

**Fr. Brad Neely**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle C**

**Sts Peter & Paul: Feb 14, 2010**

**Jer 17: 5-8; 1Cor 15: 12, 16-20; Lk 6: 17, 20-26**

To be blessed is to be fortunate---  
to have well being.

To experience woe, on the other hand,  
is to experience grief.

Both extremes are easy enough to understand.

If you look at me,

and I am standing with my feet on the ground,  
and head in the air,

I, myself, am easier to figure out,  
versus standing on my hands.

In the Gospel today,  
Jesus turns many secular modes of operation upside down.

He teaches that those who find fortune

are those who are poor---

those who are hungry---

those who are hated on His account.

And additional upside-down:

grief comes to those who are rich,

who have enough to eat,

who laugh now,

who are well spoken of.

He describes a reversal of fortune---

the mighty being cast down,

the lowly being lifted up.

Jesus talks here, of those marginalized  
in the human community.

Those who are rejected by human beings  
are welcomed by God.

This may be a very attention-getting message,  
but it is not a new one.

Jeremiah in our first reading

talks of those who are fortunate

versus those who are to expect grief.

Grief comes as a result

of trusting in human beings to the exclusion of God,

*“whose heart turns away from the Lord.”*

Fortune comes from trusting in the Lord.

For those who trust,

even in a *“year of drought,”*

they will *“show no distress,”* and *“still bear fruit.”*

The fact that Jesus

now takes the prophecy of Jeremiah

and intensifies it---

even, as I mentioned before---

turns it upside down---

doesn't change the focal point of human life.

The focal point is living our humanity,

and honoring the humanity of our neighbors,  
but always with God as our ultimate end.

To grasp what Jesus tells us,

which has been turned

our human senses upside down,

we must go beyond the Golden Rule,

*“do as you would want done to you.”*

We go beyond it to “do as God would do.”

Take on the *mind of God*

as we are humanly able.

Note that Luke sets the scene  
of these Beatitudes and Woes  
on the desert plain.

[Matthew, who was appealing

to a largely Jewish audience,

and making a point that Christianity

is the fulfillment of Judaism,

sets the scene of the Beatitudes on a mountain.

Jesus on the Mount

is the new Moses from Mount Sinai].

In Luke, Jesus comes down from the mountain

from where he was praying,

and makes the Gospel proclamations

on level ground,---

on a level playing field

where all people have access:

Jews *and* Gentiles---

the well of body---

but also the crippled, and the blind,

who would find it difficult to climb a mountain.

Jesus, as the Son of the heavenly Father,

tells us, as reflected in this Gospel scene,

that we are to trust in Him,

and know that whatever happens in this earthly life,

we will be honored in the next life

as faithful participants in His covenant.

Jesus tells us this in a dramatic way

to catch our attention.

Rather than just hear these words casually,

and wait three years until we hear them again,

do we take Jesus seriously?

These words are included in Scripture

because God wants us to understand them.

Do we believe Jesus or not?

Will it move us to trust or not?

Will it move us to be patient or not?

Will it move us to action or not?

Will we truly take this Gospel to heart?