

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 8  
Matt 5, Luke 6

Matthew 5 is known as the sermon on the mount. Most scholars believe that the sermon in Luke 6, though similar, is actually given at a different place and time. It's a given that with 2 writers you would have some variations, but each has their unique additions.

Before we dine into some fantastic verses I would like to pose a question to you. It's a hypothetical one that I hope would help you surface the source of your testimony. This same question was posed to David Bednar by his mission president when he was a young missionary. Here is the question: What would you do if one of the current 12 apostles fell away from the church? Somewhat taken back, Elder Bednar responded "that would be terrible". His mission president said "that wouldn't bother me in the least." And it kinda surprised him. "What do you mean it wouldn't bother you?" his mission president said "My witness and my testimony, my conversion is to the Lord, my witness is of the Saviour. I sustain those men as prophets seers and revelators, but if one of them fell away, it would have no impact on the witness I have received about the living Lord, Jesus Christ. And the truthfulness of the Fathers Plan."

He was converted, he didn't just have a testimony. He continued "If a testimony is what you know to be true by the witness of the spirit. Then conversion is constantly being true to what you know."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rQ2rRcrnHA>

With that question lingering in your mind as we look at these 2 chapters, I hope you will realize that what we are being asked to do is literally impossible. Some call this the boot camp for Christianity. I pray that instead of viewing these verses as lists of unattainable rules. Instead, as we dig deeper I hope you will see the purpose for them. The men and women God is transforming us to be. Because I think you will see that some of these are the exact opposite of what we are trying to achieve in life.

Luke records Jesus teaching on one hand:

"Blessed *be ye* **poor**: for yours is the **kingdom** of God." (Luke 6:20)

And then with that takes it farther and He says:

"But woe unto you that are **rich**! for ye have **received** your consolation." (Luke 6:24)

"Blessed *are ye* that **hunger** now: for ye shall be filled." (Luke 6:21),

"Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger." (Luke 6:25)

"Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall **laugh**." (Luke 6:21)

"Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." (Luke 6:25)

"Blessed are ye, when men shall **hate** you, and when they shall **separate** you *from their company*, and shall **reproach** you, and **cast out** your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke 6:22)

“Woe unto you, when all **men** shall speak **well** of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26)

So what are we to do with this? When He says “Blessed are you” It can also be translated as: Happy are you. But that's a hard pill to swallow. Happy are we if we are poor, hungry, weeping, hated and persecuted? When I have been any one of those things in my life I don't remember being happy or feeling blessed. So how do we deal with this? Luckily we do not lead with this when we preach the gospel to investigators and new converts. Could you imagine a young missionary with someone they just met teaching them: Blessed are the poor, the hungry and the hated. I don't think they would have many baptisms. If we take a look at the very beginning of these verses it indicates who Jesus is speaking to:

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples” (Luke 6:20)

This doctrine that Jesus is teaching is not for the investigators or the new converts, it's not for the Jack Mormon or for those who are relying on someone else's testimony. This sermon is for those who are, or seek to be His true disciples of Jesus Christ.

King Benjamin taught: “the **natural man** is an **enemy** to God, and has been from the **fall** of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he **yields** to the enticings of the **Holy Spirit**, and **putteth** off the **natural man** and becometh a **saint** through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a **child, submissive**, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

What is more natural than seeking riches, success, love and acceptance of others? On the surface those things don't feel evil to us, at least until Jesus says:

“**Love** your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and **pray** for them which despitefully use you. **And** unto him that **smiteth** thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that **taketh** away thy cloak forbid not *to take thy* coat also.” (Luke 27-29)

Could anything be more opposite of the natural man? I have to admit, for me this is extremely hard. I have always had a sensitivity to injustice. When I see someone being bullied or persecuted I will be the first to jump in and defend the innocent. Even when I feel that I am being treated unfairly, I will fight back with a vengeance. So this turning the other cheek, loving your enemies...man, that is extremely difficult for me. It is a daily challenge to not judge, to not condemn, and to offer grace and patience with everyone I'm with.

Verse 37 in Luke 6 has been a life changer for me. It's one of those verses that if we truly understand the magnitude of its promise it can help us become who God created us to be. Its short and right to the point:

“**Judge not**, and ye shall not be judged:  
**condemn** not, and ye shall not be condemned:  
forgive, and ye shall be **forgiven**.”

Could it be more clear and straightforward? No “ifs”, no clauses, no fluff.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. We tend to lean toward what John recorded as:

“**Judge not** according to **the appearance**, but judge righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)

But even this leaves it open for interpretation. In order to judge righteously we need to judge what is righteous and what is not. Our natural tendency, our natural man relies on our judgment. But with Jesus’s statement it takes all that stress out of it. I’m sure we all have a fear of being judged, being accused. What a relief to hear from the Master Himself that If we dont judge at all then He will withhold any Judgment from us. That if we don’t condemn; in no way will He condemn us. That if we just forgive and let it go; that He will graciously forgive us. What Joy, What peace, what comfort, that comes from those simple words of the Savior of the world.

A great example of this whole point I have been trying to illustrate was given in that same talk by Elder Bednar that I related earlier. He tells a story of a Woman who was a single mother of one teenage daughter, and the ward Relief Society president. Elder Bednar got a call one early morning that there had been a terrible accident involving 3 teenage girls in that area. In the accident this woman’s daughter had died. On the day of the funeral she got a call from a woman in the ward that was unaware that her daughter had just died. She was calling because she had a cold and was chewing out and angry with the relief society president because no one in the ward had brought her a meal when she was sick..... On the way to her only daughter’s funeral she stopped by this woman’s house and dropped off a meal that she herself had prepared.

When most of us would have turned inward to mourn and shut down. This woman turned outward to care for others in her own time of loss and sorrow.

I don’t know what Jesus means when He said “Blessed are the poor, the hungry and the persecuted” But I do know that in Matthew He gives us a little more to ponder on.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit” He said, the humble and the meek. (Matthew 5:3)

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matthew 5:6) Those who take the time to put God as a priority in their lives. Those who often study His words and pray often with faith. Those who are striving daily to be a little more like Him who was the ultimate example. Those who are converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

President Nelson says it this way:

“Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation. Choose to do the spiritual work required to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the Spirit more frequently and more clearly.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/revelation-for-the-church-revelation-for-our-lives?lang=eng>

This was not the only time he has prophesied about what is to come. Two years earlier when speaking to the Priesthood he said:

“I urgently plead with each one of us to live up to our privileges as bearers of the priesthood. In a coming day, *only* those men who have taken their priesthood seriously, by *diligently* seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others. Only a man who has paid the price for priesthood power will be able to bring miracles to those he loves and keep his marriage and family safe, now and throughout eternity.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/04/the-price-of-priesthood-power?lang=eng>

It's hard to not hear the urgency in his voice pleading with us to turn our testimonies into being converted to the Lord. To focus on those things that will turn our hearts to the Savior and His saving ordinances.

Might we ask Him in sincere prayer to change us and may we be willing to follow His path, is my prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.