

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After the Epiphany C****Luke 6:17-26****“I Have Bad News and Good News For You”**

“I have good news and bad news for you.” What happens to your heart rate when you hear these words? Is that the normal order people say this to us, the good news 1<sup>st</sup> and then the bad? How do you prefer to hear? Do you want the good or the bad first? God’s revelation of Himself to us in His Word of Holy Bible is both good and bad news. That is the order of our text. But the importance, emphasis, and priority of what God wants us to know about Himself works the other way. First comes the bad news of God’s law which shows us our sin and rightly judges us to condemnation for our disobedience against His holy will. But that is not the whole story of God’s Word. God then speaks to us His good news, the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen from the dead.

**I. Jesus’ Sermon Is Bad News**

We will reverse Jesus’ order and go with the bad news first. Woe to you who are rich, well fed, laugh, and spoken well of. All of that is in the here and now. When that is what get from this world, that is all the comfort we will have, temporary in time and limited in effects. Now, there is nothing wrong in and of itself with any of those things until we place our hope, trust, confidence and faith in them. Because of our sinful nature we turn blessings from God into curses upon ourselves when we allow those things of this world to become our gods and thus lead us away from the one true God. We turn blessings from God into curses upon ourselves when we gladly take the stuff from God without in return thanking Him in prayer, praise and worship for His daily goodness to us. For by doing so we limit God’s goodness to us to the here and now. When we remove God from the blessings He gives us, the comfort we receive from God is limited to this world and lasts for only this short life, if even for that long. The list of those who file for bankruptcy is filled with lottery winners and highly-paid professional football players. A lot of wealthy, successful and powerful people by the world’s standards can’t make it through a week without seeing a counselor to get them through their daily depression.

“Woe to you when all people speak well of you.” Don’t we want others to speak well of us? Yes, but for proper and godly reasons. Here Jesus means being spoken well of by this unbelieving, sinful, rebellious world because we fit right in with its celebrating of sin. This happened in ancient times to the false prophets, those who said about God and people what ungodly people wanted to hear. Today, similar preachers are congratulated for being with it, open-minded, in tune with their surroundings, up-to-date, progressive, enlightened, and so forth. Unbelievers indeed will speak very well of us if we compromise, conform, and give in to their ungodly ways. Unbelievers indeed will speak well of us if we turn our life’s allegiance over to the world around us and turn our backs on the God who created us. But their temporary congratulations will become God’s eternal curses for those who give into their temptations. Standing before the Lord in judgment the good times of our false living now will be replaced by an eternity of spiritual hunger, mourning, and weeping where there will be no more blessings from the God whose will we ignored in this life.

## II. Jesus’ Sermon Is Good News

That’s the bad news, and it is really very bad news, eternally bad news. But that bad news is overcome by even better good news for us. This good news is for those Jesus describes as poor, who are hungry and weep, those not always blessed in the stuff of this world. Jesus further speaks of them as hated, excluded, reviled and spurned, all for the sake of the Son of Man (Jesus Himself). This takes place when our pursuit of God-pleasing priorities penalizes us with unpopularity in this world. Such is happening in the here and now, but it is temporary in time and limited in its effects. As the people of God in Jesus Christ we should not let it get us down.

Why? Jesus is speaking to His faithful ones, we who live our lives with His holy name placed upon us in our baptism. We are part of the Kingdom of God where God lives and rules in the hearts and minds of those who are called by Him, who in turn love Him. When this world stands up and cheers the legalized killing of the almost born, even newborn babies, we must, in turn, stand up to fight for their right to life. When this world celebrates its use of our

sexuality in ways contrary to God's gift and creation, we must say that God has the better way. The tough times of living in this life where our Lord's spiritual enemies attack us on daily basis are only temporary. That day is coming when Jesus will return in all His divine glory and gather all His faithful people to Himself.

Jesus tells us that we can rejoice and leap for joy because great is our reward in heaven, the life as God created it to be for us. What a wonderful party and a grand celebration it will be for the people of God in Jesus Christ when He returns personally for us. It will be larger than the biggest family reunion we could ever imagine. There will be more to celebrate than even the Super Bowl champions or Daytona 500 winner has to celebrate. We will be united with all God's people, including those ancient prophets of God who spoke His word in spite of and in face of sinful human opposition.

### III. How Will I Respond to Jesus' Sermon?

#### A. What Is My Personal Mission?

Until Jesus returns, either for us personally or for the world as a whole, we now ask ourselves, "what is my personal mission?" What is my life all about? Why am I here? What can I do for my Lord? It is not complicated, let's make the options simple:

A) I am all about giving glory to God by what I say and do; or

B) I will serve others by helping them in their times of need, whether great or small; or

C) I will satisfy myself by doing the short-sighted and selfish things that my sinful nature wants me to do.

Putting it that way, what Christians in their right mind would pick option C? None of us should. But because of the sinful nature that still clings to us, none of us are in our right mind. We do not always think spiritually straight. Left to our own spiritual strength and abilities, our lives are all about me, myself and I. Do we need any proof of this? How did we spend our time during month of January? How many of those 31 days did we spend any time in Christian worship,

Bible study, personal or family devotions? During how many of those 748 hours were we helping out someone else just because they needed help from us? Then compare that to how many of those 4480 minutes we used to satisfy our own desires, recreation and pleasure. From there we then could get into another topic; how did we spend the money God gave us during month of January?

### B. Jesus Is Present With Me

Left to ourselves, we will fall under the condemnations of Jesus' woes rather than rejoice in His blessings. So it is best not to be left to ourselves. The crowd in our text did the right thing. They came to Jesus to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. Jesus still is here with us. Jesus comes to us. He is physically present in our lives and in our worship through His Word and Sacraments.

Jesus touches us in holy baptism with the power of His Holy Spirit to bring us to faith in Him as our Savior, to join us to Himself in death to sin and in resurrection to eternal life, and to make our bodies His earthly temples. Jesus speaks His Word to us so that we can hear Him and learn from Him through His inspired word of Holy Bible. Jesus heals us of the disease of our sins through forgiveness of sins He has won for us on cross and gives to us as, risen from dead, He is present for us with His body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

### Conclusion

What happens to your heart rate, pulse, and blood pressure when spouse, doctor, or accountant says "I have good news and bad news for you?" When Jesus says these words to us we can stay calm, cool and collected. Jesus has taken care of the bad news of our sins by His perfect life and His sacrificial death on the cross. Because of His resurrection from the dead, Jesus is God's good news for us that great is our reward in heaven.