

The weekend services here at the Village Church are by far my favorite crowds to teach. And I'm not just saying that because you pay me. They are my favorite crowd to teach because they are by far the most spiritually diverse. Take the last week for me. This past week I was teaching, really kind of talking a little bit and then answering questions at Dallas Theological Seminary in their Pastoral Ministries Department. I pretty much know what's in that crowd. Not a lot of pagans working on a ThM. Not a lot of people who want to have nothing to do with Jesus or maybe on the fence, spending \$100 grand on a degree in it. So I pretty much know what's in that crowd. Later this week, I'm going to hop on a plane and I'm going to fly to Seattle—"Text and Context"—the Resurgence Conference there in Seattle. It's pretty much going to be crammed filled with pastors and those who want to pastor. So I'm going to know that crowd, right? But here on the weekends, we're all over the map. I mean, there are some of you in here right now who don't know Jesus but you're in process—like you don't even know you're in process. Like, you're just intrigued so you keep coming back. It's just a matter of time. Too late now, sucka. It's over. He's already after you. It's over. This is the beginning of the end. If you're not sure but you keep coming back, it's just a matter of time. Some of you in here really deeply love the Lord. I mean, you've been transformed by Him, you're in love, you even sang those songs, you're in it. Some of you are neutral. You're here because your mom and dad went to church and so this is what you do. Or you have kids and you don't want your kids smoking the rock and getting people pregnant and so you're bringing them to church so that they'll be good people. But you're pretty neutral. You have work and you do work, you have home and you do home and you have church and you do church, but there's no overarching theme of the glory and might of Christ over your life. It's just not there. You're just neutral. You're just doing church. And I'm glad you're here. There are some of you here who are just the theology police. And that means you don't really have any ministry of your own; you just want to dog ours. And so you've kinda come to pay attention and maybe blog on how you've got it all right (of course in your bedroom at your mom's house). And you'll blog on that, and that will be great. I look forward to not reading that. And then there are some of you—you got duped into this place this morning. Your buddy was like, "Hey, you want to go get some brunch?"—and you got in the car and they're like, "I've got to make a stop." And you're here. So we're all over the map. And there's probably a hundred that I haven't even mentioned. We're kind of all over the map. And so I really do love preaching and teaching the preaching and teachings of Jesus Christ to a crowd that's that diverse.

Because here's the thing about Jesus, and here's why He's so challenging, to be honest with you. The thing that's so challenging about Jesus is He's not going to add to conventional religious wisdom. That's not what He's going to do. He's going to replace it altogether. That's what makes Jesus so unreal in His teaching and preaching. That's why over and over again they go, "This guy teaches and preaches as one with authority. This guy is different than our other teachers." Because He is not adding to religious systems. He's not sprinkling His two cents in. He's absolutely dismantling, replacing and taking everything that we're taught to believe and that might even be naturally in us to believe from the second we breathe air, and He's turning it on its head. Let me show you what I mean. Sometimes He just sounds crazy. Luke 6, we'll pick it up in verse 20, "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.'" Let's go to the woes now. "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."

Now, this sounds crazy. Since when did poverty, hunger, sorrow and rejection become blessing? Sounds like the 7th grade to me—I ain't looking to go back. When did those four things become blessing? And then on the tail end, when did wealth, a full stomach, joy and being loved become what we should ascribe to? In every great success story, the key component in every book, everyone who was ever on Oprah is that they moved from here—poverty, rejection, hunger, despair—and they moved to wealth. Isn't it? Isn't every great success story marked by someone who moved from here to here? It moves in this direction. But Jesus shows up and goes, "No, no, no. It moves the other way." But no one has ever made a success story built on, "He was born a billionaire...died decrepit and alone. Selah." That is not how it works. It moves from poverty, rejection, hungry, sorrow, this way to joy, wealth. But Jesus is going, "Oh no, no, no. It better head the other way." Now let me point this out, and then we'll get into the text. When Jesus preaches as one with authority, what that means is He's not making suggestions or prayers; He's letting you in on how things are. Do you understand the difference there? So let me unpack it like this: when Jesus says, "Blessed are those...Blessed are those...Blessed are those...Blessed are those...Woe is those...Cursed are those...Cursed are those...Cursed are those..." He is not hoping, wishing or praying. He is not, "Oh Father, I hope, I wish, I'm praying that the poor would be blessed." That is not what's occurring here. He is not hoping, wishing and praying; He's stating how things are. Do you understand the difference? "The poor are blessed. The hungry will be filled. Woe to those who are rich." He's not suggesting; He's trying to tap you into how it is.

So let's get into this text, and let's look at Him kind of compare these things and contrast these things. Because here's the question we asked and tried to answer last week was this: is Jesus a liar and is there any hypocrisy in Him? So we went through two chapters of Luke trying to get to the bottom of that. Is there any hypocrisy in Him? Don't get on the edge of your seat; we came to the conclusion that He's not. Hence the reason we're all here again the next week. It would be a very different crowd if last week's conclusion was, "Yep, liar, hypocrite." So the question for this week that we've got to get to the bottom of is if Jesus is saying with authority, "This is who is blessed and this is who is cursed"—what we want to do is kind of figure out where we are in that, correct? I don't know that that would be a negative thing, looking at the authoritative teachings of Christ and then going, "Where am I?" Because I'm guessing that we're not all over here, and we're not all over here. In fact, we might be somewhere in the middle. So let's look at this and let's let the Scriptures read us, and then we'll see what the Holy Spirit wants to do. "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'" Now look down in verse 24 because here's His contrast. "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation." Now, we know from Scripture that God does not hand out salvation based on economic status. He does not hand out salvation based on material wealth. So if you're one of the college kids that's here with us this morning, you're just broke, you hadn't eaten anything but Ramen noodles, and you've got like \$1.10 to your name, you shouldn't right now be going, "I'm in! The kingdom is mine!" And if you're in here and you drove up here in like a \$100,000 car and you've got gold spinners, the whole thing is big, you shouldn't be going, "Oh no, I'm out." There's something else going on here because this isn't just talking about how much we make or don't make or what we have or don't have.

So here's one of the first rules when we engage the Scriptures. When you have a Scripture like this, what you can do is you can take it and you can say what you think. And maybe there's some value in that—probably there's not. So what we need to do is we need to let the rest of Scripture read this Scripture for us. We need to look at the rest of the Bible and let the rest of the Bible read into what we just read right there. Now Matthew 5-7 is either this exact same sermon from a different vantage point, or it's the same sermon done in different places; but we don't have to get dogmatic about that. The one in Matthew's going to be a little bit more detailed, and it's going to let us into what might be going on at a deeper level here. Because in Luke He says, "Blessed are the poor," but in Matthew 5 He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." So now we've moved past just external economics, and now we're talking about the state of the heart. So blessed is the man, happy is the man, transformed is the man, deep is the man who understands that he's spiritually bankrupt, that he has nothing that he can give to God as a barter for God's favor, for justification or for right standing. Blessed

is the man who understands that no matter how many religious activities he's in, no matter how well he pulls off the moral code, no matter how clean his life is, God still owes him nothing. And although I think a lot of us know that in our minds, I've been around enough to know that most of us still don't really grasp that in our hearts. Most of us still feel that God owes us favor because we've been good. But he's saying here, "Oh no, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who understand that there's nothing in them that they can give to God that'll somehow make God go, "Oh, I'll take that and give you this." Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the ones that go, 'I just can't figure this thing out.' Blessed are those." Now, this starts to make sense, right? Because remember what Jesus said He quoted out of Isaiah, that He came to do? "I came to preach good news to the who? Poor." But He's definitely ministering to more than just poor people. So He came to proclaim good news to those who were poor in spirit and felt like they couldn't do it, and that they couldn't get close enough to God and that they were broken and they were wicked. Now, this starts to make even more sense when you look at who gets enraged by the gospel message. For the last two weeks, we've covered how the Pharisees have responded to Jesus coming and preaching grace, preaching mercy, preaching love, preaching reconciliation. What have been their two responses? Remember we did the scale? One was wrath and then last week, big time, fury. Wrath, fury. So the religious elite, those who believed that they were clean and they did have right standing because they were good and they did wash their hands and they did say grace and they didn't do this and they went here and they did that, so God has to love them— those found Jesus' message unbelievably offensive. "Blessed are the poor in spirit,"—now watch this—"for theirs is the kingdom of God." I wish I could go on for like an hour and forty five minute tirade right now on the kingdom of God. "The present power of the King of the universe on hand for the poor in spirit, but woe to you who think, by your discipline, and by your humanistic good deeds, can find justification. Woe to you. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God, theirs is the kingdom of heaven, theirs is the power of God to transform." It's pretty good news. I think it's why they call it that.

Now, let's keep going, because we've got some work to do on this one. This one will sting a little but for our good. Verse 21, "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied." Look down in verse 25, "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry." So He can't be talking about food here. He's going to address food on multiple occasions, and we know He's not talking about food here. So once again, we've got to go to Matthew 5. He's going to help us out. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." It doesn't stop. Let's view this as progression. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the ones who can't figure it out—they have issues that haunt them, but they know they can't fix themselves. They've been trying; they can't get there. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Now He moves to blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are those who are hungry for forgiveness, who are hungry for intimacy with God, who are hungry for reconciliation, who are hungry for wholeness. Blessed are those who are hungry for those things, because if you're hungry, you're going to pursue Him.

We have something that we say all the time here, and part of it is my own baggage. We say this is an okay place to not be okay. Let me tell you why I felt like church needed to be this place that was open for really messed up people. Christ saved me, and I had baggage. Like not one of those little roller things that you take on a day trip. I had like 18-wheelers behind me. I had a very dark past. I had some serious anger and bitterness issues. I had some serious unforgiveness, some lust issues. My soul was a mess, but it doesn't change the fact that Jesus absolutely grabbed hold of my heart one night. But here's what ended up happening to me. Everybody loves the conversion story. It's a very sexy story. But nobody likes to talk about the next six years...ten years...twelve years...two decades. Nobody tells that story. "...and then he was converted. The end." Nope. The beginning. After Christ saved me and I started going to church, it seemed everybody who touched the stage stood like this and had a cape on flapping in the wind. They're like, "Yeah, I memorized the New Testament this year, and then I healed a guy with no legs. He grew legs and walked. My whole neighborhood believes in Christ now, and they come to my house for a Bible study." And then you would hear really bad teaching, stuff like this: "If the Holy Spirit lives inside of you, you won't even want those things." Which is why those of us who grew up in denominations have been saved fourteen times and baptized thirteen times. So we're just like in

there again, "Please God, let it take. For some reason it's not taking." It's like everybody I knew came out of the water knowing the whole New Testament. They like came out like, "Romans 8:28 says..." And I came out of the water, and I didn't even know what happened. Nobody explained baptism to me; I was just supposed to do this. I came out of the water and went, "That's weird," and dried myself off. And here's what happened: I still had monumental issues, but I was in this place where no one else did. Well, I've come to find out all these years later that's a lie. Progressive sanctification is horrifically slow. What ends up happening in an information age is we learn truths quicker than we can apply them, and so we never want to come clean about what's actually going on in our hearts because we would rather be a hypocrite than be seen as one. And so I want to be like, "Hey, if you're all busted up, welcome to the family. Oh, you're dysfunctional? Us too! Come on in. One of the crowd."

But here's the thing I need you to hear me say out of this text. It's okay to not be okay. It's not okay to stay there. Like if the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that you've got issue, you can't sit on that; you have to move. And I've been pleading with some of you for years to get into Recovery, to go to the Center for Christian Counseling, to find a godly older man, older woman or a godly man, or a godly woman in your life and confess where you are no matter how dark, no matter what it is. But you've got to take steps. This is what this means. Blessed are the ones that hunger and thirst for righteousness. Why? Because they'll be filled. Now hear me—because some of you are on the path, and it's painfully slow. And so it's easy to give up when like a year later, you're still, "When's it going to go away?" Just put your faith in His transforming power. I promise you, you're farther along than you think you are. You don't ever really get to see spiritual growth; you just kind of wake up there. Which doesn't get preached enough, because most of us are waiting for a moment. I know there are a bunch of you fools here from the Passion conference. There were like church vans pulling into our parking lot. I was like, "Why are there church vans in our parking lot?" But here's the thing with that whole conference mentality is that we're going to this conference that finally transforms us. Okay, I was there in '98, '97. How's that working for us? Now, I love conference stuff. I'm getting on a plane to go to one. They've got this part, but it's not enough to know; you've got to be hungry enough to walk towards it. I'm not talking works-based. Please don't hear me talk about that. He's saying, "Blessed is the one who's hungry enough to pursue God, because he's going to find Him." The problem is most of us like to stay in the poor-in-spirit mode. They don't want to take that step, which is why some of you are on your way out. Like some of you are here for all those different reasons I gave at the beginning, but some of you are on your way out. You're absolutely on your way out because you are not going to be willing to commit, you are not going to be willing to submit to the Lord. And so once that happens, once you've said, "I'm not doing that," then you're just on your way out. And because some of us are religious, we'll put religious language to it. "You love Jesus but not necessarily the Church." One of my favorite things, really crazy things that I've heard said. And then it won't be long after that before Jesus gets dropped also. I believe it was Augustine who said, "No man can have God as his Father who has not the Church as his Mother." I don't think that's theologically correct, but it sounds good.

Blessed are the hungry for they'll be filled, but woe to the full. I think we've got to work hard at letting some silence into our day. Technology has really enabled us to not ever quiet things down enough to hear our hearts. And some of us don't know that we're hungry because we fill ourselves and our day— we hate silence, because silence starts going, "Hey, there's a little unsettling here. There's something not right down here." But man, we can make that thing go away with Facebook. I tell you that, we can make that thing go away with a Myspace page, a 24 DVD box set. I think if we're going to be serious about this thing, we've got to slow down enough to go, "Okay, what's really going on in me? What's really going on down here?" and then not be afraid of that. Let me assure you of something, this will be a little bit of a secret: it'll be dark, whatever's going on down there. But it's okay to not be okay. Come on in. Woe to you who are full. Woe to you who think you have no need. Woe to you who think you have it all figured out. Woe to you who think you don't need a greater power than you.

Let's keep going. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh." Now look down. "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." If we follow this as a progression: blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who hunger and thirst. Now, blessed are those who mourn. Mourn what? Mourn the fact that they're bankrupt and hungry. This is repentance. That's what this is. Blessed are those who mourn over their sin, whose hearts are overwhelmed at the darkness inside of them, who are overwhelmed with grief for how they've offended God. Now, the Scriptures make a distinction between worldly sorrow and godly repentance. Worldly sorrow is, "I've made a mess of my life. I wish I wouldn't have." But that doesn't transform hearts and souls; that's just regret.

Repentance, godly repentance—"I've offended God on high. I'll now submit my life to Him"—leads to repentance, transformation. The best way I know how to unpack this for you is the book of Ecclesiastes, which is in the wisdom literature—it says, now listen to this, because there's a reason they call it the wisdom literature. Here's what it says: "Only a fool laughs when he's on fire." People try to say the Bible's not true. "Only a fool laughs when he's on fire." I think this is a great little cross-reference to this text. What it's talking about is people whose lives are unraveling, but they continue to paint up a pretty face and smile and giggle as if it's not. Their whole world's on fire, and they smile and pretend it's not. Woe to you. Blessed is the man who can scream out, "I'm on fire. Help me."

One more. "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you..." Have you ever been excluded? I would rather be hated than excluded. Have you ever been excluded? Like, you're looking at your family's vacation and everyone's there but you—you don't even know they went? It's like everybody's at Disneyland. It's like Mickey Mouse in the middle, all your sisters and brothers. You're just like, "We were just at home." Have you ever talked to somebody in your crew and found out that on Friday they all went out to eat and went and did this deal and you stayed at home and watched a rerun of "Man vs. Wild"? They didn't even call you? Have you ever been excluded? Or maybe we're not from all dysfunctional units of relationship. Have you ever maybe been passed over for a job at your work or have you ever been demoted or have you ever been excluded? It's quite painful.

"Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!" That's going to be an important little line there, because some of you are just pompous jerks and people hate you because you're a pompous jerk, not because of the Son of Man—because you're an arrogant, graceless soul, and that's why people hate you. Now I know you like to use this verse as a "They hate me because I love the Lord." No, they hate you because you're a jerk. Verse 23. "Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets." Now look down in verse 26. "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." Now we've got to talk a little bit of evangelical history here, but before, let me say this: Plato, in *The Republic*, Book Seven—that's the great Cave Dialogue. If you haven't read that, I don't recommend it—just get the notes. In the great Cave Dialogue, Plato tells this story: that a group of men are chained together with a fire at their back and their whole lives, all they've ever seen is the shadows on the wall that dance from the flames behind them. But one day, one of them gets free. He gets free from his chains, and he runs outside and sees colors and waterfalls; he interacts with other human beings. And then because he hurts for his brothers, he wants to go back and tell them what all he's seen. And when he gets back and tries to explain to the men who have never seen anything but shadows their whole lives, that what they're seeing is shadows, but there's really depth and beauty and form and color—that those men will turn on him and kill him. He might have been on to something.

Being a pastor really does not help sometimes. A couple of weeks ago, I was at birthday party for a friend of mine. A lot of people there were not believers in Christ at all. It was awesome. I'm standing in a circle of guys, and one of the guys was like, "Hey, so what do you do?" I was like, "Uh, I'm a pastor." He was like, "Oh..." He actually pretended that someone called him. I mean I'm right there. He's like, "What Bill?" And it wasn't like, "What do you do?" And I was like, "Funny you

should ask." I mean, I just said I'm a pastor. Boom. Gone. Now my friend that's there, he works for the Secret Service—exact opposite. "What do you do?" "I work for the Secret Service." "Have you ever killed anybody? You gotta gun? How could you...?" There are people that are just absolutely offended by the fact that we exist. Now let me tell you where that comes from. Part of it is that the gospel will be to those who are being saved the aroma of life, and to those who are perishing, the stench of death. But let me unpack that a little bit better for you about what's happening in our culture. In the late 1800's, early 1900's, a wave of liberalism hit Christian institutions.

So what happened—like Princeton, Harvard—those places were one time very biblically based. Liberalism slammed into the institutions in the United States, and what the Christian movement did was they withdrew. They withdrew from the city, they withdrew from certain avenues—the arts and things like that—they withdrew from institutions and they began to build their own institutions. Correct? Absolutely. Now for all of our ranting and raving against the Fundamentalists, if it was not for them, you would not be here. If it was not for that retreat, then we would be France, England, Canada. We'd be those other parts of the world where the Church is dead.

So the older brother, as much as he exhausts us all—if it was not for him—you would not be sitting in this room. I can promise you that. Now what's happened is as that movement of withdrawal has begun to mature, it has tried to engage society again. It has tried to live missionally, it has tried to engage its neighbors; it's tried to engage the cities. But here's the problem. We're no longer the new kid on the block *à la* the Puritans; we're coming back with an unbelievable amount of baggage. Let me unpack it like this. I had lunch downtown just a few weeks ago with a guy who recently came to know the Lord—male prostitute, HIV positive. Three or four times in that two-hour lunch he brought up the 80's when hundreds of his friends were dying of the AIDS virus, and the official stance of most churches were it was a curse from God. You don't think I've got to make up some ground there? By the way, there's no church in his neighborhood. Hadn't been a church in his neighborhood for fifteen years. What happens is churches out in the white suburbs bus people in to tract bomb them on the weekends. Great methodology. "We love you...not enough to live down in this crappy ghetto. But Jesus loves you. I've got to go to Starbucks." And then we pull out. Great methodology, hopelessly flawed. Now that's just one. Who knows what's been said to your neighbors? Who knows what gospel was presented to your coworkers? Who knows what happened to that guy across the dorm from you? So we're engaging again, which is great. That's growth, that's maturity.

Some are trying to engage without content. It's actually the same thing that happened in the late 1800's. It was, "Hey, we can be Christians without the Bible." It didn't work well, at all, did it? Ended up going bad. But for those of us who are trying to engage with content, you've got to know that there at times is going to be frustration and aggression towards you that maybe doesn't have anything to do with you. But here's the great news. The great news is we don't have to go to bed at night and be angry about that aggression and go, "You know what I should have said? I should have quoted the book of Daniel where it says the smoke of their torment will rise to the heavens for eternity. Yes, that's what I should have said. Tomorrow, I'm going to send them that e-mail." We don't have to be that guy. Now even though maybe some hurtful things were said to us, some attacks were made on us, what we get to do is go to bed at night and go, "Father, I have no idea what's wounded his soul, but I pray that You might use my life and enable me to walk in such grace that I might be a tool in Your hand that would transform his mind and heart towards You. Help me—because I want to choke him. Amen. And that's a great verse in Daniel. Thank You." Do you know what that's called? That's called freedom when you fully understand that we're not wrestling flesh and blood. That's not our fight.

So He just said here, "Blessed are you when you've been so transformed that people see Jesus on you. Leap for joy. If they're reviling you and excluding you and hating you because you love the Lord; if they're going, "Oh not Johnson, he's going to bring his Bible,"—if that's you, then congratulations, Christ has begun to transform your heart in such a way that it's now visible to others— leap for joy. But woe to you if everyone loves you, because chances are you're lying to

everyone, even you.” And here’s the really tough part about being this guy over here and this guy over here and this guy over here. It makes it impossible to ever receive love. Because any love you receive in the deep part of your heart, you’ll be able to justify that what they love is not the real you and therefore their love is counterfeit. It’s a really lonely place to be. I’d rather be rejected by 99% of the world and have 1% know me and love me, than be loved falsely by 99% and rejected by the 1%. I don’t get to choose for me. It makes this job very difficult. Blessed are those who are reviled and excluded. Leap for joy you’ve been transformed.

So this is the way things are. “Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those who are persecuted. But woe is you, cursed are you who are rich, you who are full, you who laugh while you’re on fire, you who are loved by everyone.” Do you see what Jesus is trying to do? He’s trying to get you outside of how you think the universe works and get you into how it does. So here’s the question: we asked it at the beginning—you’ve got to answer it now. Where are you? Not where’s your family, where’s the church—where are you? Blessed, deep life? Growing in joy? Self-sufficient, self-sustaining? Cursed? Where do you land? Where are you? I don’t think it’s an answer you can get to quickly, honestly. I think there has to be some plunging deep down in there to see what’s in there. So let’s do this. Let’s take a couple of seconds. Would you just bow your heads, close your eyes? If that’s not how you think well, then don’t feel the need to do that.

Blessed, deep, full of life are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are those who mourn, for one day they’ll laugh, being set free from what haunts them. Blessed are those who know Jesus in such a way that it’s changed them, so that they’re excluded and reviled and at times hated, not because of their arrogance, but simply because of Jesus. But woe to you who are self-sufficient. Woe to you who are proud of your religious lineage. Woe to you who have figured it all out. Woe to you who have got it all right, for you’ve got the fullness of what you’ll have. And woe to you who are full, full and yet starving. What an empty place to be. And woe to you who laugh while your soul decays. And woe to you who are loved by all, because you haven’t been transformed much. The good news in all of this is Christ and the grace of Christ covers where we failed here. Because if we’re honest, some of us would have to say, “Hey listen, I’m not hungry, but I want to be.” Okay then, that’s where we begin.

“Jesus, I thank You for this morning, and I thank You for a chance to be read by the Scriptures. That’s my prayer, is that they read us this morning instead of us reading them. I pray that You would stir up our hearts toward You and that we’d be able to get to the bottom of what’s really going on in us. Are we blessed? Are we under woe right now? Are we choosing to live outside of how things are? Would You stir up and touch the real deep places in us? It’s for Your beautiful name. Amen.”