

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Words, Works, and Person of Christ

The Gospel of Luke

The Free Gift that Costs
Everything (Pt 1)

September 18, 2022

Sermon Text: Luke 6:20-26

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:18-30

I have decided to approach our study of the Gospel of Luke in a somewhat different way. Rather than starting as we normally would right at chapter 1 verse 1, I want to deal with some of the major themes which God has given us in this Gospel. If systematic theology can do this with the entire Bible, I think we are justified in doing essentially the same thing.

In the Gospels, we have given to us the Words, Works, and Person of Christ. What He said. What He did, And who He is. We will begin with His Words – what did Jesus teach, as recorded in Luke's Gospel?

And the first subheading under the Words of Jesus which we turn to this morning and in a few weeks ahead is this: *The Free Gift that Costs Everything*. That is to say, what does the Lord say through Luke about this question: *What will it cost me to follow the Lord?* We have a hymn by that title which gives this answer: *Everything. That is the price I must pay.*

Samuel Davies lived from 1723-1761 and began to preach the gospel in 1746. When Jonathan Edwards died, Davies was chosen to succeed him as President of the College of New Jersey, which later became Princeton University. Only 18 months later He died of

pneumonia and blood poisoning. In his ministry, Davies was known as one of the most highly regarded evangelists of his times.

Davies preached a sermon entitled *Saints Saved With Difficulty, and the Certain Perdition of Sinners*. It was based on this Scripture:

“And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:18)

At the beginning of that sermon, Davies said this:

“This text may sound in your ears like a message from the dead; for it is at the request of our deceased friend that I now insist upon it. [That “friend” was the recently deceased James Hooper from the congregation].

He knew so much from the trials he made in life, that if he should be saved at all, it would be with great difficulty, and if he should escape destruction at all, it would be a very narrow escape; and he also knew so much of this stupid, careless world,

that they stood in need of a solemn warning on this point.

But now the unknown wonders of the invisible world lie open to his eyes; and now also he can take a full review of his passage through this mortal life; now he sees the many unsuspected dangers he narrowly escaped [see Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress!*], and the many fiery darts of the devil which the shield of faith repelled; now, like a ship arrived in port, he reviews the rocks and shoals he passed through, many of which lay underwater and out of sight; and therefore now he is more fully acquainted with the difficulty of salvation than ever.

And should he now rise and make his appearance in this assembly in the solemn and dread attire of an inhabitant of the world of spirits...I believe he would still stand to his choice, and propose it to your serious thoughts, that ‘if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?’”

Most people who profess to be Christians, who claim to be following Christ, do not really believe this Scripture. The idea that the true Christian is *scarcely saved*, is a foreign and strange idea to them. And so they are careless. They may memorize a verse about the devil prowling around looking for someone to devour, but their actions deny that they take that warning seriously. They neglect God's Word. They neglect prayer. Many are careless about keeping the Lord's day holy and gathering together with the saints for strengthening and encouragement. Many neglect the ordinances Christ commands – baptism and the Lord's table.

But, as Davies points out from this Scripture – *the Christian is barely saved*. We are all like Lot in this respect. He barely got out of Sodom in time. He was only, as is evident in his wife's fate, one glance back from destruction.

- How many of Satan's arrows are fired at you every day, even one of which if it

penetrated to you would destroy your soul?

- How often does the world accuse you and hate you, tempting you to be a Pliable, abandon the Way, and go back to the City of Destruction?
- Demas loved this present world and went back to his City of Destruction when following Christ with Paul began to cost him too much.
- How many heresies, false gospels, lusts, forms of greed and covetousness work at each moment to persuade us to be the Rich Young Ruler and turn away from following Christ?

There is a *cost* to following Christ in this wicked world. If you want to examine yourself to see if you really are born again, just put this question to yourself honestly – Has my profession of faith in Christ ever cost me anything? Does it continue to cost me every single day?

The Bible is plain to show us the cost of following Christ – of being saved, and there are many portions of Luke’s Gospel which do the same in powerful terms. Let’s look at one of those sections right now:

their fathers did to the false prophets.

It is evident that Luke intends for us to see a great contrast here –

Blessed	Woes
Poor	Rich
Hungry	Full
Weep	Laugh
Hated	Well Liked

Let’s consider what costs to all who are born again are mentioned here.

Being Poor

The Lord Jesus while in this world, had essentially nothing in terms of material possessions. Nowhere to lay his head. If we are to follow Him, we must necessarily strive to be like Him.

Now, the Bible does not teach that being poor in itself is godly. Nor is being wealthy necessarily an evil. But what Christ is emphasizing here, what He is pronouncing blessing for, is the world’s material allurements. Love for this present

Luk 6:20-26 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. (22) “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! (23) Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

(24) “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. (25) “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. (26) “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so

world. Making the getting of earth's treasures one's life pursuit.

But it also means that real Christians may quite literally find themselves poor – even in poverty. Think of Lazarus the beggar. Why? Because the world does not reward anyone for following Christ. The world hates Christ and it hates all who belong to Him. You see this increasing in our day. All you need to do is voice what God says about issues like abortion or human sexuality, marriage, and so on – and the world is not going to reward you. In fact, you might well get fired from your job and cast out of your career. The Rich Young Ruler knew this and he chose to walk away from Christ.

Has following Christ then cost you anything in this regard? Our use of *things, the currency and stuff of this world*, is a revealer of the state of our soul. In fact, I believe it is biblical and right to conclude that a person who clings to and piles up money and possessions, continuing to be rewarded by the world, is in desperate need of re-thinking their claim to know Christ. Because

GOSPEL OF LUKE 6:20-26

either Christ's blessing is on us, or His curse (woe).

Hunger

Here is a cost which most Christians in this nation have never known. Luke, as we have seen these past weeks, will record Jesus' parable about the Rich Man and Lazarus. This hunger can certainly be literal hunger from a lack of food but notice that the opposite of it is "satisfied." Or, in respect to the cursed one – "full."

I am sure that most of you have noticed that many unsaved people in our spheres *are quite satisfied*. They don't "hunger and thirst for righteousness." They aren't looking to the Day when Christ comes again. They are *satisfied* with themselves, with their lives, with their pursuits and loves. They aren't hungry. They are pretty happy with themselves and their lives.

So here then is still another cost of following Christ. *Becoming dissatisfied*. There is some irony here. Christ becomes our love when we

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are born again. We look to the Kingdom of God and long for it. We lose that old earthly satisfaction we once had. We aren't full anymore. We are hungry.

I have talked with people who want to insist that "this world has a lot of fine people in it. Things aren't so bad." And they don't like to hear about the "negatives." They are satisfied, why aren't you? Jesus Himself was (and still is) viewed as waaaay too critical, too negative, too doomsday, and there are many people in the church now who, in reality, think the same thing about Him. Many "Christians" do not like Christ and they don't like Christ's real people for this very reason. They are satisfied with this world – it is what they desire and feed upon and they don't understand why Christ's people can't just be positive about "life." But when Christ comes again, they will be the hungry ones.

And so the question again – *are you satisfied with this world? As you look at your life and review it, are you "full" or are you hungry?*

Following Christ will cost you your worldly satisfaction.

Laughter

"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."

What is this "laughing"? Well, for the earth-dweller, the unconverted worldling, so often life is a party.

Psa 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.

Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

1Pe 4:3-4 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. (4) With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of

debauchery, and they malign you;

Jesus did not laugh when He was in this world. We have no account of Him in Scripture doing so. We do have records of Him *weeping* over Jerusalem, and over sinners like the Rich Young Ruler who chose money over Christ. In this sense, following Christ is going to cost you that worldly “party on” laughter which used to characterize you and which characterizes worldlings now. Vulgarly of jesting. Being praised for being a jokester – the guy who is just a laugh a minute. Those things are going to go when we follow Christ. The Christian has matters of weight to address. We see this world for what it is. We see the hard-heartedness of friends and loved ones headed for hell. Following Christ will cost our laughter.

Popularity

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

This last cost which Jesus sets out for us here is huge and far-reaching. It warrants much serious thought and self-examination.

Following Christ will cost us popularity. It will result in us being excluded. It will mean that people will speak evil of us.

How vital it is for us to realize how differently the Lord’s thoughts are from ours. He pronounces woes upon the one who is popular, and He blesses those who are hated and excluded. “I am just a fine fellow whom everyone loves” is in reality a declaration that the speaker is unsaved and not a fine fellow after all.

Man craves to be liked, to be popular. The world worships celebrity status. This the thing that drives “American Idol.” Contestants are on the edge of being celebs and thus worshipped

by the mob. It really IS about idolatry!

If you are not popular with the crowd, then you are deemed a failure. If you aren't included, if you are reviled for the sake of Christ, something is surely horribly wrong with you.

Following Christ is going to cost you being "in" with the masses.

Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Is it not reasonable then that if we follow Christ, the same is going to be said of us?

*Are you popular with the crowd?
Do most people speak well of you?
Does the world in which you live
enjoy having you at its gatherings?
Because if you claim to be a
Christian, you must "get real" and
get honest with yourself and ask,
Why?*

These then are just some of the costs of following Christ. His salvation is free, and yet it will cost us everything. Is it worth it? Peter asked Jesus that very question:

Mat 19:27-30 Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" (28) Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. (30) But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

No one will ever say in that Day, the cost was too high.