

✠ Luke 6:17-26 ✠

In Nomine Iesu

Job was rich, he was satisfied, he was full of joy, he was spoken well of by his family and friends. He had money, goods, land, animals, a wife, children, and servants. Job was rich. But woe to Job, for because of his great wealth and prosperity Satan went before the throne of the Almighty God and said, "Job loves you and worships you because you have given him everything. Take away all that he has and he will curse you." So the Lord allowed Satan to take from Job his money, his land, his animals, his servants, and even his wife and children. But Job still feared, loved, and worshiped God.

So Satan went before God Almighty and said, "It is because you have spared his life and have not inflicted him with disease and illness that Job still loves and worships you. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." So the Lord God allowed Satan to inflict Job with all manner of disease and illnesses from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. So Job sat there and scratched his oozing boils and rubbed his rashes raw: a pity of a man.

Woe to Job: he was rich and now he is the poorest of all. Woe to Job: he was healthy and satisfied and now he is hungry and full of want and need. Woe to Job: he was joyful and happy full of good things and now he weeps, lamenting the very day he was born.

He is destitute. He stinks of sickness and disease. He has lost everything. He no longer has a wife; he no longer has children; he no longer has a house, servants, animals, land, or even clean skin. To him could not even be quoted the quip: "well, at least you've got your health." For, no, Job did not have his health, and so he had nothing. He was a beggar and leper. A man to be avoided and pitied; scorned and reviled. And so he was. His friends came not as his friends, but as his accusers, accusing him of having done some great wrong that God would inflict him thus. But even in the face of such overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Job maintained his innocence claiming he had done nothing wrong. Yet he was ruined. Why, if he had done nothing wrong, his friends reasoned, would God do such vile things to him? Surely he must have transgressed against God in some severe way.

Job was poor, hungry, he wept over his condition. He was excluded from the company of the seeming righteous, his friends and relatives. His own wife rejected and left him. Passersby reviled him; he was spurned as being evil.

Job was blessed.

You were rich, you were satisfied, and you were full of joy. You were well spoken of by family and friends. You had riches, goods, land, animals, and servants. You were rich. You hadn't a care in the world. Your father gave you all that was his if only you would bow down and worship him. And so you did. You were healthy, wealthy, and wise.

It is too bad that your family was not God's family. It is too bad that your friends were no friends of God, but were friends of the evil one. It is too bad that your goods – your works and your righteousness – were bought with Judas' thirty pieces of silver, money from the purse of Satan.

Woe to you who are rich in self-made righteousness. To you who think that you know enough, worship enough, confess your sins enough, do enough good, or are worthy enough for

eternal life. You are poor in the sight of God. Woe to you who are satisfied with your own vainglory and pride. To you who believe that you are humble, yet seek praise for your feigned humility; you have received your consolation. Woe to you who laugh and make merry at your rich religiosity, thinking that you are secure in practices and rites. Woe to you who are spoken well of by the children of the devil, for so they speak of the prophets of Evolution, the pagan kings of Tolerance and religious equality, and the priests of this world who deny the Word of God.

Such people are a stench in the nostrils of God.

From them will be stripped all their riches. They will stand before God as Adam, naked and having nothing in their hands, ashamed and destitute. They who are filled with the things of this world will find that the food of this world leaves them starving in the face of the banquet set by the King. They who laugh now in the joys of the flesh will lament such pleasures when they stand before the judgment throne of Christ, who will consider their works and riches to be good for nothing but to feed the fires of hell. Thus will be fulfilled the words of Christ, "When the stone the builders rejected falls on anyone, it will crush him" (Luke 20:17-18).

But blessed are you who have fallen upon the Stone and have shattered. Blessed are you who have had everything stripped from you; your self-righteousness, your pride, your glory, your honor, your dignity, your health, your family, your friends, your possessions, your works. Blessed are you who the Lord has made to be pitied among men, the poorest of all, reviled by the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. Blessed are you who have been laid bare by the waters of Holy Baptism, and stand naked before the judgment throne of Christ, His cross, for those who are poor according to the flesh are rich in the Spirit of God. You whose nakedness has been exposed by the Law are given robes of righteousness washed in the blood of the Lamb. And thus you stand before God, clothed with Christ.

Blessed are you who have hunger pains for the righteousness of Christ, for just as the man who hungers in his belly for a crust of bread knows that he cannot create that bread in his hollow stomach, the hunger for righteousness shows that you have been cured of your illness of thinking that you can create and achieve your own righteousness, so now you are hungry for the Bread of Life. To you will be given the Bread of heaven and the water of life – the Body and Blood of Christ – and your hunger will be satisfied. You will no longer search for righteousness in works of the Law, or in religious devotion to man-made rites and ideals, for you have found the righteousness of God given to you in the person of Christ Jesus.

Blessed are you weep and lament over your sins and transgressions, for by such heavenly tears you confess that you are not worthy of the riches of God, or the food of Life, or the treasures of heaven, yet to you they will be given. For the poor will receive the kingdom of God; the hungry will be filled with the righteousness of Christ; those who weep will receive consolation in the atoning blood of Christ.

Blessed are you who draw all manner of insults from those who belong to the father of lies, for by such you are shown to be of God, for so they spoke of the Son of God. Blessed are you who are reviled by man, for so was the Son of God. Blessed are you who are excluded from the rituals of man, for they are empty and end in death. Blessed are you who are counted as evil, speaking against the goodness of man and the prosperity of humanity, for so was Christ accused of belonging to Beelzebub.

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit (Ps. 32:1-2). Blessed is such a man for he is dependent upon the grace of God.

Blessed are you on account of the Son of Man!

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠