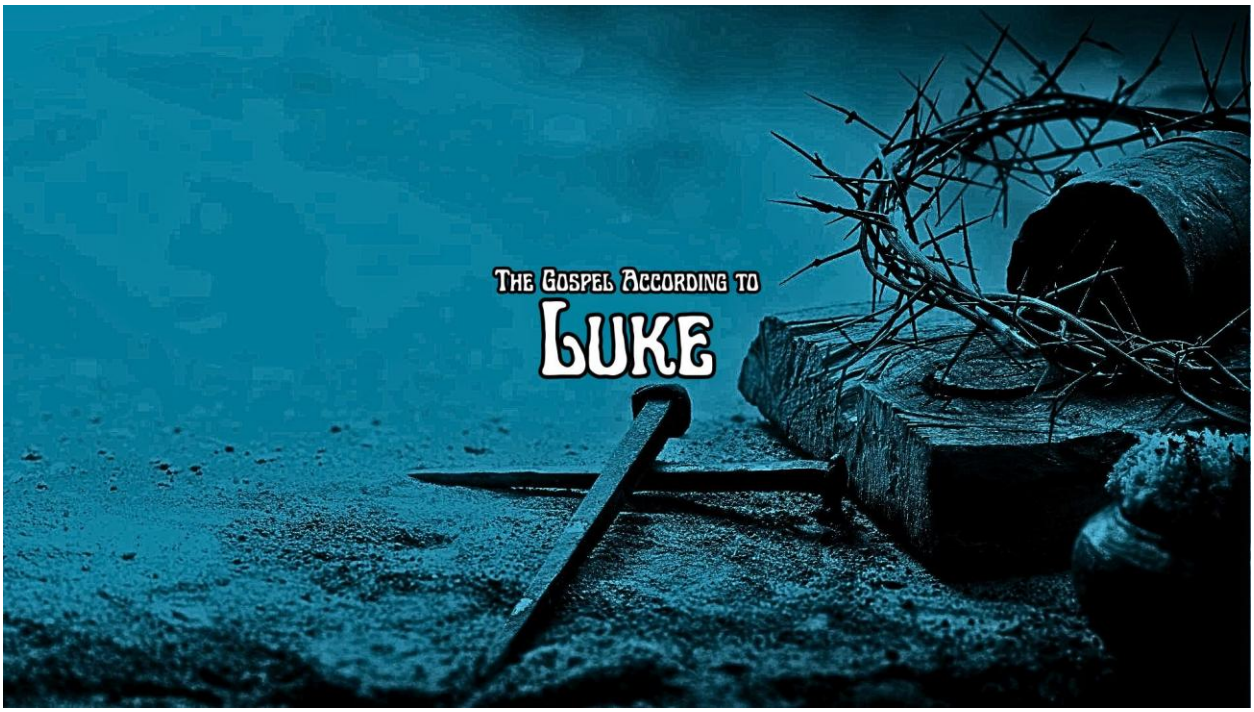
Small Group Guide

Blessings, Warnings, and the Heart of a Disciple

Based on Luke 6:20-26



Introduction for Group Leaders

This session explores Jesus's blessings and woes from Luke 6, spoken not to a general crowd but directly to his disciples. The central tension of this passage is between what the world offers and what Christ promises. Use this guide to help your group examine where their hearts are truly anchored.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus repeated his teachings in multiple settings, which means his disciples had every opportunity to hear, remember, and apply them. His words were not accidental or offhand.
- The blessings and woes in Luke 6 are mirror images of each other. What you seek in this life shapes what you receive, either now or in eternity.

- Jesus addressed these words to his followers specifically, not to the general public. This makes the warnings personally urgent for anyone who claims to follow Christ.
- Judas serves as a sobering example that a person can perform every outward religious duty while the heart remains given over to the world.
- The gospel is naturally offensive to the world. If there is no friction between your life and the surrounding culture, that absence is worth examining honestly.
- Jesus warns because he loves. His desire is not to burden his followers but to protect them and draw them toward the eternal reward he wants to give them.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before diving into the text, how would you describe your general attitude toward warnings? Do you tend to take them seriously, tune them out, or land somewhere in between? How might that posture affect the way you read passages like this one?

Understanding the Passage

2. The pastor pointed out that Jesus lifted his eyes toward his disciples before speaking, indicating this was an intimate moment of teaching rather than a public sermon. Why does the intended audience matter when we read a passage of Scripture? How does knowing Jesus was speaking directly to his followers change the weight of these words for you?
3. Look at the structure of the passage: blessings first, then woes. The message noted that Jesus starts with the blessings because that is what he wants to give. What does that ordering communicate about the character of Jesus?
4. The blessings and woes are directly paired with each other. The poor are blessed, the rich receive a warning. The hungry will be filled, the full will hunger. What principle about eternity versus the present is Jesus establishing through this structure?
5. The sermon described Judas as a possible example of someone the woe directed at the rich was meant to reach. Judas followed Jesus for three years, handled the ministry finances, and appeared to be a disciple in every visible way. What does his story reveal about the difference between outward religious participation and genuine faith?

Going Deeper

6. The message stated, "What you seek to get out of this world, you will probably get. And that will be all that it is for you." How does that statement sit with you? Where do you see that principle playing out in your own life or in the lives of people around you?

7. The woe about everyone speaking well of you is perhaps the most uncomfortable one. The pastor connected it to false prophets who told people what they wanted to hear. In practical terms, what does it look like to be a peacemaker, as Jesus calls us to be, while still allowing the natural friction of the gospel to exist in your relationships and community?

8. The pastor quoted the observation, likely from Spurgeon or J.C. Ryle, that "the reason the church has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church." Do you agree with that assessment? Where do you see evidence of the world shaping the church rather than the church shaping the world?

9. The pastor said that when the church removes the offense of sin to look more like the world, it is not actually helping people. How do you hold together genuine compassion for people with a commitment to speaking truthfully about sin and its consequences?

10. The sermon closed with this thought: "True love is not a carpet that gets walked on and absorbs all of your punches and hate. True love has boundaries because true love doesn't want you to get hurt either." How does this reframe the way you think about God's warnings in Scripture? Does this perspective make the woes in this passage feel different to you?

Practical Applications

Personal Inventory Take time this week to honestly assess where your heart is oriented. Are you pursuing comfort, security, and the approval of others as primary goals, or are you oriented toward eternity? Write down two or three specific areas where the pull of the world is strongest in your life right now.

Examine Your Friction Reflect on your relationships, workplace, and social circles. Is there any natural friction that comes from your faith, or does your life blend seamlessly into the surrounding culture? This is not an invitation to manufacture conflict, but to honestly ask whether the gospel is visible in how you live.

Resist the Prosperity Mindset Identify any ways you may have unconsciously adopted the idea that following Christ should make your life more comfortable, prosperous, or easy. Bring those expectations before God in prayer and ask him to reorient your understanding of what he has actually promised.

Study the Warnings Many people gravitate toward the promises of Scripture and skip over the warnings. Choose one warning passage this week, whether from this text or elsewhere in the Gospels, and sit with it. Ask what Jesus is trying to protect you from and what that reveals about his love for you.

Group Accountability As a group, identify one area where you collectively tend to bend toward what is comfortable or culturally acceptable rather than what is true. Commit to encouraging one another in that specific area over the coming weeks.

Closing Reflection

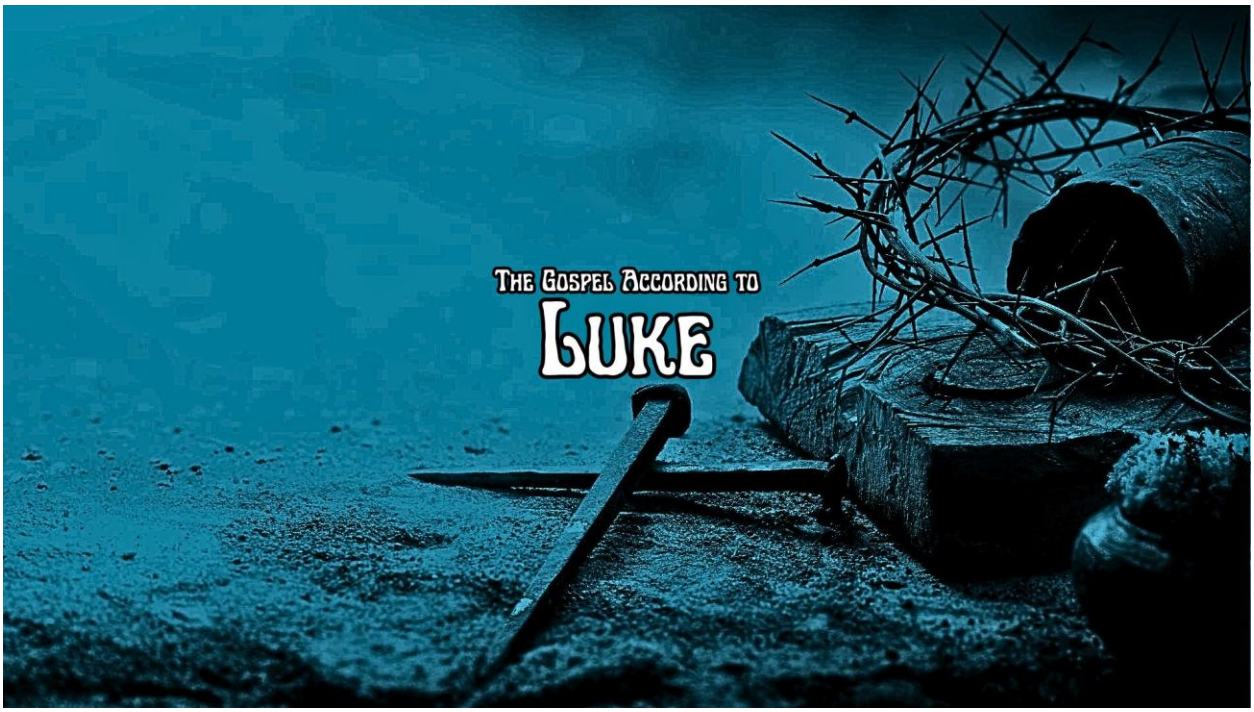
The pastor closed the sermon with these words:

"He loves you. He wants you in his kingdom. And he sends out blessings and warnings so that you can know him better and what he wants better. Don't lose sight of who Jesus is. Follow him. And take heed of his warnings."

Close your group time in prayer, asking God to give each member the courage to receive both his blessings and his warnings with an open and honest heart.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Luke 6 and the Teachings of Jesus on Blessing, Warning, and True Discipleship



Day 1: The Upside-Down Kingdom

Reading: Luke 6:20-23

Devotional: Jesus addresses his disciples directly, lifting his eyes toward those who had chosen to follow him. His first words are not warnings but blessings, and those blessings are directed at the poor, the hungry, and the weeping. This is the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God. The world measures value by comfort, wealth, and ease. Jesus measures it by faithfulness in hardship. If you are in a season of lack, grief, or difficulty, you are not outside of God's favor. You may be standing in the very center of it. Examine where you are placing your sense of worth today.

Day 2: What You Seek, You Will Find

Reading: Matthew 6:19-21, where Jesus contrasts storing up earthly treasures with storing up heavenly ones, and Luke 6:24-25

Devotional: Jesus does not promise his followers material prosperity. He promises something far greater: eternal reward and freedom from death itself. The warnings in Luke 6 are sobering precisely because they are addressed to people who were physically present with Jesus. Judas walked alongside the Son of God for three years and still allowed the riches of this world to consume him. The warning is not only for those outside the church. It is for those inside it. What are you truly seeking from your relationship with Christ? Honest reflection on that question may be the most important prayer you pray today.

Day 3: When the World Speaks Well of You

Reading: Luke 6:26, John 15:18-20 where Jesus tells his followers that the world hated him before it hated them, and 2 Timothy 3:12 where Paul writes that all who desire to live godly in Christ will face persecution

Devotional: One of the most convicting truths in this passage is that universal approval is not a sign of faithfulness. Jesus connects being spoken well of by everyone to the behavior of false prophets. The gospel is not designed to be comfortable. It carries with it an inherent friction against the values of the world. This does not mean we seek conflict for its own sake. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. But standing for truth means that conflict will find us. If your faith has never cost you anything socially, professionally, or relationally, consider whether the truth of the gospel is being clearly communicated through your life.

Day 4: Blessed Are Those Who Stand

Reading: Luke 6:22-23, Romans 8:17-18 where Paul writes that suffering with Christ leads to being glorified with him, and James 1:2-4 where James instructs believers to consider trials as opportunities for joy because they produce endurance

Devotional: Jesus tells his disciples to leap for joy when they are hated, excluded, and reviled for his sake. This is not a call to masochism. It is a call to eternal perspective. The reward he promises is not delayed compensation for misery. It is the fruit of a life lived in genuine alignment with Christ in a world that rejected him. The prophets of old endured the same hatred, and their faithfulness is honored throughout Scripture. When you face rejection for standing with Christ, you are joining a long line of faithful witnesses. Your suffering is not wasted. It is seen, known, and rewarded.

Day 5: The Love Behind the Warning

Reading: Hebrews 12:5-11 where the author describes God's discipline as evidence of his love for his children, and Revelation 3:19 where Jesus says he rebukes and disciplines those he loves

Devotional: Jesus issues warnings not out of harshness but out of love. A God who did not warn would not be a God who cared. True love has boundaries because it does not want to see you harmed. Jesus absorbed your sin on the cross, and he also clothes you in his righteousness so that you can walk forward in it. His blessings and his warnings both flow from the same source: a love that is relentless in its pursuit of your eternal good. Do not read his warnings as condemnation. Read them as the voice of a Savior who wants you in his kingdom and is reaching out to make sure you know the way.