6:22-23?

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

V.22:

- Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

V.23:

- “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

**Process Questions:**

Q V.22-23: What is the last WAY in which we are blessed? [“Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”]

Q: Again, if you’re the newly appointed apostle, are you having second thoughts?! [Let people engage]

Q: Do you think these new apostles have an idea of what hatred, or exclusion, or insults might look like at this point? If yes, what are specific examples of exclusion? [Jewish Christians had already been expelled from the synagogue.]

Q: What do you think Jesus meant by men “hating” them? [These apostles will encounter those who are opposed to God’s people.]

Q: Has anyone experienced being excluded or insulted or rejected because you are a Christ follower? [Let people engage.]

Q: What are these apostles to do as soon as they experience hatred, or exclusion, or insults, or rejection? [Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!]

**X-REF:** John 15:18-25

Q: Jesus says, “Rejoice and leap for joy.” Have you ever seen anyone rejoice after being insulted or rejected because they follow Christ? [Let people engage]

Q: How can we rejoice when men attack us for our faith in Christ? [Let people engage, e.g. by remembering that it is a privilege to suffer for His sake (Phil 3:10)]

**Observation:** When they treat us the way they treated Him, it is evidence that we are starting to live as He lived, and that is a compliment. All the saints of the ages were treated this way, so we are in good company.

Q: What is their (and our) reward for enduring hatred, being excluded, insulted, and rejected? [The reward is eternal life and having a great reward awaiting us in heaven.]

**LOOK:** How can we rejoice when men attack us? By remembering that it is a privilege to suffer for His sake (Phil. 3:10). When they treat us the way they treated Him, it is evidence that we are starting to live as He lived, and that is a compliment. All of the saints of the ages were treated this way, so we are in good company!

**Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 193). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

Jesus Himself would experience the persecution described in Luke 6:22, and so would His disciples. How can we rejoice when men attack us? By remembering that it is a privilege to suffer for His sake (Phil. 3:10). When they treat us the way they treated Him, it is evidence that we are starting to live as He lived, and that is a compliment. All of the saints of the ages were treated this way, so we are in good company! Furthermore, God promises a special reward for all those who are faithful to Him; so the best is yet to come!

**Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 220-221)**

The final beatitude concerned persecution **because of the Son of Man**. This was to become a natural course of events for the apostles. They would be hated, excluded, insulted, and rejected. Yet they would be happy (“blessed”) because of their **reward in heaven** and because they were following in the train of **the prophets** (i.e., those who spoke for God; cf. 6:26).

**Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 202–208). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

**6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you.** This is the ninth beatitude in Matthew and, like Matthew's, is different in form from the other beatitudes. It is the one beatitude in Matthew that uses the second person rather than the third person plural. This suggests that the original form of the other beatitudes also used the second person plural. In a series of parallel sayings, such as we find in Luke 6:20–23, the last member of the series is frequently longer (cf. the fourth command of 6:37–38). *Hatred* is commonly used to describe the attitude of those who are opposed to God's people. In contrast to the state or condition described in the first three beatitudes, this beatitude refers to those instances “when” or “whenever” believers are hated. The tense of this and the following three verbs (aorist subjunctives) implies that such hatred is viewed as occasional. Luke has four elements in this beatitude in contrast with Matthew's three. The love for groups of four is a Lukan stylistic feature. We see this throughout the Sermon on the Plain and elsewhere in Luke-Acts.

**When they exclude you.** When Luke wrote his Gospel, Jewish Christians had already been expelled from the synagogue, and he may have been alluding to this here.

**And insult you.** This situation of exclusion, insults, and rejection seems to contradict what we read concerning the church in Acts 2:47, where the church is described as enjoying the “favor of all the people” (cf. also 4:21; 5:13). However, for Luke both the believers' rejection and their acceptance by outsiders points to God's favor on them. **And reject your name as evil.** This may refer to Jesus' followers' having been called “Christians,” or it may allude to the expulsion of Jewish Christians from the synagogue as reflected in the twelfth benediction in the Jewish prayer called the *Shemoneh 'Esreh*. Dated around A.D. 85, it reads: “For the renegades let there be no hope, and may the arrogant kingdom soon be rooted out in our days, and the Nazarenes [Christians] and the *minim* [heretics] perish as in a moment and be blotted out from the book of life and with the righteous may they not be inscribed. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.”

**Because of the Son of Man.** Matthew has “because of me.” The interchange of a title for a pronoun or phrase such as “because of me” is not unusual, nor should it be unexpected since such titles describe the same person as the pronoun, i.e., Jesus. This clause clearly indicates that the beatitudes are addressed to believers.

**6:23 Rejoice in that day.** “In that day” refers to the times or occasions spoken of in the previous verse. It is not a reference to “the” day of tribulation coming at the end of history. Immediately after the beatitude-woe parallelism, Luke shared further with his readers how they should behave at such times (Luke 6:27–28).

**And leap for joy.** The same verb is used to express the joy of John the Baptist as he met Jesus (1:41–44). Even amid persecution Christians can rejoice, and Luke gave illustrations of this in Acts 5:41; 16:25; 21:13f.

**Because great is your reward in heaven.** This explains why in the midst of persecution believers are able to rejoice. There is no idea of merit in this statement, for even after perfect obedience and service to God, believers will only be able to say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty” (Luke 17:10). It is pure grace that causes God to reward his servants; but reward there will be, and this is not an uncommon theme in the NT. “In heaven” designates not a present geographical location but is a metaphor for God’s presence.

**For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.** Those persecuted for Jesus’ sake stand in good company. Matthew made this tie with the OT prophets even closer by adding “the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:12). There is here an unstated but nevertheless clear understanding that Christianity stands in continuity with OT religion. There are two ways of interpreting this verse. Believers should rejoice (1) because they will share God’s kingdom with the prophets or (2) because their persecution assures them that they are indeed God’s people; for God’s people, the prophets, have suffered similarly. The latter interpretation is to be preferred due to the parallel in Luke 6:26. Luke often emphasized this persecution of the prophets.