

Rediscover Jesus, 11: “Blessings and Woes”

Luke 6:20-26

Pastor John Eom

Personal IntroductionSermon Series & Scripture Introduction

Today, we are continuing in the sermon series called Rediscover Jesus as we study the Gospel of Luke. Two weeks ago, we studied the important aspects of Jesus’ ministry, which included prayer, people and the Word ministry. And starting today for the next several weeks, we will look into Jesus’ Word ministry as he teaches his disciples all the way until the next chapter of Luke.

Today’s sermon is titled “blessings and woes” because today’s text covers what is commonly known as the Beatitudes. It is the group of “blessed are you” statements of Jesus but here in Luke 6, it is followed by corresponding “woe to you” statements of Jesus as well (cf. Matthew 5:3-12).

So, as I read for us the scripture for today, let’s be ready because what Jesus says is going to sound strange and difficult to our ears but all the more will be important for our faith as his disciples as we rediscover Jesus, even discover Jesus for the first time, in his important teaching.

Scripture ReadingLuke 6:20-26 (ESV)

²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

²⁶ “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

This is the Word of God. Amen.

Sermon Introduction

Again, this is not an easy teaching of Jesus to receive. On one level, this is a difficult teaching because it does not reflect the value system of our world—what Jesus is talking about sounds pretty much backwards when compared to how the world operates. On another level, this teaching isn’t easy because Jesus is talking about woes—talking to his disciples about the disaster that is going to come. We often love to hear the positive messages of Jesus as it refreshes and revives our soul. But we naturally do not see how such negative messages could help us in our faith. And the danger is that our ears can quickly close up, and our hearts can quickly harden against Jesus’ words.

But that is exactly why Jesus is teaching his disciples and teaching us through his Word today. He is teaching his disciples about what life is like in his kingdom. And how his disciples are to hold onto the words of the King in the kingdom of God. So as he teaches these difficult truths we must understand, I believe Jesus desires for us today a few things: to wonder, to be warned, and to be won over.

- I believe today, Jesus wants us to wonder: to think hard about his words and to evaluate and re-evaluate our lives in light of what he is teaching. To check ourselves, “Do I live the way Jesus

teaches? Does my life reflect what Jesus teaches?” And then to be in awe and wonder of the amazing truths he is teaching us.

- I believe Jesus also wants us to be warned. There is that danger of our mouths saying, “Yes, Lord, anything for you,” while our hearts feel, “No, Lord, not this.” But there is a greater danger of being deceived, to think that we are true disciples of Jesus, to think that we have divine joy, but in reality we just have coming for us divine judgment. That’s a dangerous place that I don’t want to be in. It’s a dangerous place Jesus doesn’t want anyone of us here to be in. That’s why, as he teaches, Jesus wants us to wonder and to be warned.
- And lastly, Jesus wants us to win us over. As we hear his words of life, he wants to win our hearts. He wants to persuade and prove to us that living for him, no matter what the cost, is the greatest pursuit, the greatest purpose that we can live for. He wants us to be won over with his truth, with his love, with his hope—the greatest truth, the greatest love, the greatest hope that we can have as we live on this earth.

The One Thing

Therefore, the One Thing for us today is this:

*Hope in Jesus Christ and heed his warning
for he is our King who will again be coming.*

Overview

We will cover today’s text in two parts as Jesus addresses his disciples in two direct ways in Luke 6:20-26:

1. “Blessed are you” (vv.20-23)
2. “Woe to you” (vv.24-26)

Prayer for the Preaching of the Word

That we can wonder, be warned, and be won over by your words of life. No matter how difficult it may be to hear and accept. I pray that you will take from us our hearts of stone and give us hearts soft to receive your truths. To learn what life in your kingdom is like, and to obey you as your humble and faithful servants, living for our one true King.

Let’s look at the first half of Jesus’ teaching here, where Jesus teaches his disciples, saying...

Sermon Outline

I. “Blessed are you” (vv.20-23)

Luke 6:20-22 (ESV)

²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

- What does it mean to be Jesus’ disciple?

A disciple of Jesus is someone who actively follows Jesus and actively furthers his cause in the world.

- So right away, as Jesus gets started on his “blessed are you” statements to his disciples, we have to tackle two initial questions: 1) What does it mean to be Jesus’ disciple? And 2) what does it mean to be blessed? We have to understand what a disciple is and what blessings are in order to understand what Jesus is saying here.

- What does it mean to be Jesus' disciple? Well, the word "disciple" is a common word that we say in churches and among Christians all the time so we especially need to make sure we understand what it means.
 - The word "disciple" in English literally means a student or learner. It is a noun, but in the language of the Bible, the noun "disciple" comes from the verb "to follow someone". So there is a feeling of action and activity in the word "disciple." So when Jesus called his first disciples, he invited them, saying, "Follow me." And not only that, Jesus said that he will make his disciples become fishers of men (Mark 1:17-18). So Jesus' disciples are people who will actively follow Jesus and actively further his cause.
 - And we know that Jesus calls us to his cause in the Great Commission to "go and make disciples", meaning that disciples will help others to follow Jesus as well. And generation after generation of disciples making disciples, we as disciples continue to follow Jesus today, not passively, but actively learning from and living out Jesus' teachings. There must be an actual following of Jesus to be called his disciple.
 - So, this is the group of people that Jesus is teaching. And he is teaching them because he expects all his disciples to hear his words and put them to practice in their lives. All of their lives should be moving and breathing models of the truths that Jesus is teaching them. All disciples of Jesus are expected to believe in him, love him, obey him and serve him faithfully.
 - This is why I believe Jesus is addressing all his disciples as one group. It might sound like he is pointing out the disciple who is poor, and the other disciple who is hungry, so on, which I thought for a long time that Jesus was doing. But this is not the case.
 - Also, Jesus is not teaching that only poor disciples will enter the kingdom of God. Jesus had disciples who were poor and marginalized, but he also had disciples who were rich and prominent. Jesus invites all disciples into his kingdom. Jesus is not teaching that only hungry disciples on earth will be satisfied later on. If this were true, why would Jesus go ahead and feed the group of over 5,000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish? He would've kept them starving.
 - So that's why this teaching is not about different types of disciples who will get different types of blessings. I hope this is clear: There is only one type of disciple of Jesus. One who willingly and actively follows Jesus and actively helps others follow Jesus So Jesus is addressing the whole group of his disciples, including all who call themselves disciples of Jesus here today. So that's what it means to be Jesus' disciple.
- Next, what does it mean to be blessed? Even for disciples, this is really easy to get confused. We just have to scroll through our social media feed and see what Christians post with the #blessed. Posting stuff like, Got a new job or new diamond ring: #blessed. Or new muscles: #blessed. I mean, I guess these things could feel like blessings. But whatever we say are blessings in our lives, we are not just showing off the good things in our lives. We are actually saying a lot more about God, whether it is true or not. When we say, "This is a blessing," we are actually saying, "God, in his favor, has given me this good thing," or, "God has granted me this favorable situation in my life." So we are claiming a lot about how God operates, what he does and how he acts, in our lives.

Luke 6:20-22 (ESV)

²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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

- What does it mean to be blessed?

Being blessed is a description of a disciple rejoicing in God in response to his favor and mercy in their lives.

 - So as his disciples today, we cannot confuse what Jesus' blessings really are. Because whatever we say are blessings, we are furthering a certain teaching about God that might not be fully accurate or easily misunderstood by people around us, who read our posts, and who hear our words. People during Jesus' time thought that riches and material wealth were a sign of God's favor, so it is not surprising that this is also a common, natural perspective of disciples today. But

being blessed doesn't simply equal material wealth and favorable circumstances. Again, it's more than just things. Being blessed actually is a description of someone who is rejoicing in response to God's favor and mercy in their lives.

- This is why even for a disciple who remains in poverty, even though he follows Jesus and furthers his cause in the world, still poor, this disciple can still be rejoicing in response to God's favor and mercy in his life. This is strange to our ears, isn't it? I mean, I understand what Jesus is saying, but I still can't fully take it all in. Jesus is not saying being poor is better than being rich. He's not even saying that being rich is better than being poor. He's teaching that regardless of your situation, it is best to know God, to know his favor, to know God's mercy and therefore go on living now with great joy and happiness. So with proper understanding of what it means to be Jesus' disciple and what it means to be blessed, let's look at why Jesus' disciples are blessed...

Luke 6:20-22 (ESV)

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"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

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- Why are Jesus' disciples blessed?

- 1) Because Jesus promises life in God's kingdom, better than the best that this world could offer (vv.20b-21).

- Why are Jesus' disciples blessed? First reason: Because Jesus promises better life in God's kingdom, better than the best that this world could offer (vv.20b-21).

- On any day of the year, we take a look at the news and it is guaranteed that we will come across an event that is a terrible disaster. Not a day on this earth will pass where everyone in the world, when we can altogether say, "Today was a good day." No, everyday, families are scraping by in poverty, and children are starving. Everyday people are dying from crimes, by accidents, by disease and by wars. People are suffering, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, in every possible way, we are suffering, we are weeping. As much as we are able, we can and we should try to make the world a better place, but the reality is, no matter what we do, no idea, no solution, no technology or advancement will forever eliminate any of the problems in the world.
 - So, as Jesus is acknowledging that his disciples live in such a broken world, we would expect that he would offer his disciples a solution. If Jesus is truly the savior of the world, we would expect Jesus to do something about world poverty, world hunger and world weeping. But he doesn't. Instead he offers his disciples the kingdom of God, where earthly riches pale in comparison, where temporary satisfaction and temporary relief don't compare to the riches, satisfaction and joy in God's kingdom.
 - For disciples of Jesus, who have made the decision to follow Jesus until the end of time, to further his cause in our broken world. For disciples, Jesus says, "yours is the kingdom" meaning you have it now, by your active willing decision to be his disciple. It's a present-tense reality. But Jesus also says to disciples, "you shall be satisfied, you shall laugh." Meaning that his kingdom is yet to fully come. It's both a present reality and a future reality that is to come.
- So I believe Jesus here is teaching us this: He is pointing our eyes to look to his kingdom that is yet to come fully. No matter how little or how much money we have now, there are things we want we are not able to buy. No matter how little or how much food we can afford to eat now, there are things on this earth that will not satisfy our deepest desires. And no matter how painful or pain-free our lives are now, there will be moments when we are still overwhelmed with grief.
 - But, as Jesus' disciples, we are blessed in his kingdom. Jesus' kingdom is far better than the best purchase we can make. His kingdom is far better than the best meal we can have. His kingdom is far better than the best laugh we can have on this earth. So as Jesus is pointing us to his kingdom, we can be resolved in our suffering. We can eagerly wait in our current situations and hope in Jesus Christ our King to fulfill his promise to usher in his kingdom one day (cf. 2 Peter 3:13). This eager hope is what can bring us through the roughest storms of life, which is what Jesus gets to next...

Luke 6:22-23 (ESV)

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

- Why are Jesus’ disciples blessed?
 - 2) Because Jesus provides heavenly joy as our reward in trials and tribulations, especially when we are persecuted for Jesus (vv.22-23).

- The second reason why Jesus’ disciples are blessed: It is because Jesus provides heavenly joy as our reward in our trials and tribulations, especially when we are persecuted for Jesus (vv.22-23).
 - Jesus is making a startling statement. He is teaching his disciples that when they decide to actively follow Jesus and further his cause, disciples will be hated. It’s a matter of “when people hate you” not “if people hate you.” Disciples of Jesus Christ should expect to be hated because of Jesus. Expect to be left out for Jesus. Expect to be slandered and your reputation ruined. All because we are his disciples in his kingdom. Disciples of the Son of Man, which is one of Jesus’ titles describing his identity as God the Son and Savior among men.
 - Jesus is also making a bold claim here. He is saying that the promise of his eternal kingdom is so magnificent, so extraordinary that even when we are hated by people, we should be joyful. He says, “Rejoice in that day of persecution, rejoice in that very moment you are hated for being my disciple, and leap for joy!” We should be joyful because suffering persecution for Jesus proves that we truly belong in his kingdom. And we can be sure of the heavenly joy as our reward that Jesus is reserving for us in his kingdom.
 - To be clear, this does not include when people hate us because of our bad attitudes or poor witness. Also, it is not persecution if our neighbors tell us that our dogs are barking too loud or that our praise music is disrupting others in our community. That’s not what Jesus is talking about here. He is saying all who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus taught his disciples, “If, I, your master is persecuted, then people will also persecute you” (John 15:20).
 - For disciples today who weren’t sure about this, now we know clearly: We expect persecution for being Jesus’ disciples. And though it’s clear, it is still a difficult teaching, that might make us even reconsider if Jesus is worth following. And yes, while many disciples would leave Jesus during his time on earth, even Judas who would betray Jesus, many were more convinced with greater conviction that following Jesus was the best way to live. And suffering for Jesus was a special joy, a purer joy, that they experienced.
 - For this reason, Jesus’ words are before us today. That we should evaluate and reevaluate our hearts, asking ourselves, “Jesus, are you worth following? Are you even worth giving up my own life?”

- If I may briefly address those of us here who have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, I believe these questions are completely valid for you to ask as well: “Is Jesus really worth following? Why would anyone rejoice in suffering persecution for the sake of Jesus?”
 - For all of us, the only way we can properly think through and answer such questions is by looking to the gospel, the good news, of Jesus Christ. The gospel explains to us that God existed from eternity past and that He is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-righteous. And God created the world and he created people in his own image to walk with him in his purposes and for his good pleasure.
 - But, when sin entered into creation through the disobedience of the first created man, God rightfully cast out all humanity away from his holy presence. But by his power, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to be born into this broken world so that he could die in our place for the sins of all people. But Jesus Christ rose again from the grave, defeating sin and death. And now he offers salvation and life in his kingdom to all who will believe in him by faith, repent of their sins, and choose to follow Jesus until he returns again.
 - So, when we look to Jesus’ sacrifice, as he died for the punishment of sins that we should have paid. Only when we realize that Jesus himself chose to suffer persecution so that

unworthy sinners like us could be saved. Only then can we say, “Yes Jesus. You gave up your life for me. So what can I do other than live my life for you?”

- To share honestly, I have never faced persecution for my faith in Christ. Even when I shared the gospel of Jesus Christ and how he is the ultimate sacrifice for our sins to people I met for the first time in Indonesia. I have never faced persecution in the ways I see other disciples have been persecuted in the times of scripture, as well as currently among people who are most hostile against Christians. My life and my family have never been threatened for our faith in Christ. So I personally am missing out on this special joy in Christ. But when I hear of martyrs and their stories and their convictions to be willing to even die for Jesus’ cause, I realized one common thread in all their testimonies. In their own words, they say it is worth following Jesus and furthering his cause to the ends of the earth.
 - Here are the final words written by a martyr (John Chau*), who was a missionary reaching the people of North Sentinel Island who have always been hostile against foreigners. In this final letter to his family, he wrote this, quote:

[Show picture “John Chau.png” side-by-side on one slide with this quote:]

“You guys might think I’m crazy in all this but I think it is worth it to declare Jesus to these people. Please do not be angry at them or God if I get killed. Rather, please live your lives in obedience to whatever God has called you. And I’ll see you again when you pass through the veil. The eternal lives of this tribe is at hand and I can’t wait to see them around the throne of God worshiping in their own language as Revelation 7:9-10 states. I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ.” [John Chau]

**For more on John Chau’s life, please read this helpful article that explains the facts and addresses the controversies that were stirred up against him:*

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-we-can-learn-from-john-chau/?amp>

- Jesus will probably not lead many of us into such persecution where we will be called to risk our lives on the account of Jesus Christ. But I know many of us here, have already and will most likely face persecution in the ways Jesus describes. It will come in the form of hatred, rejection, slander and bad reputation, even from people in our lives who are the closest to us. Family members and friends who just cannot see the worthiness of Jesus Christ like we do. Others who will challenge and even mock our life decisions as we try to follow Jesus.
- Even then, I pray we will clearly see that we are truly blessed to be Jesus’ disciples. We have the promise of his kingdom. We have the provisions of heavenly joy as our reward as we suffer for him. So may we deeply believe that Jesus is worth everything in our lives and that we will joyfully follow Jesus and further his cause in this world.
- As we close out this first part, I’ll provide us with some questions to wonder about in light of Jesus’ blessings.

→ Questions to wonder: What do I consider as my blessings from God? Are they things of this world or of God’s kingdom? How does the promise of his kingdom and the provisions of heavenly joy help me face any trial or tribulation, even persecution?

Now, we are ready to look at Jesus’ woes.

II. “Woe to you” (vv.24-26)

Luke 6:24-26 (ESV)

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

²⁶ “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

- After Jesus describes such wonderful blessings, Jesus continues in pronouncing woes as he addresses all his disciples. And the word, “woe” (w-o-e) translated in English doesn’t really capture the right feel of the word. It’s different from “woah” (w-o-a-h), when we say, “Woah, that’s a nice car.”
 - “Woe” actually describes a great disaster that is about to take place. Pending destruction that you don’t even realize. So when Jesus moves onto talking about woes for his disciples, Jesus is warning them about something. So the question is, if Jesus has already pronounced blessing on his disciples, with the promise of the kingdom and the hope that is to come, why does Jesus’ blessing have to come with such a serious warning? How can blessing and warning stand together in one teaching?
 - And the short answer is that the news of the kingdom of God is both good news and bad news. It is good news for all who submit themselves to Jesus Christ as the one true King. And who are eagerly waiting for Jesus to come again and lead us home into his eternal kingdom. Good news, great news. At the same time, it is bad news for all those who will continue to reject Jesus as King over their lives. They remain as rebels who seek to build their own kingdoms on earth, to ultimately be a king themselves.
 - Jesus offers all to take upon his yoke. The yoke that farmers put on cattle. Jesus says, put on my yoke for it is easy and light, and learn from me (Matthew 11:28-30). But those who want to be kings and want their own kingdoms don’t want to be yoked. They’ll reject saying, “Jesus get this off me!” And they will remain as enemies of God who will be denied entry into his kingdom when Jesus returns. Jesus’ blessing and warning come together in one teaching because the news of his kingdom is both good news and bad news. So, then, why are Jesus’ disciples warned?

Luke 6:24-25 (ESV)

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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

- Why are Jesus’ disciples warned?
 - 1) Because we will be tempted to somehow serve both Jesus Christ and our comfort (vv.24-25).
- See how Jesus warns his disciples. Again, he’s not saying wealth, fullness and laughter are evil things in and of themselves. Remember how he just said that his disciples are to rejoice with profound joy just before in verse 23. And that there will be a day when the disciples will be laughing. And again, Jesus had disciples who were poor and marginalized and also rich and prominent.
 - These are neutral things. And Jesus warns that there is a certain way that earthly riches, earthly fulfillment and earthly laughter can be evil. And that evil way is when disciples seek out these things as their consolation. Consolation means encouragement and comfort.
 - So this means, anything in this world, even if it is not inherently evil, it is wrong in Jesus’ eyes when we seek them out as our ultimate comfort. When we pursue any earthly goal as the ultimate prize of our lives. When we treasure any temporary benefits as ultimate benefits, we are in danger of falling into temptation and deception. That somehow we can serve both Jesus as king and our comfort as another king. When in fact “no one can serve two masters; he will hate one and love the other” (Luke 16:13).
 - So especially when we as his disciples are suffering in our broken world. If we pursue money as our consolation and comfort, thinking like, “If I just had more money or a higher salary, my life would be so much better.” Well we are serving comfort as our king. And Jesus warns us, “Woe to you! Money will be all the comfort you get and you will see it is no comfort at all in the end.” If we pursue satisfaction as our comfort, anything from our basic desire for food to finding fulfillment and joy in relationships. Our comfort has become our king. And Jesus warns us, “Woe to you! You will be miserably disappointed and still be left wanting in the end.” We cannot serve our comfort as king when we commit ourselves to Jesus as King.
 - This is why the “prosperity gospel” is not the gospel at all. It teaches the direct opposite of what Jesus is saying here, in one of his most important sermons he is giving to his disciples. “Prosperity gospel” falsely claims that when you trust in Jesus, that he promises you earthly

riches, earthly satisfaction and earthly laughter. It's just another way for disciples to somehow try to serve both Christ and our comfort.

- But, we cannot have both Jesus as king and our comfort as king! If we serve our comforts as king, woe to us! There is disaster coming because it does not please our true King, Jesus Christ. And we must have the vigilant awareness over our hearts when we think we are living for Christ when we are actually ruled by our comforts.
 - Our King is coming again. And it is good news, glorious news for all who fully submit themselves to Christ as King. But it will be terrible news for all those who still serve any other lesser, weaker king. This warning is weighty/heavy enough by itself. But there is one final warning God's Word has for us today.

Luke 6:26 (ESV)

²⁶ "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

- Why are Jesus' disciples warned?
 - 2) Because we will be tempted to soften the severity of God's wrath and final judgment (v.26).
- The last reason why Jesus' disciples are warned is because we will be tempted to soften the severity of God's wrath and final judgment (v.26). I see this in Jesus' final woe, when he says to his disciples, "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."
 - We have to consider first, "What did the false prophets do?" One terrible thing that all false prophets did was that they misrepresented God's true character when prophets were actually supposed to represent God properly to his people. During the time of the OT prophets, God's people needed to understand that God is a God of love and justice.
 - As God of love, God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. And that he forgives sins and trespasses committed against Him." But God is also a God of justice and that God "will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:5-7). God is a just judge and He will punish the guilty who have no case to defend themselves from God's wrath. God's people always needed to understand God in the ways he has revealed himself. And prophets were supposed to speak on God's behalf to the people.
 - However, false prophets: They focused on the nice, loving part of God. And they softened the severity of God's wrath and judgment. So in the end, they misrepresented God. They spoke just about the nice parts of God that people wanted to hear.
 - There are actually many instances of false prophets doing this in the OT. But here is just one reference as an example to understand what disaster was coming for people like false prophets whom all people spoke well of. Because it is the same disaster coming for disciples who do the same today.
 - In the book of Jeremiah, God speaks so clearly against the false prophets who misrepresent God. They softened the severity of God's wrath and judgment that is rightfully due to rebellious sinners. Instead the false prophets said, "Don't worry, God will not judge you for your unrepentant sins. Just rest assured, God will give you peace. This was how God responded:

Jeremiah 14:13-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ ... "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name although I did not send them, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not come upon this land': By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed. ¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword, with none to bury them—they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their evil upon them.

- The fathers of Israel loved to hear what their ears were itching to hear from the false prophets. They didn't want anything to do with God's judgment, even as they were disobedient to God. The true prophets were telling Israel to repent and return to God. The false prophets said, "Do whatever your heart desires and God is with you." This is still the same temptation that attacks God's people, disciples of Jesus Christ today. Our ears are itching to hear that God wants us to be king. That God wants us to serve our comfort and our desires. And that there's nothing like wrath and judgment coming for them. But Jesus says, "Woe to you, be warned" all of you, who say you're a disciple, but who soften the severity and seriousness of God's wrath. Because such false disciples will end up receiving the full weight of God's terrible wrath and punishment when Jesus returns again. So there are few more questions for us to wonder:

Questions to wonder: What comforts do I still serve as my king that I need to immediately surrender to Jesus? Do I have a full, proper understanding of God's character? Do I tend to soften the severity of God's wrath and judgment as I live in God's grace and mercy?

- Church, as I point out this truth of Jesus Christ to you, please know my heart's desire. My utmost concern for you all here today is for your faith in Jesus Christ. And if your faith is guided by half-truths and misrepresentations of God, you are not safe. Because you are living with a false security, a false salvation that comes from false teaching. A false comfort that will fail you in the end.
 - But when you see Jesus' coming again, I pray it will be good, glorious news for you. Because you believed and trusted in Christ alone as your king through your life here on earth. This is what I'm praying for. Jesus, let none of us in our church be led to fall away from the living (Hebrews 3:12). Please help us so that when we meet you face to face, none will be shocked to see that their name is not in the Book of Life. All because they lived for other kings and other kingdoms all their life.
- I've been wrestling with how to say this, how to preach this sermon. Wrestling with Jesus. Jesus, am I nervous because I want all people to speak well of me? I don't know how people will accept this hard teaching that you have given us. I've never prayed this much in preparing a sermon. Even Ester, my wife, said I was praying with my hands on my face in my sleep. Maybe that's why God let my whole family get sick for two weeks, so I could have the time and space to wrestle with Christ, wrestle with his truth that I say I believe in. Maybe.
 - But all I know for sure, is this is God's Word. And for all of us who say, "I am a disciple of Jesus Christ," we must take Jesus' warnings to heart. We must know the truth that Jesus teaches us. And we must live out the truth that we believe.
- As we close, brothers and sisters, do we see how Jesus is seriously committed to our salvation? So much so that he teaches us the truth. He doesn't hold back the seriousness and severity of God's wrath and judgment upon sin. Not only that, he took on the full weight of the punishment of all sins, dying once and for all sins. Giving up his own life for undeserving sinners like us. He is so committed to our salvation. So that whoever believes in Jesus, becomes his disciple who will follow Jesus and further his cause, this true disciple will have eternal life in Christ.
 - So Church, let's rejoice in Jesus' blessing. Let's heed his warning. And let's hope in Christ! Jesus promised us that he is coming soon. And to that, confidently by faith we can say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" And when he does, may we all be found as faithful disciples, serving him and his cause in this world (Revelation 22:12, 20).

Life Application:

- 1) Take time to evaluate by reflecting on the questions above with scripture open.
 - a) Take time to evaluate ourselves using the questions above and wonder at the blessings we have in Christ as his disciples. Reflect with God's Word open beside you to really learn and apply Jesus' teachings in our lives.
- 2) Take to heart Jesus' warnings by helping one another in discipleship and accountability relationships in our church.
 - a) Biblical, healthy accountability will be beneficial for us as a church as we:

- i) TGR: commit to support our spiritual family and stabilize our faith for spiritual growth. God will use our discipleship and accountability to help build one another up in love during this season.
 - ii) JKT: commit to sanctifying one another as a spiritual family. God will use our discipleship and accountability to help us to take both sin seriously and grace seriously.
- 3) Take in the amazing gospel of Jesus Christ (again and again).
- a) Be won over by the amazing gospel of Jesus Christ
 - b) Preach the good news of Jesus Christ to yourself. Let others around you hear it as you continue processing the gospel in your life.

The One Thing:

*Hope in Jesus Christ and heed his warning
for he is our King who will again be coming.*