

All Saints' Bible Study – September 12, 2008

1. We looked at some **proverbs** from the Old Testament book of Proverbs and grouped them into themes. There were themes of poverty/wealth, wisdom/foolishness, discipline, pride/humility, generosity, love, peace/anger.
2. We **compared Luke 3:21-22, Luke 4:1-13 with Luke 6:12-23** and found some parallels:
 - at his baptism Jesus was identified and designated Son of God – in Luke 6 Jesus identifies particular followers and they are designated a role
 - at his baptism Jesus is in prayer – before choosing the twelve, Luke makes a point of mentioning that Jesus prayed all night
 - in his temptations Jesus was tempted away from hunger and away from humility and chose the way of suffering – in Luke's beatitudes, the disciples are taught that the way of suffering is the route of blessing

We compared too with Luke 1:26-38 and 46-55, the announcement to Mary and the Magnificat. Here too Mary is designated a role and the song talks of the blessing of the hungry and the humble.

We noted too the echoes of the Exodus story, with Moses designating leaders, meeting with God and then giving the commandments. Exodus 18,19,20.

3. We thought about why the **poor** and **mourning** and **insulted** are blessed. It is not that entry into the kingdom of God can be earned by meeting standards of poverty and humility, but that we can only respond to God out of emptiness, not out of self-sufficiency. We read the following text:

“The poor know they are in urgent need of redemption.

The poor know not only their dependence on God and on powerful people but also their interdependence with one another.

The poor rest their security not on things but on people.

The poor have no exaggerated sense of their own importance, and no exaggerated need of privacy.

The poor expect little from competition and much from cooperation.

The poor can distinguish between necessities and luxuries.

The poor can wait, because they have acquired a kind of dogged patience.

The fears of the poor are more realistic and less exaggerated, because they already know that one can survive great suffering and want.

When the poor have the gospel preached to them, it sounds like good news.

The poor can respond to the call of the gospel with a certain abandonment and uncomplicated totality because they have so little to lose and are ready for anything.”

4. We inverted the above text substituting the word 'rich' for 'poor' and then read **Luke 6:24-26** where he does a similar thing.
5. **We compared with Matt 5:3-12** and noted that Matthew's version is more spiritualised. It was felt likely that Jesus would have taught these themes on more than one occasion.
6. **We read Luke 6:27-38** The golden rule, v. 31, appears in many religions and philosophies in negative form. Rabbi Hillel was asked to recite the whole law when standing on one leg: and said, 'what is hateful to you, do not to your fellow. That is the whole law and all the rest is commentary'. The Christian standard goes beyond merely not doing wrong and beyond merely doing right. Love does not retaliate (v.27-31), love seeks no reward (v.32-36), love is not censorious (v.37-38). We had an illustration of a lady who, in the face of injustice, persevered with generosity for 3 years and succeeded in creating a rewarding relationship with a work colleague.