

# Encountering Jesus

## Luke 6:17-26

*Welcome to this gathering of Encountering Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. It is said that “showing up” is the most valuable step...because showing up is itself an expression of desire. May you enjoy the certainty, that in different ways, you are getting to know both one another...and Christ together.*

### **Getting to know one another...**

*What sport would you compete in if you were in the Olympics?*

### **Centering...**

*Take a quiet moment to center your soul on God. Take a minute for all those participating to close their eyes... take a deep breath...and prayerfully listen as one member reads the following Scripture... slowly ...three times...after which they may lead in an opening prayer for the group time.*

*Psalm 90:14 (NIV) – “Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”*

### **Exploring...**

*In Luke 6:12-16, we are told how Jesus prayerfully choose the twelve who would be his core disciples... fully devoting their time to follow and be trained. Many have noted that the choice for twelve was symbolic of Jesus creating the church as the “new Israel” or more ultimate “people of God” as the twelve paralleled the twelve tribes of Israel. So this becomes a time of launching the new work of God’s kingdom coming.*

*Read Luke 6:17-26 (Could have read aloud, by one or two individuals)*

Luke 6:17-26 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, <sup>18</sup> who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, <sup>19</sup> and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

<sup>20</sup> Looking at his disciples, he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now,  
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you,  
when they exclude you and insult you  
and reject your name as evil,  
because of the Son of Man.

<sup>23</sup> “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

<sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have already received your comfort.

<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are well fed now,  
for you will go hungry.

*Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will mourn and weep.*

*<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,  
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.*

*1. Before considering the specifics of Jesus' admonishing, consider why would Jesus speak of such a radically different understanding of who and what should be understood to offer blessing (favor) and be warned against what brings harm at this particular juncture? What do you think was vital to him to impart to this crowd?*

*2. Jesus uses the contrast of declaring that four conditions can bear blessing (favor) with four parallel conditions that he warns can bring eternal harm. Take some time to try to summarize, in your own words, what the four themes that are given blessing and warning are. (Best if one or two participants try to surmise one, rather than every participant trying to surmise each.)*

*\*3. These words (which parallel the longer list of "Beatitudes" and extended social ethics of the "Sermon on the Mount" in the Gospel of Matthew), have long been discussed in regard to how they should be understood and applied. On point that can be helpful, is to realize that they are clearly, what could be referred to as "figuratively instructive truth"... whose point is made by speaking in strikingly basic terms. They do not try to define who is poor or rich...or what constitutes hungry or full... rejection or popularity. How might that actually serve the intent of what Jesus's words?*

*4. Do you think such blessing (favor) will be experienced in the present, future, or both...and how?*

*5. How does this radical view begin to define the nature of the kingdom of God?*

*\*6. What Jesus said seems to be directed more to the disciples than the crowd at large. Why do you think that is? What does it say about following Jesus?*

*7. How do the values Jesus talks about here compare with the values of contemporary society?*

*\* This question is best considered OPTIONAL. It may be best to skip if the group is large or short on time, perhaps having had extensive discussion on a previous question.*