

JESUS TEACHES THE PERILS OF THE MATERIAL WORLD

LUKE 06:20–26

Introduction

This is a shocking passage to the world, for Jesus switches the world's values completely around. He rejects entirely the *materialism* (things) of the world and warns the worldly and materialistic that severe judgment is coming.

- I. The promise to those who reject materialism (vv. 20-23).
- II. The judgment to those who follow materialism (vv. 24-26).

I. *Luke 06:20–23 The Promise to Those Who Reject Materialism*

There is the promise to those who reject materialism.

1. Blessed are the poor. This does not mean that a man must be poverty-stricken and financially poor. Hunger, nakedness and slums are not pleasing to God, especially in a world of plenty. Jesus is not talking about material poverty. He means what he adds in Mathew: “poor in spirit” (see Mat 5:3). “Poor in spirit” means several things.
 - a. To acknowledge one's utter helplessness before God, one's spiritual poverty, one's spiritual need; acknowledging that one is solely dependent upon God to meet his need.
 - b. To acknowledge one's utter lack in facing life and eternity apart from God; to acknowledge that the real blessings of life and eternity come only from a right relationship with God (see Eph 1:3; see John 10:10; Gal 5:22-23).
 - c. To acknowledge one's utter lack of superiority before all others and one's spiritual deadness before God; to acknowledge that no matter what one has achieved in this world (fame, fortune, power), he is no better, no richer, no more superior than the next person. His attitude toward others is not proud and haughty, not superior and overbearing. To be “poor in spirit” means acknowledging that every human being is a real person just like everyone else — a person who has a significant contribution to make to society and to the world. The person who is “poor in spirit” approaches life in humility and appreciation, not as though life owes him, but as though he owes life. He has been given the privilege of living; thus, he journeys through life with a humble attitude, that is, with an attitude of being poor in spirit and contributing all he can out of a spirit of appreciation.

Two critical steps are taken by the person who truly acknowledges his spiritual poverty.

- a. He turns his primary attention away from the things of this world, knowing things can never make him rich in spirit.
 - b. He turns his primary attention to God and His kingdom, knowing that God alone can make him rich in spirit (see *God's Blessings*, Eph 1:3).
-

The opposite of being “poor in spirit” is having a spirit that is full of self. There is a world of difference between these two spirits. There is the difference of thinking one is righteous and acknowledging one has the need for righteousness. There is the difference of *having self-righteousness* and of having *another’s righteousness*. Man must have *another’s righteousness*. Self-righteousness goes no farther than self, that is, no farther than death. *Another’s righteousness*, that is, Christ’s righteousness, lives forever (2 Cor 5:21; Ph.3:9. See Rom 3:21-22; *Justification*, Gal 2:15-16; Rom 10:4.)

The promise to the poor is phenomenal. Note the exact words: “yours is the kingdom of God.” The promise is not “yours will be,” but “yours is.” The poor in spirit receive the Kingdom of God now (see *Kingdom of God*, Mat 19:23-24).

2. Blessed are the hungry. This is spiritual hunger, not physical hunger. Again, being physically hungry is not a blessing. It is often sad and tragic. Jesus is saying, “Blessed are they who hunger spiritually, who hunger for righteousness” (Mat 5:6). It means to have a starving spirit, a spirit that craves righteousness.

In the Bible righteousness means two simple but profound things. It means both *to be right and to do right*. (See *Righteousness*, Mat 5:6.)

- a. There are those who stress *being righteous and neglect doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.
 - 1) False security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has *believed in Jesus Christ*. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
 - 2) Loose living. It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his *faith in Christ*. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behaviour will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means being righteous and doing righteousness. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

- b. There are those who stress doing righteousness and neglect being righteous. This also leads to two serious errors.
 - 1) Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance — that God loves him and accepts him not because he does good but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ (See *Righteousness*, Mat 5:6).
 - 2) Being judgemental and censorious. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and censors others.

He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, for *He* keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is both being righteous and doing righteousness. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without being made righteous in Christ Jesus (See *Righteousness*, Mat 5:6; Rom 5:1. See 2 Cor 5:21.)

Note that Jesus does not say, “Blessed are the righteous,” for no one is righteous (Rom 3:10). He says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Man is not righteous, not perfectly righteous. His chance to be righteous is gone. He has already come short and missed the mark. He is already imperfect. Man has but one hope: that God will love him so much that He will somehow count him righteous. That is just what God does. God takes a man’s “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and counts that hunger and thirst as righteousness (See *Justification, Faith and Righteousness*, Rom 4:22).

The promise to those who hunger after righteousness is fulfilling. They will be filled with abundant life: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal 5:22-23).

3. Blessed are the sorrowful, the persons who weep and mourn. The idea is a broken heart, a desperate, helpless weeping. It is weeping over sin; it is a broken heart over evil and suffering; it is a brokenness of self that comes from seeing Jesus on the cross and realizing that one’s own sins put Him there (see James 4:9).

Who are they who mourn? Who are they so full of grief and sorrow that they cry and weep and groan deep from within? There are three persons who mourn and groan.

- a. The person who is *desperately sorry* for his sin and unworthiness before God. He has such a sense of sin that his heart is just broken (Luke 18:13).
- b. The person who really *feels* the desperate plight and terrible suffering of others. The tragedies, the problems, the sinful behaviour of others; the state, the condition, the lostness of the world — all weigh ever so heavily upon the heart of the mourner.
- c. The person who *experiences* personal tragedy and intense trauma.

The promise to the one who weeps is that he will *laugh* (*gelasete*). The word means *loud laughter* that arises from a deep-seated joy and comfort. The laughter comes from two things.

- a. It comes from seeing the end of sin and shame, sorrow and suffering, tragedy and trauma.
- b. It comes from being comforted (*paraclesia*, see note, 2 Cor 1:3). Note two glorious truths.
 - 1) There is a present comfort.

=> A settled peace: a relief, a solace, a consolation within.

=> An assurance of forgiveness and acceptance by God.

=> A fullness of joy: a sense of God's presence, care and guidance (John 14:26); a sense of His sovereignty, of His working all things out for good to those who love Him (Rom 8:28; see John 10:10; 15:11; 2 Cor 6:10; Psa 16:11).

2) There is an eternal comfort.

=> A passing from death to life (John 3:16; John 5:24f).

=> A wiping away of all tears (Isa 25:8; Rev 7:17; 21:4).

4. Blessed are the persecuted, the persons who are persecuted for Jesus' sake. The persecuted are those who endure suffering *for Christ*. Jesus spelled out what He meant by persecution. He means being hated, ostracised, reproached, and having one's name spoken against.

Note the attitude a person is to have while being persecuted. The person is to "rejoice" and "leap for joy." How is such possible? By keeping one's eyes on the reward. Note the words, "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven" (Luke 6:23).

Believers are forewarned: they will suffer persecution (John 15:20; 16:4; Ph. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 John 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:12f).

- a. Believers suffer persecution because they do not belong to the world. They are called out of the world. They are *in the world*, but they are not *of the world*. They are separated from the behaviour of the world; therefore, the world reacts against them (John 15:19).
- b. Believers suffer persecution because they *strip away the world's cloak of sin*. They live and demonstrate a life of righteousness. Such exposes the sins of people (John 15:21, 24; see 15:18; 2 Tim. 3:12).
- c. Believers suffer persecution because the world does not know God or Christ. They want no God, no Lord other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want to do just what they want, to fulfil their own desires and not what another Lord wishes and demands (John 15:21; 16:3).
- d. Believers suffer persecution because the world is deceived in its concept and belief of God. The world conceives God to be the Person who fulfils their earthly desires and lusts (John 16:2-3). Man's idea of God is that of a *Supreme Grandfather*. He protects, provides, and gives, no matter one's behaviour, just so the behaviour is not too far out. God (the Supreme Grandfather) will accept and work all things out in the final analysis. But the true believer teaches against this. God is love, but He is also just and demands righteousness. The world rebels against this concept of God (John 16:2-3).

The promise to the persecuted is twofold. Their reward is great in heaven, and they are following in the footsteps (testimony) of the great prophets of the past.

1. The persecuted receive a great reward now.
 - a. They experience a special honour (Acts 5:41).
 - b. They experience a special consolation (2 Cor 1:5).
 - c. They are given a very special closeness, a glow of the Lord's presence (see note, 1 Pet. 4:14).
 - d. They become a greater witness for Christ (2 Cor 1:4-6).
2. The persecuted will receive the Kingdom of Heaven eternally (Heb 11:35f; 1 Pet 4:12-13; see *Kingdom of God*, Mat 19:23-24).

EPHESIANS 01:03 GOD'S BLESSINGS

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
Ephesians 01:03

God's blessings are spiritual and heavenly, not material blessings. Throughout history God has used two methods of blessings to deal with man. Before Christ, God dealt with man by blessing him with material blessings. He promised Abraham and Israel land, wealth, and fame. (See *Israel, God's Special People*, John 4:22; *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom 4:1-25. See Gen. 12:1f; 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) But Israel misused and hoarded the material blessings. Instead of sharing its blessings with other nations, Israel isolated itself and claimed superiority and God-given rights over other nations of the earth. However, since Christ, God deals with man spiritually, blessing him with spiritual blessings.

Five things should be noted about this.

1. Spiritual blessings *are of the Spirit*. It is the Spirit that controls man and the circumstances that surround him. A man may feel bad; he may be down, depressed and oppressed; but if his spirit is strong, he arises and conquers his feelings. He controls and overcomes the oppressing circumstances, and he lives a victorious day. But if his spirit is weak, whether at work or at play, he often wallows around in self-pity, grumbling and griping and living a defeated day. And too often the days stretch into weeks and months until a person's life is down more than it is up — all because the spirit is too weak to conquer. Thus, the major blessings of God are bound to be blessings that are spiritual — that enable a person to control his life.
2. Spiritual blessings are the very opposite of temporal blessings. They are the *blessings of the inner man*, the blessings of the immortal. But of all blessings, they are the most glorious and satisfying. They are the blessings that erase the loneliness, alienation, and purposelessness of man. They are the blessings that give man an over-abundance of life.

3. Spiritual blessings are vastly superior to material blessings. They are *permanent and perfect and eternal*, lasting forever. They are of the very same nature as God Himself. Spiritual blessings exist and can be experienced both upon earth (the physical dimension of being) and in heaven (the spiritual dimension of being).
4. Spiritual blessings are found only *in Christ*. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God the Father. He is in heaven, surrounded by all the heavenly atmosphere and blessings. All heavenly blessings are His; He is Lord and Possessor of all blessings. Therefore, if a person is to experience the spiritual blessings, he must be *in Christ*. If a person is *in Christ*, then he sits *in heaven* with Christ. How is this possible? When a person *believes in Christ*, truly believes, God takes his faith and counts it as righteousness. God counts the person to be the same as Christ, righteous and acceptable. In God's mind *faith in Christ* makes a person just like Christ: holy and righteous and acceptable for heaven. Therefore, when a person believes in Christ, God's mind sees the person in Christ; God sees the person identified with Christ, seated in heaven. And being seated in heaven, the person can experience all the blessings of heaven. Simply stated, to be *in Christ* means to believe in God's Son so much so that God becomes elated — elated so much that He counts the person to be just like Christ: acceptable and worthy to be blessed with all the blessings of heaven.
5. God dealt with man in material blessings first because man had to learn several things.
 - a. An earthly inheritance does not last. It is subject to being lost or stolen. We either watch our material possessions deteriorate or else we leave our material possessions behind for others.
 - b. An earthly nation and material inheritance cannot bring peace and security. Peace and security are of the spirit. Earthly nations and material things are of the earth, of a corruptible nature. Thus nations and material things do not solve the spiritual struggle that man senses within his own being. Neither can nations and material things erase the spiritual divisions between men and between man and God.
 - c. Man has within his *inner being* a basic selfishness and greed. Man finds a tendency, an unregulated urge, that desires and seeks the material and hoards the corruptible to the neglect of the spiritual.
 - d. Man must undergo a basic change of character to be freed of this urge, this tendency that causes so much bondage, disruption, and division within one's self and between men. Man must be *born again*, made into a *new creation*, created into a *new man* — spiritually, permanently, perfectly, eternally. And such a spiritual creation must be performed by Someone much greater than himself. Man must be recreated by the hand of God Himself. □

GALATIANS 02:15–16 JUSTIFICATION (DIAKIOUN)

“We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners.’ Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” Galatians 02:15-16

To count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous. It does not mean to make a man righteous. All Greek verbs which end in “oun” mean not to make someone something, but merely to count, to judge, to treat someone as something.

There are three major points to note about justification.

1. Why justification is necessary.

a. Justification is necessary because of the sin and alienation of man. Man has rebelled against God and taken his life into his own hands. Man lives as he desires...

- fulfilling the lust of the eyes and of the flesh (sinful nature).
- clinging to the pride of life and to the things of the world.

Man has become sinful and ungodly, an enemy of God, pushing God out of his life and wanting little if anything to do with God. Man has separated and alienated himself from God.

b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God. “God ...expresses His wrath every day” (Psa 7:11). Sin has

aroused God’s anger and wrath. God is angry over man’s...

- rebellion
- sin
- hostility
- desertion
- ungodliness
- unrighteousness

Man has turned his back upon God, pushing God away and having little to do with Him. Man has not made God the centre of his life; man has broken his relationship with God. Therefore, the greatest need in man’s life is to discover the answer to the question: How can the relationship between man and God be restored?

2. Why God justifies a man. God justifies a man because of His Son Jesus Christ.

When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man’s faith as righteousness. Why is God willing to do this?

a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man (John 3:16; Rom 5:8).

b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.

=> Jesus Christ has secured the *Ideal* righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the *Ideal Man*, the *Perfect Man*, the *Representative Man*, the *Perfect Righteousness* that could stand for the righteousness of every man.

=> Jesus Christ came into the world to *die* for man. As the *Ideal Man* He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death *could stand* for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner (2 Cor 5:19). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the *Ideal Man*, and as the *Ideal Man* His death could stand for the death of every man.

=> Jesus Christ came into the world to *arise from the dead* and thereby to conquer death for man. As the *Ideal Man* His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God *could stand* for every man's desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ — really believes — God takes that man's belief and...

- counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as *righteous in Christ*.
- counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as having already *died in Christ*, as having already paid the penalty for sin *in the death of Christ*.
- counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been *resurrected* in Christ.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honours any man who honours His Son by *believing in Him*. He honours the man by taking the man's faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God.

3. How God justifies a man. The word justify (diakioun) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. By such God counts the man — judges him, treats him — as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. "God justifies the ungodly"— an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace. (See Rom 4:1-3; see *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom 4:1-25; *Credited, Imputed*, Rom 4:22; *Justification, Faith, Righteousness*, Rom 4:22.)

How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this? Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 3:23-24 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Rom 4:3 *What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom 5:9 *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

Rom 6:7 *Because anyone who has died [counted dead, justified] has been freed from sin.*

Rom 8:33 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Gal 2:16 *Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

Gal 3:24 *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*

MATHEW 05:06 RIGHTEOUSNESS

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Mathew 05:06

What is righteousness? In the Bible “righteousness” means two simple but profound things; it has a double meaning. It means *to be* right and *to do* right. It may be said another way: *to be good* and *to do good*. This is critically important in the Bible.

Rom 3:10 *As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.”*

Mat 19:17 *“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”*

Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

What is being said is that God alone is righteous; He alone is perfectly good. Man is not perfectly righteous; he comes short. How then can a man become perfectly righteous? What is the answer? The answer is what Christ says: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they will be filled.” What happens is this: God takes a person’s “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and *counts* it as righteousness. The person is not righteous, but God counts him righteous. This is the great love of God. A man hungers and thirsts for righteousness; therefore, God fills him.

Several things need to be said about righteousness.

1. Righteousness is explained throughout Scripture in the word *faith*. Faith is believing God and trusting the goodness of God to take our faith and count it as righteousness. “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Heb. 11:6)

It is the person who *diligently seeks God* who really believes God. The man who so *hungers and thirsts for God and His righteousness* shall be counted righteous and shall be filled.

2. The righteousness of God has been shown to man. Just what God wants man *to be* and *to do* has been demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. This is the love of God. God has not given man just the written Word describing His righteousness; He has given man a life — the life of His own Son — to show what He means by righteousness. Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness; He did nothing but good. This is what the Bible means when it talks about Christ’s being “the righteousness of God.” Christ is the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of righteousness — of *being right* and of *doing right*.

1 Cor 1:30 *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

3. Righteousness involves the mind. Scripture says involves being “made new in the attitude of your minds” (Eph 4:23), and being “renewed in knowledge” (Col 3:10).

This means that the man who seeks God is “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” He “puts on the new self or the new man” and is “made new in the attitude of [his] mind.” (Eph 4:23).

In other words, the man who seeks God has “taken off [his] old self with its practices and [has] put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Col 3:9-10). □

ROMANS 05:01: JUSTIFICATION AND PEACE

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 05:01***

The first result of justification is peace with God.

1. The meaning of peace with God is striking. Peace with God does not mean escapism, a quiet atmosphere, the absence of trouble, the control of situations by positive thinking, the denial of problems, the ability to keep from facing reality. *Peace with God means the sense and knowledge...*
 - that one has restored his relationship with God.
 - that one is no longer alienated and separated from God.
 - that one is now reconciled with God.
 - that one is now accepted by God.
 - that one is freed from the wrath and judgment of God.
 - that one is freed from fearing God’s wrath and judgment.
 - that one is now pleasing God.
 - that one is at peace with God.
2. The source of peace is Jesus Christ. Men can have peace with God only because of Jesus Christ. It is He who reconciles men to God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

Eph 2:14-15 *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.*

Col 1:20 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Isa 53:5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

3. The reason we have peace is the glorious truth of justification. □

ROMANS 04:22 JUSTIFICATION: FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS

*This is why “it is credited to him as righteousness.” **Romans 04:22***

In simple terms *justification* means that God takes the believer’s faith and counts it as righteousness (Rom 4:3; see Gen. 15:6)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*, God takes that person’s faith and counts it for righteousness (Rom 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God’s glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ *is his Saviour*. Such belief honours God’s Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honours God’s Son, God accepts that person’s faith for righteousness. God counts that person’s faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. A person’s belief — the right kind of belief — is critical.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*

II. *Luke 06:24–26 The Judgment of Those Who Follow Materialism*

There is the judgment to those who follow materialism.

1. The warning is strong to the rich. Who are the rich? Realistically, in comparison to what the vast majority of the world has, a rich person is anyone who has anything to put back beyond meeting the true needs of his own family. This is exactly what Christ and the Bible say time and again (see also Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4; Acts 4:34-35).

Why are the rich warned? Because wealth pulls a person away from the Kingdom of Heaven. It is difficult for a rich person to enter heaven. Christ made this statement because of the things that *pulled* the rich young ruler away from heaven. There is a lure, an attraction, a force, a power, a pull that reaches out and draws any of us who look at or possess wealth. There are pulls so forceful that they will enslave and doom any rich person who fails to turn and embrace God.

- a. *Wealth creates the big “I”*. The wealthy are usually esteemed, honoured, and envied. Wealth brings position, power, and recognition. It boosts ego, making a person self-sufficient and independent in this world. As a result there is a tendency for the rich man to feel that he is truly independent and self-sufficient, that he needs nothing. And in such an atmosphere and world of thought, God is forgotten. The rich person forgets there are things that money cannot buy and events from which money cannot save. Peace, love, joy — all that really matter within the spirit of man — can never be bought. Neither can money save one from disaster, disease, accident, and death.
- b. *Wealth tends to make one hoard*. The Bible lays down the principle of handling money for all men, even for the poor:

Eph 4:28 *He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*

Mat 19:19; 22:39 *“‘Honour your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”*

The world reels in desperate need. People are starving, sick, homeless, and unclothed by the millions; and teeming millions are spiritually lost and without God in this world and doomed to die without ever knowing Him. When any of us sit still and objectively look at the world in its desperate plight, how can we keep from asking: “How can any man hoard and not help — even to the last available penny? Why would any man keep more than what he needs for himself and his family?”

As God looks at the rich, He is bound to ask the same questions. In fact, His questions are bound to be more pointed and forceful. This is exactly what Christ said to the rich young ruler:

Mat 19:21 *Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

- c. *Riches tend to make a man selfish.* For some unexplainable reason, the more we get, the more we want. When we taste the things of this world and become comfortable, we tend to fear losing our possessions. We struggle to keep what we have and to get more. True, many are willing to make contributions, but only a certain amount, an amount that will not lower their overall estate or standing or level of comfort and possessions. There are few who give all they are and have to Christ to meet the needs of the world.

As Jesus said, “How hard it is for the rich [meaning those who have anything in comparison with most of the world] to enter the kingdom of God” (see Luke 18:24). If we do not have compassion and take care of our brothers (fellow-man) when they are in desperate need, how can we expect God to have compassion and take care of us when we face the desperate need for heaven? It is foolish for us to think that a loving and just God will meet our need for eternal life when we would not meet the need of our fellow-man for earthly life. The rich have the means to help and to save human life, *if they would*.

- d. *Wealth attaches one to the world.* Wealth enables one to buy things that...

- make him comfortable
- expand his experience
- stimulate his flesh
- challenge his mental pursuit
- please his taste
- stir his ego
- stretch his self-image

If a man centres his life upon the things of the world, his attention is on the world not on God. He tends to become wrapped up in securing more and in protecting what he has. Too often, he gives little if any time and thought to heavenly matters. Wealth and the things it can provide usually consume the rich.

The judgment of the rich is their wealth on earth. The word *received* (apechete) means a receipt in full. Their only *comfort* (paraklesin, help, aid, encouragement) is to be on this earth — the wealth they have. There will be no consolation after this life — no help, no aid, no encouragement, no cheer. They are *paid in full*. They choose this life, so all the good they will receive is the good they now experience.

1 Tim 6:7 *For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.*

1 Tim 6:9 *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

James 5:3 *Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.*

Deu 8:13-14 *And when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

Job 20:28 *A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath.*

Job 27:16 *Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay.*

Psa 39:6 *Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.*

Psa 49:10 *For all can see that wise men die; the foolish and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others.*

Psa 62:10 *Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.*

Prov 23:5 *Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.*

Prov 27:24 *For riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.*

Prov 28:20 *A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.*

Eccl 2:18 *I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.*

Jer 17:11 *Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay is the man who gains riches by unjust means. When his life is half gone, they will desert him, and in the end he will prove to be a fool.*

2. The warning is strong to the full. The full are the opposite of those who hunger for righteousness. The full are those who are filled with all that the world has to offer; in essence they are full of themselves, their own desires, urges, and cravings. They have no hunger for righteousness at all. Scripture identifies the full as those who...

- till their stomachs with the pods of the world (Luke 15:16).
- serve their own appetites and not the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 16:18).
- indulge in the food (things, sins) of the world (1 Cor 6:13; see 6:9-13).
- make their god their stomachs (Ph. 3:19).
- “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them” (Rom 1:29-32).

The judgment of the full will be hunger. This means they...

- will leave all that filled them behind when they die (Luke 12:20; 16:25).

- will have no desires filled after this life.
- will have no delights fulfilled throughout eternity.
- will hunger for good (righteousness) and for the good things throughout eternity.

Rev 3:17 *You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*

Psa 17:10 *They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths peak with arrogance.*

Ezek 16:49 *Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned: they did not help the poor and needy.*

3. The warning is strong to the merry, to those who laugh now. This means three things.

Laughing now refers to those who have no sense of sin, no sorrow or regret over evil and suffering, no brokenness over the cross and their own sin. Their joy is carnal and sensual.

Laughing now refers to those who are laughing it up *in the world* with all its comfort and ease, pleasures and stimulations, recreations and pastimes. Their joy is the indulgence and entertaining of their flesh.

Laughing now refers to those who pay little or no attention to the reality of the world, a world suffering under the weight of evil and disaster, greed and selfishness, sin and death. Their joy is found in denying and ignoring the truth of the world or in giving a pittance of time or money to help in order to ease their consciences.

The warning and judgment to the merry is mourning and weeping. They are doomed because they refused to face the reality of a world lost in sin and evil, a world that needed their attention and help. They refused to help the needy, those who suffered and wept so much in this world.

Therefore, they will be left alone in the next world to mourn and weep over their great loss.

Job 20:5 *That the mirth of the wicked is brief, the joy of the godless lasts but a moment.*

Prov 14:13 *Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief.*

Eccl 7:6 *Like the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of fools. This too is meaningless.*

James 4:8-10 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

4. The warning is strong to the prideful and compromising. These are the opposite of those who are persecuted for Christ's sake. The worldly speak well of those who live worldly...

- who live as they live
- who speak as they speak
- who compromise
- who seek their company and approval
- who never point out the truth of sin and death, judgment and hell

Worldly men want attention and esteem, position and place, honour and praise, recognition and applause. Men honour such ambitions and rewards. Therefore, they speak well of men who attain such. But note what Jesus said. He said that *false prophets* were those of whom the world spoke well, and this was their reward, all they would ever receive. They coveted worldly recognition and honour and they received it, but at the expense of heavenly recognition and honour.

Thought 1. We are not to be as false prophets, slapping men on the back, acknowledging and compromising with their worldliness. If we do, the world will speak well of us, but we will lose our reward. What the believer must do is tell the truth to all men: all men need a Saviour and their eternal fate depends upon their coming to Him for salvation, seeking His righteousness.

Job 32:21 *I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man.*

Prov 20:19 *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.*

Prov 24:24 *Whoever says to the guilty, “You are innocent” — peoples will curse him and nations denounce him.*

Prov 26:28 *A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

Prov 29:5 *Whoever flatters his neighbour is spreading a net for his feet.*

Psa 12:3 *May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue.*

2 Tim 4:3 *For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*

Titus 1:11 *They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach — and that for the sake of dishonest gain.*

2 Pet 2:1-2 *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ■*