



The Messenger

International Lutheran Church

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A NOTE FROM PASTOR CARL

EPIPHANY KINGDOM

And he [Jesus] lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20 ESV)

The light of Epiphany creates out of chaos a new order that is built not upon the standards of this world but rather is built upon Jesus, the One who became poor, that we might become rich in Him. Today at International Lutheran Church we continue our reading of the gospel of Luke and hear this amazing proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain.

Having grown up on the plains of Iowa, there is one thing I can relate to here – endless miles of open space upon which the farmer has unfettered opportunity to sow the spring crops. I should correct myself: growing up, most of these farms were separated by simple fences, but today as likely before the family farm had arrived, that land was without boundaries, at least no natural ones as far as one could see. I remember driving home from college numerous times and reflecting on the endless rows of corn on one side of the road and soybeans on the other as the sun set in the distance. Endless is the word that comes to mind!

Luke tells us that there were so many people coming from across the whole of the land of Israel that Jesus needed a flat and level place from which to see and care for all these people. He came down to the plain, Luke says. We should note, too, that Luke tells us in the verses leading up to this point the progress of God's Epiphany light. Jesus had spent the night in prayer with His Father and then in the brilliance of the day He chose from among those following Him, twelve who would serve as apostles, messengers of the Kingdom of God.

Here we see then how the light of God's Epiphany in Christ now creates the very framework through which He would serve all people. In a real sense the Sermon on the Plain is taking us into the re-creation story itself as God in Christ orders all things through His powerful Word. Just as God's Word separated the light and the dark, the water above from the water below, and the land from the sea, so now Jesus' Word sets the boundaries and markers of His Kingdom, the blessings and curses, the do's and the don'ts, the right and the wrong. The very term that Jesus uses – *makarios* – or "blessing" (*bok* in Korean and *fu* in Chinese) is first used in the garden as God laid out the parameters and boundaries of His creation to the man and the woman. This blessing is repeated again and again until that day when Moses led the children of the Exodus to the very boundary to which he could not cross and laid before them the blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28). And even as the curses that Moses had clearly articulated were coming to pass in the life of Jeremiah, he too points to the truth of Psalm 1 – "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD." (Jeremiah 17:7) We hear the word "blessing" today and we may think of the life that is healthy, wealthy, and wise. But from the beginning "blessing" has been rooted in God alone.

This is why the four blessings and four woes of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain seem to us upside down as He declares, 'Blessed are the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those whose names are reviled.' Who would want any of

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM	<i>Bible Class and Sunday School</i>
10:00 AM	<i>Divine Worship Service</i> (in-person and live stream)
7:00 PM	<i>Bible Study</i> (live stream)

OTHER EVENTS

Go to ilcseoul.org > Upcoming for other events

that?! Instead the things we long for and pursue our whole life long – riches, satisfaction, happiness, and a stellar reputation are doomed. But this is the very point and crux of the difference, and the very boundary to which Jesus has committed His way. He came not seeking wealth, satisfaction, endless joy, or even a pleasant reputation. He came to be poor, to be hungry, to weep as we can never truly understand. His tears that night in the garden literally tore Him to pieces. For your sake and mine, He was reviled and hated and rejected as the refuse of the world, the most pitied of all. And all this solely so that your poverty and mine and that of the whole world would be filled with His grace. That is the Kingdom, reign, and rule of this King. He did not come to tax our life away but came to be leveled into the dust of the earth so that in and through Him all things would be made new. He was plowed over that we would sprout anew. He died that you and I would live in His Kingdom both now and forevermore.

You see, as Jesus speaks His Word, the poor, hungry, weeping, and reviled of us are comforted. Through His cross He even transforms the pain in our lives to His glory and for the good of our neighbors. Nothing is wasted or meaningless. In the cross, our weeping is turned to joy. We do not need to dread the day when we have the opportunity to share His Name. Instead, we skip and leap with joy because His death and resurrection have won for us a pleasure that this world needs to know (1 Corinthians 15:1-20). But if we have been trusting in our own hard-earned riches, or if we have been trying to satisfy ourselves with our own accomplishments, or simply tried to laugh away the pain all around us, then this is also the wakeup call for us to consider where all this has gotten us, and to consider what is yet to come.

As Jesus came down on to the Plain that day, His power was poured out to heal the sick and deliver the oppressed from everything that was upon them. Like the light that shattered the darkness, His Word this morning brings us into His realm of grace and mercy right here and now, and makes us heirs of its greatest treasure – Jesus! With eyes looking upon you he says, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20)

Pastor Carl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, you may direct inquiries for any announcement to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Links to online or live stream events will be included in either the electronic version of *The Messenger* or will be sent out on Sunday morning.

CHILI LUNCHEON - DATE CORRECTION

Not today, but next Sunday, 2/23, ILC will hold a chili fellowship luncheon after the service. We will have the kimchi jar out for KRW 5,000 donations for adults. Thank you for your generosity in helping ILC continue to provide these kind of activities.

CHURCH360

As we transition to a new church management system called Church360, we are reaching out to individuals and families to help us provide helpful information for the church in order to better connect with you. Thank you for your assistance!

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Last Sunday, we provided another brief Financial Update at the end of the service. As the Church Council works on the budget for this coming fiscal year, we thank you for your prayers. May the Lord bless the planning and implementation of ILC's goal to be Christ's light into the community. Together, we all have a role to play in this work!

SINGERS AND MUSICIANS

At any point, you are welcome to join any of ILC's special musical groups. Generally, practice takes place before the service once a month. See Seokhee, ILC's organist and music director, for more details.



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE GIVING

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY MAKING USE OF ONLINE GIVING.

If you are unable to attend in-person church, we encourage you to make use of offering your tithes and gifts via online giving. Giving in this way will be recorded for your personal end-of-year giving statement.

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READINGS

February 16: Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

OT	Jeremiah 17:5-8
NT	1 Corinthians 15:1-20
Gospel	Luke 6:17-26

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant, or need to make a scheduling adjustment, please write to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Thank you!

FEBRUARY 16		10:00 AM
ACOLYTE	Andrew & Liliana	
GREETER	Kris	
USHERS	Eric & Christian	
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Chuck	
LIVE STREAM	Ethan	
KITCHEN HELPERS	Rachel & Sung Eun	
OFFERING COUNTERS	Adam & Matt	