



“The One Who Is Blessed”
 Luke 11:27-36

Idea: How a person responds to Jesus determines his or her ultimate spiritual condition.

Intro: A young boy lived with his grandfather on a mountain in the Swiss Alps. It was a beautiful place, surrounded by deep valleys and cascading rock faces. The rugged terrain made a natural amphitheater. For this reason, the young boy loved to go outside, cup his hands around his mouth, and shout, “HELLO!” Up from the canyon below the reply reverberated, “HELLO...HELLO...hello...hello...” Then he would call out, “I LOVE YOU,” which would echo back, “I LOVE YOU...I LOVE YOU...I love you...I love you...”

One day the boy seriously misbehaved and was severely disciplined by his grandfather. Reacting violently, the young guy shook his fist and screamed to his grandfather, “I HATE YOU!” To his surprise, the rocks and boulders across the mountainside responded in kind, “I HATE YOU...I HATE YOU...I hate you...I hate you...”

The reverberating echo that the boy received back reminds us that in a family, and in life for that matter, we get back in direct proportion to what we give. This is one of the immutable laws of physical nature as well as a law of human nature. You see, incredible echoes mirror our actions to an emphatic degree, sometimes even in greater measure than we give. Sadly, the results can be embarrassingly tragic.

Allow me to further illustrate this idea. I had rotator cuff surgery eighteen days ago. Prior to surgery, I was used to working out and lifting weights five days a week. As you might imagine, my workout schedule has been greatly modified and, in many ways, put on pause. My goal, however, is to return and become stronger than I have ever been before. While this is my goal, I know it will not happen on its own. Right now, my shoulder is stiff and sore. Pain accompanies every movement. Therefore, for me to regain mobility and rebuild my strength, I will have to put in months of painful and physical work to rehabilitate my shoulder. This work will not be very enjoyable, but in the end, it will result in a strong and functional shoulder. I will receive back in direct proportion to the work I put into it.

Not only does this principle apply to the elements of the physical world, it works in the spiritual too. The Apostle Paul told the church at Philippi, “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*” (Phil 2:12b-13). He called them to work out that which God had worked into them in salvation. In other words, he called them to be obedient to God’s Word and the life of Christ within them. Through the verses we are examining today, I am going to show you that the way a person responds to Jesus and His Word will determine his or her ultimate spiritual condition.

[Read Luke 11:27-36.](#)

Inquiry: As Jesus called the crowd off the fence and to choose a side (Luke 11:14-26), one woman in that crowd in essence shouted out, “Amen!” (vs. 27). This lady got a little happy about Jesus and what He was saying. What the lady did not realize, but Jesus definitely did, was that her statement concurred with Mary’s statement about herself in the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:48-49). The mother of Jesus was the most blessed of women. For this reason, Jesus did not reprove her statement but improved it. Please note that there is no hint of the Roman Catholic idea of the veneration of Mary here. If ever there were a place for our Lord to teach such a thing, it would be here in this context. He would only need to “amen” her blessing. Instead, the Lord turned the woman’s attention and our attention away from Mary to God’s Word and one’s adherence to it (vs. 28).

Jesus then focused His attention on those in the crowd who continued to seek after a sign that would prove His divinity. He did so by calling to remembrance two famous occurrences in their history when Gentiles responded to the Word. These two events involved the preaching of Jonah in Nineveh and the wisdom of Solomon before the queen of the South.

Jonah, as a prophet, was called to go to the Assyrian capital city and preach against it. Rather than obeying the Lord and going to Nineveh, Jonah hoped on a ship in Joppa that was going to Tarshish, a city on the opposite side of the known world. As the ship was sailing west, God hurled a great storm on it in order to get His prophet to obey and return. Jonah refused to do so. He preferred death over seeing his enemies afforded the opportunity to repent and be saved. So, he told his shipmates to throw him overboard, which they did. God, then, had a giant fish swallow Jonah. For three days, the prophet was in the belly of the fish as God worked on his heart. After those three days and a mild-heart transformation, Jonah was vomited up on dry ground. He then went to Nineveh and reluctantly preached judgment to His enemies, which resulted in their repentance and God’s grace toward them.

The queen of the South probably refers to the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chron 9:1-12). This queen, from far away in her own land of Sheba (southern Arabia, modern Yemen), “*had heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD*” (1 Kings 10:1). It was too great to believe, so at great cost to herself in both financial and security terms, she made the long trek north to see and hear from King Solomon. Once she experienced the greatness and wisdom of Israel’s king, she believed all that she had originally heard about him.

The people of Nineveh heard about Jonah and his experience in the belly of the fish. Surely, they also saw its effects on his body. And so, they believed the prophet’s message. Likewise, the queen heard the wisdom of Solomon and believed the word she had heard about the king and God’s people. Jesus used these two historical accounts to point to a greater reality. Someone greater than both Solomon and Jonah stood and preached before them. Those two men and the blessings they experienced foreshadowed the greatness and blessing that would be found in Jesus as God the Son. Therefore, Jesus wanted the people in that crowd and us today to understand how one is blessed by the Lord. There are four facets of this blessing. The one who is blessed:

1. Hears the Word of God.

Jesus said to the woman, “*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God...*”

Why is there such a strong emphasis in the Bible about the importance of hearing what God has said? I believe the answer to this question comes back to knowledge. It is vital that we know things about the world in which we live. Thomas Edison who invented the incandescent lightbulb, the phonograph, and the motion picture camera once said, “We don’t know one millionth of one percent about anything.” He died in 1931. Humanity has discovered many things since then, but I suggest the percentage of our knowledge has not grown that much.

In Eden, God told Adam what he could and could not do (Gen 2:15-17). All the plants and trees were available to be used for food except for one tree. That one tree was off limits because its fruit would bring death upon him and his family. Without this knowledge, Adam would have been in danger

because he would not have known the destruction it would cause. He might have unwittingly eaten from the forbidden tree. Likewise, without God telling Adam what trees he could eat from in the garden, he would not have known.

This knowledge that God gave through His Word was a blessing to Adam. It told him what was good and what was bad. It described God's provision and warned of potential destruction. As we contemplate how determinative a person's response to Jesus is, I want us to see that the one who is blessed hears the Word of God. His Word reveals and explains who God is and what He demands of His creation. This hearing of the Word helps determine one's ultimate spiritual condition.

2. Obeys the Word of God.

Jesus said to the woman, *"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it."*

It is one thing to hear the Word of God; it is quite another to keep or do it. God wants us to hear His Word, so He graciously makes it available. His purpose in giving it, however, is that we might obey it for our own good and His glory. This point is made over and over again throughout the Bible.

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! – Psalm 119:1

Walking in the law of the LORD requires knowledge of the law and the commitment to obey it.

⁵Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! ⁶Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. – Psalm 119:5-6

Again, hearing the statutes and commandments leads to obeying them. The one who hears the Word and chooses to obey it is blessed. James the half-brother of Jesus magnifies this point. Read James 1:22-25. If this is true, then why do some many people who call themselves Christians fail to be *"doers of the word?"* Could the reason be that they have allowed themselves to become too familiar with the rhythms of God's Word?

Illust: A little girl was sitting in her first Good Friday service, and the epic story of the crucifixion was beautifully read. She heard about Judas' betrayal of Jesus. She heard about Peter's denial. She listened to Pilate's cross-examination of Jesus. She pictured the crown of thorns and felt the beating of the soldiers. Then came the words, "And there they crucified Him." The little girl began to weep and buried her head in her mother's lap. Her sad voice could be heard throughout the auditorium as she sobbed, "Why did they do it? Why did they do it?"

I am sure there were some "Christians" in that service who were wondering, "What is wrong with her? Why is she getting emotional?" The truth is that lifelong familiarity with the rhythms of the gospel can dull us to its trembling realities, so that we listen to it with the same vitality with which we listen to the weather report. We need to be more like the little girl again. What we hear in God's Word ought to sting and cut and bear down on our souls. It ought to lead us to obey what is said. This is where blessing is found, which brings us to a third facet.

3. Refuses to hold onto sin.

In verses 33-36, we find some broad applications that Jesus offered to drive home the impact of hearing and obeying God's Word. The eye is described as the lamp of one's body. If the eye is healthy and bright (able to take in light), then the body is healthy and full of light. On the other hand, if the eye is unhealthy and dark (unable to receive light), then the body is unhealthy and dark. For the believer, hearing and obeying the Word of God results in an ever-increasing desire to distance oneself from sin.

We would refer to this theologically as sanctification. It is the process of becoming conformed more and more into the image of Christ. It has been said that sanctification is a life of Christ-centered choices, made evident in loving obedience to God.

You see, the more one hears and obeys God's Word, the more one will refuse to hold onto sin. The light of God's Word will shine brightly like a lamp in a dark room in the life of a believer who continually refuses to hold onto sin. On the other hand, when a person allows sin to be present, the light of Christ is veiled in his or her life. This brings us to a fourth and final facet.

4. Receives the gospel light.

Read Luke 11:35-36.

There are two competing ideas in Jesus' statement. How can light be darkness? He is referring to the condition of one's eye. A healthy eye allows light in, which enables sight. An unhealthy eye does not allow light in, which prevents sight. He is referring to one's spiritual condition. A healthy spiritual eye recognizes the gospel light and receives it. An unhealthy spiritual eye refuses to see the light of the gospel, consequently rejecting it.

For believers who have received this light, hearing, obeying, and refusing to hold onto sin ensures the light continues to shine in and through your life. Is this not what it means to walk in the gospel? We are not talking about religious exercise here. What we are talking about is an abiding relationship with Christ. We read and hear the Word because we want to know God. We obey the Word because we want to please God. We turn from our sin because we want to walk with God in fellowship without any hindrances or distance. We understand as believers that the gospel which redeemed us from the curse of sin is the same gospel that enables us to walk with God in the light of His truth. This Word is the Bible we hold in our hands, and it gives light to show us how to walk through life.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
– Psalm 119:105

Jesus admonishes us to *"be careful"* in how we live our lives in verse 35. As our gracious Savior, the Bible makes it clear that He desires to bless our lives. His blessing, however, does not mean that life will be easy, fun, and without hardships. For many believers, life will be challenging. They might even be killed for their faith. The blessing Jesus wants His people to experience in this life is His presence and power. This blessing comes as we hear, obey, refuse to hold onto sin, and continually receive the gospel light. Therefore, how can we be careful in these pursuits?

Three Actions

- 1) Regular Prayer
We must see to it that we confess our sins continually and ask the Lord to keep our eyes clear.
- 2) Healthy Introspection
We must be careful to make time to be alone with God, asking Him to reveal to us the dark spaces of our lives.
- 3) Expectant Reading of God's Word
We must ask God to shine light on us through His Word.

Conclusion: As that young boy shouted out to his grandfather, "I HATE YOU," he was surprised to hear the reverberating "I HATE YOU" come back from the mountainside. His echo reminds us that we receive back in direct proportion to what we give in any situation. Today, do you wish there was more of God's blessing (His presence and power) resting over your life? According to Jesus, you can have it. Blessing comes to the one

who hears His Word, obeys His Word, refuses to hold onto sin, and receives the gospel light. Are you putting the work into your spiritual life? How you respond to Jesus determines your ultimate spiritual condition.