

## The Upside-Down Kingdom

2026-01-25 – Luke 6:20-49



When Jesus came, he announced that he was bringing a new kingdom. As followers began amassing around him, he taught them what it would mean to be citizens in the kingdom where he reigns. This Sunday, we are looking at how the king perfectly embodies what he commands us to do, and how we can follow in his example.

Good morning, everyone. It is good to see you all. I got in around 5:30 this morning and I wondered what this morning would look like. Our prayer meeting started out with about five people at 9:00, but it multiplied to like 50 people here praying this morning. That was such a blessed time. And so I want to thank you for being here. I am excited for this morning. We are going to be celebrating. We're going to end our service by praying over Ashton Wilson, our new youth pastor, and his wife Brynn and their little baby that I get to see in person for the first time. You don't have to hold it up like "The Lion King," but the baby's in here and I know it. I sensed it. But we are very excited to celebrate today and to celebrate the renovations being complete in our fellowship hall. And to have that meal after this—you're all going to have to eat a lot because I was told no leftovers today. So come hungry. But right now, I hope you are hungry for the Word of God because this morning we are in one of—if you were to ask me, "Matt, what's your favorite passage in Luke?" I would say no favoritism, but, but in Luke chapter 6 we get to see Jesus preach a sermon. And the Master teacher, from verse 20 of chapter 6 to the end of the chapter, lays out the values of the Kingdom of God in the clearest and most radical way.

What Jesus says in Luke chapter 6 becomes famous in Acts chapter 17 because as Paul and the disciples of Jesus are spreading the gospel on the other side of his death and resurrection, some of the men who encounter Paul as he's proclaiming the risen king say, "**These men have turned the world upside down**" (Acts 17:6). You've probably seen this imagery before. The Gospel is called "The Upside-Down Kingdom" because when Jesus came and he spoke and he preached, we realized that it is the greatest who will become the least, and he became the least, and that is why he is the greatest. And today we are going to look at the passage and the place where Jesus talks about the Kingdom he came to bring. And I want to make sure you understand what I mean by "Kingdom." In Scripture there are two kingdoms and only two: light and darkness, good and evil. There's the Kingdom of God, and there is the dominion of darkness. It says in Colossians 1:13–14 you belong to one of these kingdoms. There is no way around that.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The question for today is **Which Kingdom do you belong to?** Who is the king that you follow? And today, as we open up to Luke 6, we are going to answer that question with clarity as we see Jesus declare the values of what it looks like to be a citizen in the Kingdom where he reigns.

To that end, I'm going to pray and then we will jump into our passage.

*Father in Heaven, Father, we thank you for snow plows, we thank you for salt. We thank you for heaters. We thank you for just all of these things that allow us to gather. We thank you, Lord, that we are in a nation where we are able to gather together and pray and worship. And Father, we thank you that whether or not we are in a place where we are allowed to do that, we are in the Kingdom where we can give you glory. We pray this morning, Lord, that your Spirit would be guiding our time. We pray, Lord, you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear. I pray, Lord, that if there are those here that are trusting in their own righteousness, if there are those here that do not know which Kingdom they belong to, that long before the end of this service, when we say Amen, that you would make it abundantly clear to them who you are. I pray, Lord, that for any who are blind in this room, your Spirit would open their eyes and they would see. And I pray for all the believers in here that we would leave today recognizing the radical way that you have loved us. I pray, Lord, that you would speak to me, that you would speak through me, that these would be your words and not mine. And we praise you, Lord, that you sent your Son. It is in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

So we're looking at the question, **Which Kingdom do you belong to?** And we're in Luke 6 starting at verse 20. And I just want to set the stage for you. We've been in Luke looking since a couple weeks ago at how Jesus, when he started his ministry, he resisted temptation in the wilderness—not defeated the devil there, but he resisted temptation. He ultimately defeats him on the cross and ultimately will defeat him in the end. But he resisted and drove off the devil through using the Word of God. And then he began to declare that he is king, that he is the Messiah who has come. He says, “I'm bringing the year of Jubilee into your midst.” He brings abundance. He starts to call disciples. Now, early on, some people reject him like the people of his hometown. They're ready to stone him and throw him off a cliff and drop stones on him because he is saying he is the Messiah. Many begin to follow him. The crowds press in. At one point he has to go on a boat to preach. As he begins to amass followers, he also begins to amass haters. The Pharisees begin to see him do things, and they say, “Why are your disciples eating on the Sabbath? Why are you healing on the Sabbath?” And he says, “You have misunderstood the purpose of this day. If you see me do good and you are calling me unrighteous...”

We come to Luke 6:20 and Jesus has just gone up a mountain. And he prayed all night. And I don't know about you, but if I was the all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere Son of God, I would probably get my shut-eye instead of staying up all night praying. But he prays all night, we're told

in Luke 6. And that's the model for us, the need to be in prayer. And at the end of praying, he chooses 12 disciples—people who he knew would follow him and one who would betray him from before the foundations of the world. He chooses them. He comes down the mountain. And at the start of Luke 6:20, he's standing in front of those 12 men and then a broad group of disciples. And he's about to preach his first sermon we see fully in the Gospel of Luke. And to these men we will see him carry out and show the picture of the Kingdom. And the question that he is asking is, **Which Kingdom do you belong to?**

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?

The first thing we're going to see in the introduction in the first 6 verses: Jesus is going to announce that the Kingdom that he brings is the Kingdom full of his righteousness. So do you belong to the Kingdom full of his righteousness or the Kingdom full of your righteousness?

<p>Then looking up at his disciples, he said: Blessed are you who are <b>poor</b>, because the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are <b>hungry</b> now, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who <b>weep</b> now, because you will <b>laugh</b>. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man.</p>	
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<p>“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way <b>their ancestors used to treat the prophets</b>.</p>	
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Luke 6:20-23 CSB

**Looking up at his disciples, Jesus said: “Blessed are you who are poor, because the Kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, because you will be filled. And blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh.”** (Luke 6:20–21). Now when we read these words, we need to understand the day in which Jesus is saying them. Because Jesus is talking about physical poverty in that day. But if you were an ancient Jew in that day, sitting as Jesus taught, and you were being told, “Blessed are the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God,” the assumption of everyone listening was that the rich already have the Kingdom of God because God has already blessed them. The

Pharisees were assured of their self-righteousness because how could we have all this stuff? How could we follow in such a great way except by the proof that God has blessed us? The idea that Jesus is lifting up the poor, the hungry, and those who weep is Jesus saying that those who know they are far from God—it's speaking both of physical and spiritual, and for us today as we read it, we need to immediately move it to spiritual because that's how the people of that day would have understood it.

When it says blessed are the poor, it's blessed are those who lack righteousness. Because if you know you lack righteousness, you'll turn to the source. Blessed are you if you hunger for righteousness, because there is a source that satisfies. And blessed are you if you are weeping because of how sinful you are, because if he has opened your eyes to that, he will save you.

He goes on: ***“Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, and they insult you and slander you on account of my name. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note, your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.”*** (Luke 6:22–23). Jesus says you think the satisfaction should come in this life. But if you follow me in my Kingdom, it will come to you eventually when you are in my Kingdom in truth someday. When he says their ancestors did this—this is how they treated the prophets—that language, if you read the book of Jeremiah, it's the best example. Jeremiah 25 brings the word of the Lord about how God is going to use Babylon to bring the people into exile and the people are ready to kill him. That's like the theme of Jeremiah. Jeremiah gives a word of the Lord, the people reject it. And then they find false prophets who say, “Actually, Jeremiah's wrong.” And Jeremiah responds again and again to that with, “I hope they're right, but we are going to see the word of the Lord play out.” The people in ancient Israel who were valued were those who told the people what they wanted to hear, not those who told the people what they needed to hear.

And Jesus says, if you hunger and thirst and weep for righteousness that only comes through me, I will satisfy you, but this world will hate you, exclude you, insult you, and slander your name on account of it. Your reward will be great in heaven. Now, this is radical, but for the people of that day, they would have been thinking, oh, we're being lifted up to the same status as the rich and the full and those who are laughing.

Then looking up at his disciples, he said: Blessed are you who are <b>poor</b> , because the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are <b>hungry</b> now, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who <b>weep</b> now, because you will <b>laugh</b> .	But Woe to you who are <b>rich</b> , for you have received your comfort. Woe to you who are now <b>full</b> , for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are now <b>laughing</b> , for you will mourn and <b>weep</b> .
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<p>Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man.</p> <p>“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way <b>their ancestors used to treat the prophets.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Luke 6:20-23 CSB</p>	<p>Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for this is the way <b>their ancestors used to treat the false prophets.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Luke 6:24-26 CSB</p>
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And then Jesus keeps going: ***“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your comfort already. Woe to you who are now full, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are now laughing, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the false prophets”*** (Luke 6:24–26). It is an exact inversion. If you think you are righteous before God, woe to you. If you think you are satisfied, you've become righteous enough and full enough in what you've done, you're gonna be hungry. And if you laugh in this life and think you are great and that you are great in the eyes of God, you will spend your eternity mourning and weeping as you are separated from God forever.

Now these words are so radical that Jesus says them here and by the end of Luke, before he dies and rises again, before the coming of the Spirit, the people don't get it at all. How do I know this? Well, you know the story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18 where this young man comes to Jesus and he's rich. I imagine he's good looking because, you know, all rich people are good looking, but he comes to Jesus and he goes, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And he thinks the answer from Jesus is going to be, “My good sir, you already have it.” But Jesus looks at him and he loves him and he says, “You know what you need to do, you need to sell everything you have and give it to the poor and follow me.” And the young man goes away sad. And then Jesus says to all his disciples present, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. It's important to note there are all these modern scholarship things that take this passage and say, well, the eye of the needle was certainly like an old Jerusalem gate that a camel—it would be hard to—no, no, no, no, no. That came about at about 1000 AD. Jesus was talking about shoving a camel through a needle that you would use to thread a shirt. And he is saying, if you think you have wealth and righteousness and goodness from God in your own strength and works, that camel's got a better chance than you do. The world is flipped upside down by these words.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?

The people who would have heard these words would have marveled at what he was saying because the Kingdom is full of his righteousness. You belong to his Kingdom.

This is a reality that we all must face. When you read carefully through scripture, if you think you can earn your salvation—that is you thinking you can be rich and full and laughing on your own—the whole gospel speaks to the reality of how wrong this is. We are all sinners saved by grace. If we are believers, it is outside of us to save ourselves. It's outside of us to even move us to salvation without the work of God first and foremost. If you do not believe this, you have misread scripture because it is he who saves us. And if we settle for anything else, we have changed and distorted the truth of the gospel. And so I ask you, **which Kingdom do you belong to?** The Kingdom full of his righteousness or the Kingdom full of your own righteousness? Someday you're gonna stand before God on the throne. And if you're relying on your righteousness, I promise you it will not be a good day. But if you rely on his righteousness, it's not because of what you've done, it's because you have been redeemed by his blood and clothed in his righteousness, and you are able to stand before him because of what he has promised and how he has brought it about. **Which Kingdom do you belong to?**

Now we move on to the body of the sermon where Jesus is going to say, I want to make this very clear for you. My Kingdom turns the world upside down, and it is full of my righteousness, not the righteousness of this world.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?  
The Kingdom where enemies receive mercy  
or the kingdom where enemies are destroyed?

The second point we're going to see: **which Kingdom do you belong to?** Do you belong to the Kingdom where enemies receive mercy or the Kingdom where enemies are destroyed?

“But I say to you who listen:  
Love our enemies,  
do what is good to those who hate you,  
bless those who curse you,  
pray for those who mistreat you.  
Luke 6:27-28 CSB

Blessed are you when people hate you,  
when they exclude you,  
and insult you,  
and reject your name as evil,  
because of the Son of Man.

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,

	Because great is your reward is great in heaven.  For this is the way <b>their ancestors used to treat the prophets.</b>
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After Jesus says this upside-down thing, the next thing he says is even more radical. ***“But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you”*** (Luke 6:27–28). And in case you want to take this to some abstract place of my enemies far away, the enemies of the nation I'm in, or anything like that, do you know who the enemies he's talking about are? When people hate you, when they exclude you, when they insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man, I say to you love them, do good for them, bless them, and pray again.

Now you may say, Pastor Matt, that's hard to do. You know I'm blessed as a pastor. My coworkers are believers, you know, in the office, if I share my faith, they're just like, yeah, Matt, we get it, you know, like we're with you. And many of you live in much harder day-to-day realities to be. And it may be hard in your day-to-day reality to love those who persecute you if they know you're a believer. You can pray for them. You can always be praying for them. You can seek to love them and do good for them and bless them. And that is what Christ is calling us to do. And let me make sure you understand this. He's not calling us to do something he has not done because before the Kingdom came in, before Jesus brought his Kingdom by our own strength, we were all enemies of God. So if he did not love his enemies, you and I would still be his enemies.

Love our **enemies**, do what is good to **those who hate you**, **bless those who curse you**, pray for **those who mistreat you**.

If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either. Give to everyone who ask you, and from someone who takes your things, don't ask for them back. Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.

Luke 6:29-31 CSB

He goes on from here and ***the love your enemies, do good, bless and pray for those who mistreat you***—that's the framing of all of this next part. ***“If anyone hits you on the cheek, which would have been a grave insult in that day, let him also hit the other. And if anyone takes away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either. Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don't ask for them back. Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.”***

Now this is not Jesus advocating for a lawless society. This is Jesus speaking of when you are persecuted for my name, go above and beyond to love that person who is persecuting you. This is not a passage to say what if the rule of law falls apart. This is a passage to say win over the

nations, win over the people in your life who revile and hate and exclude you—by how you love them and pray for them and point them to me.

Love our enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

If you love those who love you, **what credit is that to you?**

Even sinners love those who love them.

If you do what is good to those who are good to you, **what credit is that to you?**

Even sinners do that.

And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, **what credit is that to you?**

Even sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full.

But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Luke 6:32-36 CSB

He goes on: ***“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to be repaid in full”*** (Luke 6:32–34).

And I want to take you right back to our Savior here, because he gained nothing. Right, we gained everything. We were his enemies. And yet he made us children of God. ***“But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful”*** (Luke 6:35–36). He is saying the way that I have loved you, you are to love one another. And he is saying there there's no doubt that it is going to turn the world upside down because when you do this, you are going to do this to people who hate you, revile you, exclude you, who slander you on account of my name. That does not change your mission because it did not change mine.

When we get to the end of the gospel of Luke 22 and 23, and we watch his arrest, of the sham of his trial. When we watched them beat him. When we watched them mock him. When we watched him nailed to the tree, what does he say? ***“Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing”*** (Luke 23:34). We follow a king who is perfectly living out what he is calling us to and has turned the world upside down for all who believe.

Love our enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged.

Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven.  
Give, and it will be given to you;

a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Luke 37-38 CSB

The last point he makes after in this middle section after talking about be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful: ***“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: His final illustration is a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you”*** (Luke 6:37–38). The imagery here in this day would have been you go to a merchant. And a merchant that's stingy is going to pull the cup out full of whatever you're buying and they're going to level the top off. And when you're not looking, they're going to tip some extra out, right? And they're going to pour the exact amount. But he is talking about the way your heavenly Father digs in and dumps out an overflowing amount of grace and mercy upon you. Do the same for others. If Jesus is on the throne in your life, because he is on the throne, if you recognize that he is on the throne, follow in his example of mercy and grace.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?  
The Kingdom where enemies receive mercy  
or the kingdom where enemies are destroyed?

**Which Kingdom do you belong to?** Is it the Kingdom where enemies receive mercy or the Kingdom where enemies are destroyed? If you choose the Kingdom where enemies receive mercy, you are an enemy of God who has received mercy, because of the blood of Jesus Christ. If you're a part of the Kingdom of the world, you are the part of the Kingdom where our enemies are destroyed and make no mistake, at the end, God will send all who are from the Kingdom of the world, and they will spend an eternity in weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell because they have fully rejected the Kingdom of God. That there is no way around this. So do you want to be in a Kingdom where the king gives mercy to his enemies? Or the Kingdom where enemies are destroyed?

After Jesus sets all this up, he closes with a series of illustrations that help us understand exactly what he is calling us to do.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?

The Kingdom where enemies receive mercy  
or the kingdom where enemies are destroyed?

The Kingdom where the king calls you to follow  
or the kingdom where you call yourself king?

As we talk about **which Kingdom we belong to**, we come to the end and we ask you belong to the Kingdom where the king calls you to follow or the Kingdom where you call yourself king.

Summarizing questions of verses 39-49:

- Can the blind guide the blind? (39)
- Can a disciple be above his teacher? (40)
- Why do you judge your brother before taking care of yourself? (41-42)
- Can a bad tree produce good fruit? (43-45)
- Can a house stand when it is not built on a strong foundation? (46-49)

In Luke 6:39–49, as we look at which Kingdom will we be a part of, there are a series of five parables, back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back. And some people say, well, Luke probably just threw all these together because they're so disjointed. But Jesus is a master teacher, and he goes from blessings and woes—my Kingdom is upside down. If you're a part of my Kingdom, it means you love your enemy and you follow my example—to this final set of illustrations where he says, if you're going to follow me, you're gonna do it on my terms because I am the king and you are called to follow.

The first one we see is the question: **“Can the blind guide the blind?” Jesus asked them. “Won’t they both fall into a pit?”** (Luke 6:39). Now I hope you know the blind cannot lead the blind. I hope that is very apparent. Coming off what we have just read before it, Jesus right now is saying if you try and figure this out on your own, you are going to trust in your own richness, your own satisfaction, and your own laughing. You are not going to be someone who turns to me. You cannot come to Kingdom values on your own because you are blind. A key theme in the whole gospel of Luke is Jesus came to give sight to the blind. If you try and lead yourself, you will never follow the king. If he is not on the throne in your life and make no mistake, the question is not whether or not he's really on the throne, but if you don't see him on the throne, if you see the world opposite of the Kingdom of God, if you try and reign and follow him in your own way, if you try and do good and righteousness in your own way, you are blind. And you will find yourself in the pit. And make no mistake, that pit is imagery of hell. You will find yourself separated from him. If you pursue others instead of Jesus, you will find yourself in the pit. If you seek to be on the throne, or you seek

someone else besides Christ to be on the throne, he is the only way to the Father. The blind cannot lead the blind.

Jesus goes on to say ***“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher”*** (Luke 6:40). The only way to come to the Kingdom is through the Word of God and through the work of God, through the Spirit of God and through the work of Jesus Christ. This is not something that you can do on your own because if you could do it on your own, you'd be saying you're greater than the teaching and the Word and the ministry of Jesus Christ. And if somehow you think that is true, go back to the blind one, OK, go back to the blind one, because you're gonna fall in a pit. If you really think you can be greater than Jesus. Can a disciple be above his teacher? No.

From here, Jesus goes on to use the imagery of Why do you judge your brother before taking care yourself? ***“Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye, but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye,’ when you yourself don’t see the beam of wood in your eye? Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the splinter in your brother’s eye”*** (Luke 6:41–42). The imagery here, we're going to see this play out as we keep reading in the Gospel of Luke. One of the key things the Pharisees say about Jesus: “Why does he spend so much time with sinners?” The response of Jesus—one of my favorite responses: ***“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick”*** (Luke 5:31). And in case you don't know that when Jesus is not saying the Pharisees are healthy. He's saying you're sick and you don't know. As soon as you know that, blessed will be you when you realize how poor you are.

The reality of this imagery is Jesus is saying here it's not about can you judge others and can you say, well, that person, they think they're rich, but they're poor. The Kingdom of God is not a place for comparison of saying I'm better than him or I'm better than her. It's not a place of saying, well, comparatively I think my righteousness is average plus one. So I think on the bell curve, I'll fall into the heaven category. No. If you walk in that kind of blindness, get the beam out of your own eye. Notice the passage does not say don't worry about your brother and say ah, he'll just have that splinter until it gets infected. No, help your brother, but start with yourself. As you learn from the master, as the teacher turns you, as you have sight and are not blind, use that to point others to the Kingdom.

And we go from here to the imagery of bad and good trees and the fruit they produce. ***“A good tree doesn’t produce bad fruit, on the other hand, a bad tree doesn’t produce good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren’t gathered from thorn bushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush. A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of***

*the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart”* (Luke 6:43–45). Jesus here is making it abundantly clear you're part of one Kingdom or you're part of the other. You are either bearing fruit for the name of Jesus or you are a thorn tree, a bramble tree. You're going to be tossed in the fire in the final judgment. There is no room to say, well, sometimes I bear fruit and sometimes I don't. In the Kingdom of God, we are pursuing—we are righteous because of what he has done, and we seek to bear good fruit.

He is saying if you're comfortable living—and there's no such thing as I've got one foot in the Kingdom and one foot in the other Kingdom. One of the most devastating things—I'm going to ramp as a youth pastor for a moment—something that I used to see on social media all the time with students was that there would be these like Christian influencers would be like, “hey, I struggled today and I felt like I had one foot in the world and I had one foot in the Kingdom. And I know I need to turn this way, but I'm sorry,” No. No, if you're saying I've got one foot in either you can't have yet. No one can serve two masters. If you're bragging about that to show how authentic you are, if you are walking in that kind of nonsense, you are not looking and seeing the value of the Kingdom of God. If you say some days I bear fruit in accordance, other days I don't even try, I want to encourage you to repent and start bearing fruit. Turn to the Lord. Do not forsake what the Lord has called you to. Because if you are a follower of Jesus, as you learn from the Master, as you learn from the Teacher, as you become fully trained, you should look more and more like him, not more and more like someone who juggles the values of the world and the values of heaven. If that is who you are, repent.

And this brings us to the last imagery. Can a house stand when it is not built on a strong foundation? Jesus here says, *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don't do the things I say?”* (Luke 6:46). This language is if you call me king and don't follow me as king and never follow me as king, don't be surprised in the end when I don't call you citizen.

This is imagery we see in Matthew 25. This is imagery we see here where Jesus says, I'll show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. *“He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed against that house and couldn't shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately it collapsed. And the destruction of that house was great”* (Luke 6:47–49).

If you're a part of my Kingdom, you are going to weather storms because you are built upon me and you walk in obedience. That is what Jesus is saying. But if you build and trust in your own understanding—sublime, leading the blind—it's the pit. The destruction of that house was great.

**Which kingdom do you belong to?**

The Kingdom full of His righteousness  
or the kingdom full of your “righteousness”?  
The Kingdom where enemies receive mercy  
or the kingdom where enemies are destroyed?  
The Kingdom where the king calls you to follow  
or the kingdom where you call yourself king?

So I asked you again, **which Kingdom do you belong to?** The Kingdom where the king calls you to follow or the Kingdom where you call yourself king. And you may say, well, Pastor Matt, I don't call Jesus king, but I also don't call myself king. Well, if you think you're in a position to choose who the king is at all, you're in a position of pretty high authority. The upside-down Kingdom picture that we have in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts is a picture where when you see the world the way it truly is, you realize that the only foundation is Christ Jesus. The only foundation for our righteousness, the only foundation for us to follow comes from him. And the upside-down Kingdom imagery I love in light of that last image of the foundation on rock, because if you're built on Jesus, you know, you're this way. If the world tips over, you're still built on Jesus. If you build on nothing, the result will be you stand on nothing. Christ Jesus is the only foundation.

And so I ask you again, **which Kingdom do you belong to?** And if you belong to the Kingdom of Jesus, when people look at you, do they see someone who knows that in their own strength they are poor and they hunger for righteousness, and they weep because of their sin? Because if those statements aren't true about you, you are not representing the Kingdom well. If your faith and hope in this life is in how you are perceived in this life, you will be utterly disappointed in the end. If your hope in this life is to build up a Kingdom for yourself and then at the last moment to pray on your deathbed to say, well I gotta cover this up and make sure I'm OK. I believe the Lord can work that way. But the one who hears this message and walks away from it? The destruction of that house will be great.

I want to encourage you if you are here today and you are a believer that this sermon from Jesus is a call to how we should live each and every day. And when Jesus says love your enemies, let's make sure we understand loving your enemies in gospel terms does not just mean, oh hey, they can do whatever they want. No, it means speaking truth to them, doing good. It's not good to just usher people on to hell and say whatever you want to do, you can do. No, we need to be standing on from the word of God, we need to be pointing people to Him. But the love we are talking about in this passage is that when others strike you with words, with actions, when they hate you for following Jesus, your response to that is to pray for them. Your response to that is to figure out how can I bless them, how can I do good, how can I love them in the midst of this that they would

be won over? Remember, as we talked about this, the apostle Paul was dragging Christians out of their homes to kill them and to come up with a plan to stop the spread of the gospel. And it's he—in Acts 17, they say this is the one who's turned the world upside down. And it's not him. It is the transforming power of King Jesus.

If you're here today and you're not a believer, I want to encourage you that there is a king on the throne. You are not worthy to be in his Kingdom. I'm not worthy, none of us are worthy to be in his Kingdom, and yet he paid the price that we could have citizenship in the Kingdom where he reigns. You are not righteous enough. You are not righteous at all, and yet through his blood, if you cry out in his name, you will be saved. For all who believe in Jesus's name will stand before him someday, clothed in his righteousness. Do not leave today without crying out to him. Build your house on the surest foundation.

Let's pray.

*Father in Heaven, Father, I thank you that for everyone who is in this room who is a believer, it is because you, through your Spirit, have revealed to our eyes how poor we are. And as we have hungered for righteousness, because of the work you have done, you have given it to us. You have satisfied us. And we praise you, Lord, that as we weep and as we confess our sins, we cry out to you, You forgive us. We thank you, Lord, that for all who believe we will stand before you someday in your Kingdom. We will be fully satisfied and we will laugh with joy, knowing that our reward is great, not because of what we have done, but because of all that you have done.*

*Father, I pray for the believers in this room. I think of those that when I say love your enemies, that immediately a face comes to mind. One comes to mind for me, someone I see occasionally that just hates the gospel. I pray, Lord, for each of us, that you would give us the conviction to show them love that points them to the truth. I pray, Lord, that we would find ways to give them the whole truth of the gospel, knowing it's not us but your Spirit that moves. We praise you, Lord, that as we picture enemies of you, we realize that we, in our own strength, were your enemies before the work of your Son. And we praise you, Lord, that you have brought us into your Kingdom. I pray, Lord, for anyone who does not know you, that even now your Spirit is stirring in their hearts and they are saying, "Lord, I believe!" And I pray, Lord, that as we finish our time in worship and as we go forward, Lord, that we would see you do mighty works in our midst. We thank you, Lord, that you are seated on the throne in heaven. You are the King above all kings, and we thank you, Lord, that you have bought and redeemed us to allow us to be a part of your Kingdom through your blood. We pray all of this in your holy and precious name. The name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*



## Digging Deeper – **The Upside-Down Kingdom** – Luke 6:20-49

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

### Read Luke 6:20-49

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?
3. In the “blessed are you” and “woe to you” section, what similarities do you see between the two groups? What differences?
4. Do you feel more like one who is blessed or one who to whom Jesus said “woe to you”? Why do you choose what you said?
5. In verses 27-38 are a number of commands from Jesus of things to do and not do. List them all out as a group.
6. What are the consistent themes of each command? Who are we commanded to do these things for?
7. Reread verses 23 and 26. How do these verses relate to verses 27-38?
8. What does it look like today to love someone who hates, excludes, insults, and slanders you? Do you ever experience this for testifying about Jesus?
9. Verses 39-49 feature a series of parables. Read through each of them and consider:
  - a. What is this parable warning about?
  - b. Do I heed this warning?
  - c. Am I walking in the way Christ is calling me to walk based on this parable?
10. As you consider the whole of this sermon Jesus preached, what stands out to you after discussing it? What actions is Jesus calling you to take? What would it look like to be one who is blessed in the kingdom of God today?
11. Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.