

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**February 11, 2019**

**THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Jeremiah 17: 5-8**

**Luke 6: 17, 20-26**

**1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20**

**1. Jeremiah 17: 5-8**

- Wisdom sayings of Jeremiah similar to Psalms and Proverbs
- Familiar themes of a just man being like a green tree (Ps 52: 10; Proverbs 3: 18; 11: 13) and the contrast of trust in God and trust in humans (Ps 39:5; 117: 8-9; 145: 3) are traditional—especially Psalm 1.
- Prepares us for the Gospel in which the poor and the rich are contrasted. The poor trusting in God; the rich trusting in themselves
- The heart of true religion: God is one's sole refuge.

**2. Luke 6: 17, 20-26**

- Luke's Sermon on the Plain vs. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount
- Jesus has just chosen the Twelve Apostles. He is establishing a new Israel that was founded on twelve tribes.
- Luke creates a pictorial representation of the Church

Jesus

The Twelve

The Other Disciples

The Crowd that is Burdened and Afflicted Humanity

- Luke's beatitudes are more hard hitting and pointed than Matthew's
- Mt: Blessed are the poor in spirit/Lk: Blessed are you who are poor.
- Luke adds "Woes:" Woe to you who are rich, full, laughing and well-spoken of
- Woe is not to condemn but to call to conversion
- Blessed: fortunate or advantageous in relation to the coming action of God
- God will turn things upside down. In Mary's Magnificat: He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly; The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty (Lk 2: 52-53) In Luke 4: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor/liberty to captives/sight to the blind/the oppressed go free.  
God is to do something new. He will reverse the order of the things.
- Jesus is saying: Congratulations if you are poor, hungry, weeping or reviled because you are in a much better position to be filled up with God's good things when the Kingdom of God is established. Woe/Beware you are rich, filled, laughing and well-spoken of because you are at a disadvantage when God transforms the world because you will already be satisfied and think that you do not need God. A surprising and shocking turn of events.

- Poor and rich have economic meaning but are also spiritual terms. Luke has a definite concern for those who are economically poor and a mark of true discipleship is for those who are rich to share what they have with those in need.
- Also, the poor are those who acknowledge their need for salvation and accept Jesus as the one who ushers in the Kingdom of God. The poor open themselves up to God and wait upon his promises.
- The rich are those who do not want to commit themselves to Jesus and the Kingdom he brings. They are content with their present, comfortable existence.

### **3. 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20**

- Some members of the church in Corinth doubt the reality of a bodily resurrection. Influenced by the Greek culture, they modify it into a survival of the spirit after death or experiencing salvation now while alive. Paul insists on a bodily resurrection—albeit a glorified body, a totally new existence, a resurrected life.
- The preaching of the church is that Christ was raised from the dead—body and soul. The continuity of Jesus' earthly body and his resurrected body are attested to by the nail marks still visible in his resurrected body. The reality of his resurrected body is shown by his eating in the disciples' presence. Yet, he is not confined by space and time as he comes through the locked door.
- If Christ is not raised, then the apostles' preaching has been a lie.
- If Christ is not raised, then our sins have not been forgiven.
- If we only hope in Christ for this life, we are the most pitiable of men.
- Paul affirms that indeed Christ is risen—he is the first fruits—the pledge that those who have died will rise.

# Breaking Open the Word



## Good News or Bad News?

### Scripture Background

*This information isn't meant to be read aloud, but as background for the leader. If helpful, share some of it in conversation with the group.*

Jesus echoes Jeremiah's message of caution to those who trust in humans instead of God, as well as his words of encouragement for those who trust in the Lord. The Gospel passage is Luke's version of the Beatitudes delivered during Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain," so-called because Jesus was said to be standing on a "level place" when he spoke these words. We find the same teachings with slight variations in Matthew's gospel where the discourse is called the "Sermon on the Mount" because Matthew wrote that Jesus was teaching from a mountaintop. Rather than split hairs about exactly where Jesus delivered this message, we are called to focus on the message itself.

### Opening Prayer

*Pray the following aloud together, beginning with the Sign of the Cross:*

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Good and Gracious God,  
thank you for bringing us together to reflect on your Living Word.

Open our minds and our hearts  
so that we may hear the message you have for us today.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### Scripture Reading: Luke 6:17, 20-26

*Ask someone to read this passage aloud, then pause for a minute of silence.*

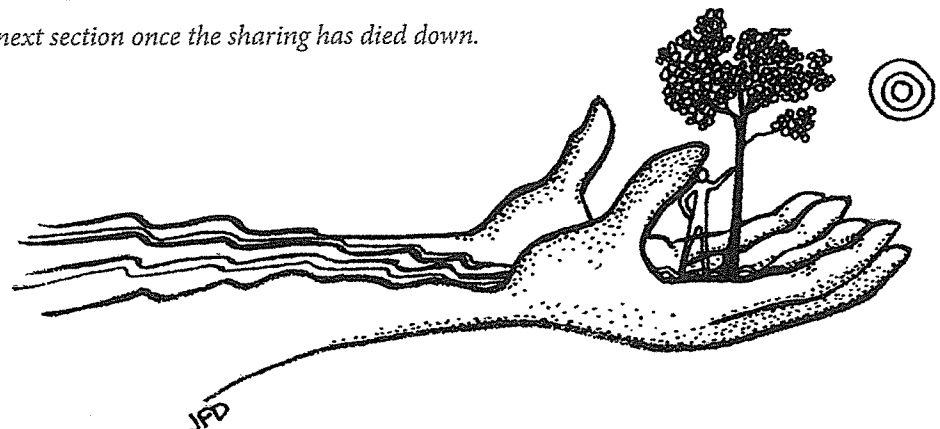
*Ask: What struck you about this reading or the liturgy this week?*

*Allow for sharing. Move on to the next section once the sharing has died down.*

February 17, 2019 • Year C

6th Sunday in Ordinary  
Time

- ▶ Jeremiah 17:5-8 - True wisdom
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20 - The resurrection and faith
- ▶ Luke 6:17, 20-26 - The great discourse



## Reflections on the Reading

*Invite each person in the circle to read one paragraph aloud:*

The word *gospel* comes from the Greek word meaning “good news.” At some points, Luke’s Gospel is “good news for the poor” and “bad news for the rich,” as in today’s passage. Matthew’s version of the Beatitudes includes only positive promises such as “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.” Luke’s version, however, includes strong words from Jesus to those who are living in comfort now.

We get the sense that Jesus’ audience here includes some very poor people to whom he speaks directly. “Blessed are *you* who are poor ... blessed are *you* who are hungry now ... blessed are *you* who weep now” not the more generic “blessed are the poor in spirit ... blessed are those who mourn.” The crowd must also include some wealthy listeners because Jesus also addresses them directly “But woe to you who are rich ... woe to you who are full now...” There are many other places in this Gospel (and the Acts of the Apostles, which Luke also wrote) where Jesus speaks bluntly about wealth, poverty, and practices that contribute to economic inequality.

Although Jesus says some things that are hard for the rich to hear, he doesn’t dislike rich people. He did banquet with them frequently, after all! Jesus came to free *everyone* from what holds them captive, and he knows that for some rich people it is their wealth which imprisons them. His words may sound like “bad news” on the surface, but if they help free people and move them towards greater generosity, justice, and trust in God rather than possessions, then ultimately Jesus is speaking good news.

## Questions for Discussion

*Read each question aloud, one at a time, followed by time for sharing.*

- ① What strikes you first when you hear this version of the Beatitudes? What is your initial reaction?
- ② Imagine some poor people of today and some wealthy people of today gathered together to hear Jesus proclaim these words. How do you imagine they might react?
- ③ Which line of the Beatitudes most speaks to you today?

## Closing Prayer

*Pray the following aloud together:*

Lord, thank you for this chance to slow down and listen to your Good News.

May we go out from here committed to loving and serving all those we encounter this coming week. Amen.