

## Blessed are the Eyes that See

February 3rd, 2013

Luke 10:17-24

*"<sup>21</sup>In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>22</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." <sup>23</sup>Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! <sup>24</sup>For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."*

This passage closes with a benediction -- a pronouncement of blessing - - from the lips of Jesus: "<sup>23</sup>Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "***Blessed*** are the eyes that see what you see!" The Greek word means, "favored, fortunate, happy, privileged". And I wonder how many of you come in here this morning with a deep, firm, sense of this blessedness. How many of you would look back on the last week, or this morning, because of a job situation or a health situation or a family situation or some other circumstantial longing that is going unfulfilled, you don't feel that blessing today.

As Americans, we don't seem to be in a real "favored, fortunate, happy, privileged" position. One out of every ten people ages twelve and up are using antidepressants, a number that is up 400% from ten years ago. A search on Amazon books for self-help yields 175,000 titles (8,500 released in the past three months). Though we have every manner of trinket and pleasure available at our fingertips, and though we tend to amuse and entertain ourselves silly, we're just not very happy. And yet Jesus speaks here of a blessedness, and I believe His will for us today is that we grasp and experience this blessing, this privilege, that is ours as we gather here this morning.

This text raises two important questions: 1. What is the reason, or cause, of this blessedness? And, 2. Who are the recipients of this

blessedness? We'll answer question #1 today, and then come back and address #2 next Sunday.

## **What is the Cause for this Blessedness?**

From Jesus' words here, we can detect two answers to this first question: one in front of the pronouncement of blessing, and one after it. Let's make sure we see both, starting with Jesus' words immediately following His benediction.

### **1.1 -- In Jesus, the Kingdom of God has come near**

"<sup>23</sup>Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! <sup>24</sup>*For* (He's giving a reason for why they are so blessed) I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." The disciples are blessed because many kings and prophets had longed to see what they were seeing. So if we're going to grasp this blessedness, we need to know what they were desiring. This is something we have seen before in Luke (1:46ff, 4:14ff, 9:2), but let's review briefly.

In short, what the prophets and kings longed for was the arrival of the Kingdom of God. You see this longing show up throughout the prophetic writings, but let's look at Isaiah, which was a pretty important book in Jesus' mind (In 4:17ff, Jesus grounds His whole identity and mission as the fulfillment of what Isaiah wrote about the Messiah):

*(Read Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-9, 25:6-9, 35:4-7, 10, 65:17-19)*

The kings and prophets longed for "Shalom", the way things ought to be. Not just personal salvation from this world, but for the restoration and healing of this world. And Jesus says, "What they longed for, you're seeing, and so you are blessed." In Jesus, the Kingdom of God has come (v.9), God's glorious future reign has broken into the present, giving a taste of the firstfruits of the great harvest to come. This was a great mystery to the Jewish people, that the fulfillment (or

achievement) of the Messiah's Kingdom would happen in history long before its glorious, global consummation.

Jesus had to first break the curse upon creation by absorbing it in His own body of flesh, then rose to vindicate His Kingship and guarantee the future resurrection of all who are united to Him by faith, along with the renewal of the whole cosmos when He comes again (Revelation 21:1ff). So, Christians, you are blessed, because every longing and heartache and frustration that you presently endure isn't worth comparing to the weight of glory yet to be revealed when He comes again and the whole cosmos is freed from its bondage to corruption, and you inherit the world (Matthew 5:5, Romans 4:13).

### **You've almost reached your inheritance**

That's a reason to feel favored, fortunate, happy and privileged, even if your circumstances this week have been awful. There is truth here that, when embraced, frees us to live in a state of blessedness that circumstances cannot nullify. There's a freedom from grumbling and frustration and bitterness when you know you're two seconds away from inheriting the world! John Newton illustrated this powerfully, and teaches us how to battle our depression. He said,

*Suppose a man was going to New York to take possession of a large estate [let's say, to bring this into modern times, a hundred million dollars], and his carriage [car] should break down a mile before he got to the city [you get a flat tire], which obliged him to walk the rest of the way; what a fool we should think him, if we saw him ringing his hands, and blubbering out all the remaining mile, "My carriage is broken! My carriage is broken!"*

This life -- miserable as your lot might be -- is just a vapor, and your afflictions are light and *momentary*, in view of eternal glory in the New Heavens and New Earth. Imagine the folly of, instead of getting off the carriage and running with joy to claim that inheritance, grumbling and complaining and lamenting that you have a flat tire! But that's what

we're like a lot of the time (that's what *I'm* like a lot of the time), and it's crazy. You've got an inheritance coming, and the resurrected body of Jesus Christ, enthroned at the right hand of God the Father this moment, and the Holy Spirit He has given you, is God's down payment of that coming reward. You're blessed!

## **1.2 -- God's knowledge of Himself has been revealed to you**

And that's not even all of it! I said there were two causes for this blessedness, one after the pronouncement of blessing, and one before it. We've only looked at the one after it, so let's move backwards in the text now to see this other cause for blessedness today. The benediction is prompted by what Jesus had just said: "<sup>22</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."<sup>23</sup> *Then turning to the disciples* he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!"

Yes, you're going to inherit the world. Yes, the Kingdom of God has dawned in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the day is coming when all sorrow and sighing shall flee away, when the world is set right, when death is no more, every tear is wiped from your eyes, and we'll feast on rich food and well-aged wine, and the lamb will lie down with the wolf, and we'll experience the shalom that our hearts yearn for.

But there's something greater than that, something more ultimate and beautiful and satisfying, that is the cause for our blessedness: you have been granted to know the Father and the Son as they know One Another: "<sup>22</sup>No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him...Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!"

Many of you are aware that "know" in Scripture isn't mere cognitive awareness of facts. There's a deep, rich, relational aspect to this knowing (Gen.4:1), I think we get a glimpse of that in this very text:

"<sup>21</sup>In that same hour he rejoiced (extremely joyful, filled with delight) in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth..." Jesus is rejoicing in the Spirit, praising the Father. Earlier in Luke, at Jesus' baptism, we saw this go the other way, with the Father rejoicing in His Son, and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove.

### **The Exuberant Pleasure of God in God**

In these two places, we are getting a window into what God has been experiencing forever. The greatest joy is joy in God: "<sup>11</sup>In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." You can't improve on or add to that. Nothing is fuller than full, and nothing is longer than forevermore. And who has been in the presence of God forever, but God? God has existed eternally in a loving relationship of three Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit beholding, praising, enjoying, loving, admiring, delighting in Himself from all eternity.

If that seems vain to you, that's because it would be, if you were feeling this way about yourself, because you are not supremely beautiful and excellent and praiseworthy. But God is, and so He would be unrighteous if He did not admire with infinite enthusiasm and delight what is infinitely admirable and worthy of praise: Himself. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have been pouring love, joy and adoration into each other, beholding and admiring and enjoying one another with glorifying love. And because the glory is unsearchable, the joy is unsearchable. I think we should have this in our minds when we hear Jesus say, "<sup>22</sup>No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son."

God is good to us in giving us many earthly glimpses and foretastes of this supreme pleasure that God has in God. One especially vivid glimpse for me is the Dave Matthews Band. In college I was a huge (understatement) fan of them, had hundreds of their CD's, went to

several concerts, and even after I became a Christian, I felt myself drawn towards their music. I threw out all my CD's, because I felt that their music was dishonoring to God, and in one sense it was. But in another sense, I believe it was (and is) a reflection of this Trinitarian joy: distinct persons united together producing beauty and joy.

When that saxophone mingles together with the violin, and the guitar and drums and keyboard thrown in, there's a beauty there flowing from the distinct parts being joined together in harmony and unity. And since I've been to so many concerts, I can still picture in my mind the joy that each of the members of the band had in what they were doing, and in watching the others take the lead at different points. And so when I hear those guys today, I grieve that they don't know the Creator whom they reflect, but the appetite of my soul is whetted with the knowledge that the pleasure I feel in that music is only a faint glimmer of the eternally exuberant, ecstatic delight of Father, Son and Spirit.

### **Graciously Granted to Share in Glory**

And I marvel with fresh wonder and gratitude, that by the grace of God, I have been brought into that eternally exuberant Trinitarian joy: "<sup>22</sup>No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son *and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*" I marvel that I've been chosen to know Him, and love Him, and see His glory, and enjoy Him forever, and that I've been granted this at the cost of His own life. And I feel profoundly *blessed*, that Jesus would be willing to lose this eternal joy, that hell-deserving sinners like you and me might be brought into it for all eternity.

We'll take the Lord's Supper in a few minutes, and what do the bread and cup remind us of? Apart from the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, all we deserve from God is hell. We don't deserve joy, we don't deserve blessing, we don't deserve favor and fortune and privilege. We deserve damnation. But because Jesus willingly exchanged, "You are

My beloved Son," for the silence of heaven ("My God, my God..."), all who come to God like little children (v.21, see next week) are forgiven, redeemed, cleansed and made new, and brought into the fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore that God has known from all eternity.

I don't know what your last week has been like, or what the week ahead has in store for you. But I hope as you hold onto the bread and the juice in just a minute, that you can feel with fresh encouragement and wonder today, this glorious benediction of Jesus: "<sup>23</sup>Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!" Christ, our Savior and King, crucified, risen and reigning, soon to come again, will make all things new, and everlasting joy shall be on your head, and all sorrow and sighing shall flee away. You'll be in His presence, seeing His face, His glory will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Even if the wheel on your carriage is broken today, you are blessed.

The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of what we've been saved from, and an appetizer of the future feast that we've been saved for. Let's celebrate it with joy today.