

NOT SO FAST // Luke 6:24-26

from the "Kingdom Life" mini-series within the Gospel of Luke

Last week, we were introduced to the Beatitudes and their instruction to Christ followers to be "different." This week, we studied the "woes" that immediately follow Jesus' instructions to His disciples. In verses 24 through 26, Jesus turns His attention from His disciples to the crowd.

We can assume that this crowd is made up of people who are not followers of Jesus. Therefore, these "woes" apply to those who are outside the Kingdom of God. Regardless, we still ought to pay attention to Jesus' words because the Christian must be a person of vigilance in his or her spiritual pilgrimage. In other words, in order to follow Christ well, we must be careful. Vigilance in the Christian life requires us to set up guards for ourselves. This week, Pastor Neal suggested four "Guards" to place on our lives based on this passage of Scripture:

1. Guard against Fortune

Jesus is *not* saying it is wrong to be rich; He *is* saying it is wrong to trust in riches.

2. Guard against Food (*consumables, things for which you can develop an appetite*)

Jesus does not call us to a life of self-satisfaction or self-expression. Jesus calls us to a life of self-denial.

3. Guard against Fun (*happiness*)

Happiness is external while joy is internal. Therefore, the goal of the Christian life is not happiness, but rather, joy.

The thoughtful Christian knows the reality of our world and that it is not all a game while also maintaining a healthy level of humor.

4. Guard against Fame (*popularity*)

By following Jesus, we will indirectly make enemies simply because Jesus had enemies.

There's nothing wrong with being liked, but to have no enemies is a sign of having no true convictions. (cf., Galatians 1:10). The Christian, therefore, seeks to live a kind and blameless life, all the while knowing that to follow Jesus is to swim against the flow.

Utilizing Guards in our lives allows us to tune our hearts to hear Jesus' instructions for developing the characteristics of a Kingdom Life. With these Guards in place, we must ask ourselves: whose Kingdom am I building - Jesus' or my own?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It could seem that there is a very delicate balance between "too little" and "too much" with these Guards (ex. people pleasing VS. seeking enemies). In order to navigate that balance, what are some practical ways to use/think about these Guards?
2. What are some things (other than Jesus) for which you have developed an appetite? How do you keep that in check? How *could* you keep that in check?
3. How do you differentiate between happiness and joy? How do you find balance between the two?