

Sermon Luke 6 17 26
“Blessings and Woes”

This week, we are coming off Jesus’ inaugural sermon in his hometown Nazareth synagogue. He reads from the prophet Isaiah, essentially declaring himself a prophet of God sent to minister to the broken. We find that in Jesus’ preaching, he could cause a stir with words of confrontation, calling us to account for the way we live out our faith, and yet, in the same vein, to make people feel secure by what He could do for them. People would crowd around Jesus, trying to reach out and touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. Did that make them happy? It sure did!

Following that day in Nazareth, Jesus went out to a mountain to pray, spending the night praying to the Father. The following morning, he called twelve men from his disciples to begin their formal training before sending them out as his apostles. He goes from praying to picking to preaching. This sermon looks very similar to the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. You might recognize it in his introduction from Matthew’s gospel in the “Sermon of the Mount,” beginning with “The Beatitudes.”

Although we can’t know for sure, it was not a different sermon but a condensed version, and Luke may have recorded this sermon from a different location. It would be like me giving a sermon here today and later giving the same sermon with some subtractions or additions later in another time and place to a different audience. However, unlike Matthew, Luke includes woes that warn believers to avoid, not just blessings. It is also important to remember that Matthew’s audience was mainly Jewish readers, whereas Luke’s audience was mostly Gentiles. What gives us a hint is that the text tells us that Jesus went down and stood on a level place, a low-lying piece of ground, not up on a mountainside, as Matthew records in chapter 5.

As we move forward, we see Jesus preparing His disciples for what they will face in a fallen world. Jesus says, “When you encounter poverty, hunger, weeping, friendlessness, or persecution, don’t react as if, “What’s happening to me, Lord? “This isn’t supposed to be how it is! Jesus says, “Remember what I taught you. “Everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher” (Luke 6:40).