

**THE BIG IDEA:** We can be blessed forever or blessed for a moment.

### The Take-Off

There was a man who wasn't feeling well - didn't have the energy to do all the things around the house that his wife wanted done. He went to the doctor for an exam and afterwards, said to the doctor, "Give it to me straight doc. Don't try to hide it from me with all those fancy medical words." "Alright, the doctor said, "You're lazy." "Oh," replied the man. "Now give me the medical terms so I can tell my wife."

Maybe you've never been in the situation where you're waiting for a doctor to "give it to you straight," but if you ever are, sometimes as soon as they do, we wish they'd have tried a different approach!

We love this picture because it's cute, but how happy is that dog if the doctor tells him he isn't fetching again?

Today and on Easter we're going to be looking at the section in Luke that parallels Matthew 5-7, and it covers what is arguable the best sermon ever preached. You may have heard it called the "Sermon on the Mount" and many commentators agree that our faith would be so much richer if we simply applied the teachings that Jesus offered in the sermon.

What we're going to see is that Jesus is a lot like that doctor who gives it to us straight.

And not only Jesus, but remember that Luke was a physician, and so he's going to relate the sermon like a doctor.

Let me show you just one example of how he does that: Matthew uses 107 verses to share with his readers the "Sermon on the Mount" while Luke only has 30. Luke is like the doctor who comes in and doesn't beat around the bush - he gets right to the point, and here is the point that you and I need to walk away from these verse getting:

We can be blessed forever or blessed for a moment.

That's it. Jesus takes 3 verses to explain how we can be blessed forever and 3 verses to explain how we can be blessed for a moment, but before we really get to that, let's define a few terms.

### 1. I'm not sure that word means what you think it means!

- a. Here's a little something for all the Princess Bride fans in the room.
- b. ["You keep using that word..." image]
- c. So, let's try to define a few terms right up front:
- d. Beatitudes
  - means supreme blessedness or ultimate bliss
  - sounds like a good thing, doesn't it?
  - but let's point out the obvious - these aren't "DO-actions," they're "BE-attitudes"
  - these are internal choices of how to think, respond, see the world
  - they aren't general teaching for the masses (although there's plenty that can be learned here), but specific encouragement for followers of Jesus b/c that's who Jesus is teaching (see Luke 6:20)
  - they present the present in light of the future
  - think "if you have these attitudes, you'll be blessed"
- e. So what do we mean by blessed?
  - The word can mean happy, but who determines happiness?
  - God does. Blessed is better translated as favored, and so no matter what we're facing eternally, we're blessed internally because we are now the objects of God's favor
- f. Just to be clear, then, the Beatitudes aren't something to hang on a plaque, memorize and try to live out.
- g. They are statements of reality about people who are blessed at a soul level and who understand that a soul blessed by the favor of God will ultimately lead to a life lived with the favor of God
- h. See 3 John 1:2 - it all hinges on "as your soul prospers!"
- i. Hopefully that's clear enough to get us ready for a little visit to the doctor, because Dr. Jesus is going to give us a prescription for living the blessed life.

### 2. You can pay me now or pay me later

- a. Back in the 70s, Fram sold tons of oil filters with the slogan "you can pay me now, or pay me later."
- b. That's a value statement, right? You can keep your \$5 and save the hassle now, but know that if you do, you'll still be in the shop at some point (and probably paying a lot more than \$5)
- c. What Jesus teaches in verses 20-26 is a lesson on values more than anything else
- d. Do we value what's eternal more than what's temporal? Do we value what's coming more than what's now?

- e. Do we value the soul over the body?
- f. Jesus walks in like a doctor and says something like, “Listen. You need to stop smoking, because if you stop smoking, you’re going to literally add years onto the end of your life. I can’t make you, but if you don’t stop, you’ll “enjoy” being able to smoke if you want, but you’ll be dead in a year.”
- g. Brutal, right? Give it to me straight, doc!
- h. Jesus says it’s good to be poor now (more spiritually “poor” in that we’ve humbled ourselves before a greater God - KING David called himself poor and he was very well off financially - see Psalm 40:7; 86:1; 109:22), to be hungry now, to weep now, to be hated, excluded, insulted and rejected now - not because anyone would ever enjoy those things - but because someday those things will be distant memories in light of the great reward we’ll have in heaven!
- i. The ONLY way anyone would ever chose that is if they’ve come to value Jesus over everything else!
- j. Is it worth the pain of not smoking now in order to have years with loved ones later?
- k. Jesus is saying, you can be blessed forever or blessed for a moment.

### The Landing

Think about it: the only way we would ever value later over now is if later is infinitely better, right?

The idea of that seems crazy to the culture around us, but Jesus isn’t talking to them.

He’s talking to us, to his followers, and he wants us to see that, even though the “now” may at times be discouraging, the “then” will more than make up for it!

Like Rick Warren said, living in light of eternity changes our priorities.

[Francis Chan video - the rope]

Please see the contrast: what if you could be rich, comforted, well fed, full of laughter and respected NOW? What if you lived the “perfect” life and never experienced anything “bad?”

Jesus says it would only last for a moment - and your life, even at 100 years, is but a moment.

Give it to me straight, doc!!

He did.

At the beginning of the greatest sermon ever preached, Jesus was clear: we can be blessed forever or blessed for a moment.

It’s better to give up everything to follow Jesus than to refuse to give up anything to follow Him and then ultimately lose it all

Let’s pray.