

FRUIT BASKET UPSET

(Luke 6:17-26)

Intro: God blesses what we curse.
And curses what we bless.
-Or so it seems.

In our Gospel lesson for this morning.
-It appears that God is playing a game.
#Spiritual Fruit Basket Upset.
-The things that Jesus blesses.
#We try to avoid at all costs.
-The things that he warns us against.
#We spend our lives trying to achieve.

- I. Our Gospel Lesson Is The Beginning Of Jesus' Sermon On The Plain.
 - A. We Are Perhaps More Familiar With The Sermon On The Mount.
 1. Matthew 5-7.
 - a. And perhaps more comfortable as well.
 - b. But this is Luke's version of the sermon.
 2. Luke's sermon is different.
 - a. Jesus is not on a mountain.
 - He's on the plain.
 - #In Luke.
 - *Mountains are places of encounter with the Divine.
 - +Revelation.
 - +Prayer.
 - *When Jesus wants to communicate with people.
 - +He comes down off the mountain.
 - +He meets people on the plain.
 - =On the level.
 - b. There is no spiritualizing of the Beatitudes in Luke.
 - There is no blessing of the poor in spirit.
 - #As in Matthew 5:3.
 - *But rather of those who are poor.
 - There is no blessing of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - #As in Matthew 5:6.
 - *But rather of those who are hungry.

- c. Luke adds something that may make us squirm in our seats.
 - Woes.
 - # "Woe to you who are rich."
 - # "Woe to you who are full."
 - # "Woe to you who laugh."
 - # "Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you."
 - *Woe.
 - *Woe.

B. Whoa, Indeed! What's Going On Here?

- 1. As my friend Warren Werling might ask:
 - a. "Has Jesus gone from preaching to meddling?"
- 2. Jesus is cursing the very things we tend to value.
 - a. Money in the bank.
 - b. Food on the table.
 - c. Laughter.
 - d. Acceptance and praise.
- 3. Jesus blesses the very things we tend to devalue.
 - a. Poverty.
 - b. Hunger.
 - c. Grief.
 - d. Rejection and ridicule.
- 4. Jesus has turned the values of the world upside down.
 - a. It's like he's playing a game.
 - Spiritual Fruit Basket Upset.
 - b. Only it's no game.
 - When our:
 - *Values.
 - *Way of life.
 - +Called into question.

C. It Is Our Values That Are On The Line Here.

- 1. Luke's Sermon on the Plain is different in another way from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. In Matthew.
 - Jesus' words are in the third person.
 - # "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness."
 - b. In Luke.
 - Jesus' words are in the second person.
 - # "Blessed are you who are poor."
 - # "Woe to you who are rich."

2. We can't pretend that the problem is out there somewhere.
 - a. The problem is here.
 - b. It's in our society.
 - c. It's in our homes.
 - d. It's in our hearts.
 - We are the rich.
 - #Oh, maybe we're not anywhere near:
 - *Bill Gates.
 - *Warren Buffet.
 - *Donald Trump.
 - *Ted Turner
 - #But in the eyes of the world.
 - *We are all among the "haves."
 - +Not just our bank accounts.
 - +But:
 - =Our standard of living.
 - =Our quality of life.
3. When my younger son Joel was in junior high school.
 - a. I read an article.
 - In the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.
 - About the latest model of Michael Jordan tennis shoes.
 - b. Article reported.
 - Nine students.
 - #From my son's school.
 - Cut class.
 - #So they could go shopping.
 - #So that they would not miss out on these:
 - *\$150.
 - *Limited-edition.
 - *Tennis shoes.
 - c. My son was not one of those who skipped school.
 - He knows better than that.
 - d. But when I showed him the article.
 - So that we could talk about it.
 - His response just floored me.
 - #He said:
 - *"Oh, there were a lot more than nine who cut class."
 - #He didn't seem to understand what the problem was.
 - *I'm not sure I've ever spent:
 - +\$50 on a pair of dress shoes.
 - +Let alone \$150 for tennis shoes.
 - *But I dare say if Joel had had \$150 to spend.
 - +He would have spent it on tennis shoes.

- e. I say:
-“Whoa!”
- f. Jesus says:
-“Woe!”

D. What’s The Problem Here?

1. What in the world is so blessed about?
 - a. Poverty.
 - b. Hunger.
 - c. Grief.
 - d. Rejection.
2. What is so terrible about?
 - a. Wealth.
 - b. Food.
 - c. Laughter.
 - d. Acceptance.
3. Jesus does not say:
 - a. “Blessed is poverty.”
 - b. “Blessed is hunger.”
 - c. “Blessed is grief.”
 - d. “Blessed is rejection.”
4. He does not say:
 - a. “Woe is wealth.”
 - b. “Woe is food.”
 - c. “Woe is laughter.”
 - d. “Woe is acceptance.”
5. He says:
 - a. “Blessed are you.”
 - b. “Woe to you.”
6. The focus is on us.
 - a. Where our life is centered.
 - b. What we choose to value.
7. That’s where we can have problems.
 - a. We can easily develop an “I” problem.
 - Look what I’ve got.
 - Look what I’ve accomplished.
 - Look what I’ve acquired.
 - Look what I’ve achieved.
 - b. I.
 - c. I.
 - d. I.
 - e. I.
 - f. I.

-Jesus says:
#"Whoa!"
#"Woe!"

8. True blessedness comes:
 - a. Not from our pursuit of things.
-Valued in the eyes of the world.
 - b. But in God valuing us enough.
-To give us the Kingdom of God.

II. The Kingdom Of God Is Ours Because God Played Fruit Basket Upset.

A. Jesus Turned The World Upside Down

1. Jesus knew:
 - a. Poverty.
-Matthew 8:20 suggest Jesus may have been homeless.
#"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."
 - b. Hunger.
-When he was in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights.
#Being tempted by Satan.
#With nothing to eat.
#He was hungry.
*Luke 4:2.
 - c. Grief.
-When his good friend Lazarus died.
#Shortest verse in the Bible.
*John 11:35.
*"Jesus wept."
 - d. Hatred.
Insults.
Rejection.
-Of the cross.
 - e. He knew it all.
2. But on Easter morning.
 - a. God turned the world upside down.
-With a resurrection.
 - b. God played Fruit Basket Upset.
-Giving to us what we in our:
#Poverty.
#Hunger.
#Grief.
-Could never:
#Buy.
#Earn.
*Kingdom of God.

3. Giving away the kingdom is not the way of the world.
 - a. Remember when John the Baptizer criticized Herod.
 - For marrying his brother's wife.
 - #And ended up losing his head.
 - b. When Herodias' daughter danced at Herod's birthday party.
 - He was so pleased.
 - #That he offered to give her anything she wanted.
 - *Up to half of his kingdom.
 - +Mark 6:23.
 - c. That's the way of the world.
 - To give a:
 - #Part.
 - #Piece.
 - #Percentage.
 - d. God gives us the whole blessed kingdom.
 - World is turned upside down.

B. Mary Must Have Known It Would Happen.

1. When she received the news.
 - a. She would become the mother of the Christ child.
2. Mary launched into a song.
 - a. We know as the Magnificat.
 - b. Luke 1:46-55.
 - “He has stretched out his mighty arm.”
 - #Luke 1:51.
 - “He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly.
 - #Luke 1:52.
 - “He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich empty away.”
 - #Luke 1:53.
3. Jesus turned the world upside down.
 - a. God played Fruit Basket Upset.

C. When God Upsets The Fruit Basket, We Have Nothing Short Of Heaven On Earth.

1. Someone sent me an e-mail.
 - a. One of those ubiquitous e-mails that makes the rounds.
 - b. Contained a story of heaven and hell.
2. Holy man.
 - a. Was having a conversation with the Lord.
 - b. Said:
 - “Lord, I would like to know what heaven and hell are like.”

3. Lord led the holy man to two doors.
 - a. Behind Door #1.
 - Large round table in the middle of the room.
 - In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew.
 - #Smelled delicious.
 - #Made the holy man's mouth water.
 - People sitting around the table:
 - #Thin.
 - #Sickly.
 - *They appeared famished.
 - They were holding long-handled spoons.
 - #Strapped to their arms.
 - #Handles of the spoons were longer than their arms.
 - *They could reach into the pot of stew.
 - *But they could not get the spoons back into their mouths.
 - The holy man shuddered at the sight of such:
 - #Misery.
 - #Suffering.
 - The Lord said:
 - #"You have seen hell."
 - b. Behind Door #2.
 - Scene exactly the same as the first one.
 - #Large round table in the middle of the room.
 - #Large pot of delicious stew in the middle of the table.
 - *Made the holy man's mouth water.
 - People had the same long-handled spoons.
 - #Strapped to their arms.
 - But unlike the first room.
 - #People were:
 - *Well nourished.
 - *Fat.
 - *Sassy.
 - *Laughing.
 - *Talking.
 - The Lord said:
 - #"This is heaven."
 - Holy man said:
 - #"I don't understand."
 - #"What's the difference?"
 - The Lord said:
 - #"It's simple."
 - #"It requires only one skill."
 - #"These people have learned to feed each other,"
 - #"While the greedy think only of themselves."

- D. God Has A Way Of Upsetting Our Fruit Baskets.
1. Rubbing our noses in Luke 6.
 2. Questioning our values.
 3. Challenging our priorities.
 4. Calling us to take another look.
 - a. What is blessing.
 - b. What is woe.
 5. When God upsets our fruit baskets.
 - a. Where do we land?
 - We land here in front of this altar.
 - b. What do we find?
 - We find a fruit basket full of:
 - #Bread.
 - #Wine.
 - Here we receive our Lord's:
 - #Body.
 - #Blood.
 - One Friday they were cursed.
 - #When that body was broken.
 - #When his blood was shed.
 - *On the cross.
 - But God has turned the world upside down.
 - #That curse has been turned into blessing.

Concl: Here is:

- Richness of God's forgiveness.
- Fullness of God's love.
- Joy of God's comfort.
- Peace of God's acceptance.

Here God plays Fruit Basket Upset.
 -It's a blessing.

