

22/03/26

BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY
BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF CHRIST

Jesus has been up on the mountain praying all night and regardless of the expenditure of physical strength involved, he comes down in power, fully charged to and ready to make decisions that will affect all time. He inaugurates the disciples (including Judas) and then he

comes down to a level place and takes his stand in the power of the Spirit making himself available to a vast crowd of people who are not all his friends. Jesus is doing incredible things for these people who have come from far and near: Jerusalem, Judea, Tyre and Sidon to be near Jesus. There is something magnetic about Jesus. God has made a plan to save the world. He sends a little baby to grow up in a little village as the son of a carpenter who grows to be a man prepared to carry out the plan. What a Man!! He draws people from the north, south, east and west. Jesus draws people by his irresistible grace. They are all as keen as mustard to get to the front so they can make physical contact with the great charismatic Jesus. They all come to give an 'organ recital' of all their aches and pains in the hope that their physical problems will be dealt with and then all will be fine. It is good to be well but Jesus needs to reassert the message they need to hear because of their deeper sickness "They had come to hear him and be healed."

We believe in a maturing process and these people were beginning to listen and learn and walk with Christ as disciples. They did not want to stay as they were; they wanted to be more like Jesus, growing in grace, getting closer to Jesus and being changed by him. The people were troubled by all sorts of unclean and evil spirits: temptations, trials, anxiety, fear, worry, burdens... Do you have total peace of mind? Are you troubled by any experiences from your childhood? Have you seen something you wish you'd never seen or done something you wish you'd never done? Have things been done to you that you wish they'd never been done? Is there pain in here [points to head] that oppresses you? Is there guilt, shame or lies told by yourself or others? When these people came to Jesus he spoke into their lives and he brought them healing. Jesus had a transformative effect on their inner world. They could forgive, face issues, do stuff they were afraid to do. Power went out from Jesus so that they could live. There are some leaders who try to exploit the power of the people. They soak up energy from the crowds for their own ends. But Jesus, the greatest of all leaders, gave these people power. He gave them dignity, respect and love, honour and forgiveness, help and direction. He gave to the people. The people loved him because when you're near Jesus you are more human, more complete and more able to live life. What a great leader God has sent in the person of the lord Jesus.

The four blessings that Jesus pronounces were on the people on the bottom of the shoe of life. After spending time with Jesus they were enabled to live in the face of all the hardships poverty, hunger, sorrow and hatred. He turned to his disciples to pronounce these blessings. They were poor, hungry, sad and unpopular. Poverty is not some kind of virtue. Nor is sorrow or hatred. It is not about a blessing on poverty, hunger, sorrow or unpopularity. They are specifically because of the Son of God. (v22) Not all the disciples were in any of those categories but such as were he comforts them and says, "You are blessed" because your suffering and hardships are because you are standing here with me, You have come to believe in me, you have followed me. Jesus tells them to "leap for joy" (v23) because God has got something for people like you: a truly great reward. The whole of human history is moving in a particular direction. The prophets, disciples and Christians are looking past their present circumstances, down the tunnel of time where they can see that all things in the fulness of time will be brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the praise of God the Father. That day is coming. Following Jesus has brought a whole lot of heat on your lives but on that day you will not regret the stand you took, the confession you made in favour of Jesus even for an instant. You have hope. You have a promise from the King. Is God any man's debtor? Can you lend to him and he will not repay?

There are other people in the crowd who are his enemies. They are setting up their own kingdoms against him and need to hear these four woes. Oi' is a caricature of Jewish talk. Oi, oi, oi, oi! Woe, woe, woe, woe! These are not curses. They are kind warnings. Normally we want to obliterate our enemies. The purpose of a warning is so that they might be saved, spared the things that he says are coming. The woes are not against being rich, fed, happy or popular. The reason there are these things is because they have taken a stand against Christ and his kingdom and everybody is patting them on the back for it. They are doing fine at that moment but not when that day comes. On that day they will regret their decision with all of their heart. The false prophets have their own view of the future where Christ is not on the throne as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The true prophets will tell you that. The day is coming when we will see who is on the right side of history. Are you on the right side of history? If you are on the right side of Christ you will absolutely be on the right side of history.

Thess blessings and woes are very similar to what we find in Deuteronomy 28 where Moses sets out a whole set of blessings for people who walk in God's way of living. Then there is a whole set of blood-chilling curses and warnings against those who go their own way. The famous verse that comes out of that says, "Life and death are placed before you. Chose life" Chose life, chose Jesus Christ. Put your trust in him. Whatever it costs you or however hard it might be this is the way. Walk in this way. You will not regret it. Examine your heart and bear these things in mind.