

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Spoken Well Of** Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, September 7, 2016  
8:15 AM 1 Cor 7:25-31; **Lk 6:20-26** (How often people are condemned, even if they are very holy.)

**“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”**

Today we have the so-called Beatitudes from the Gospel of Luke, different from the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew, where there are eight Beatitudes. Here there are only four, and then there are four Woes.

Now the meaning of the **Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew** is clearly for the early Christian community, especially with Jewish roots, to follow a new paradigm, to follow a new pattern or model of life. It was a practical way of living. It was, if you will, **the new Torah given from the mountain as Moses gave the Decalogue from the mountain.**

**But in Luke it's different.** Luke first of all has a different audience; his audience is gentile and allusions to the mountain and Moses and Law would not interest them. In fact, Jesus is—it doesn't say here in this particular part of the reading, but it says he is standing on the plain, so it's different, a different mental construct, a different setting, a different audience, and a different message actually, even though similar in phrasing, but a different message.

**The message here in Luke is that everything is going to be reversed.** People who are happy now will be sad; people who are grieving now will be happy. People who are rich now will be poor; people who are poor now will be rich, etc. But **the most important part is always at the end.** Now at the end of the Beatitudes **Matthew includes also “Blessed are you when people hate you.”** That's also in Matthew. **But Luke's real zinger is “Woe to you when all**

**speak well of you.”** That’s the most important part. “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

**Now consider who is spoken well of? And how often people are condemned, even if they are very holy.** For example, on Sunday our Holy Father canonized Mother Teresa. Now you might think Mother Teresa, being the humble servant of all that she was, was universally acclaimed. Oh, no, she wasn’t. She was quite roundly condemned by many people in India and also in the West especially in England where she was criticized for all kinds of things, such as doing the wrong things for people or not really trying to correct the situation that created all the problems, etc. etc. **By no means was even Mother Teresa praised by everybody.** And so it is. **Our Holy Father**, although in so many ways exemplary, is quite often actually criticized and **condemned by people who are threatened by his message.** And so it is. Now look at who are really popular people that have enormous prestige even within the circle of so-called religion? Just observe that.