

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Luke 6:17-26

## Sermon February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### *Jesus Reverses Our Fortunes*

We've all had one of those bad days where everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Picture it. Your phone alarm goes off for the fifth time. You are so tired that you keep hitting the snooze. As you go to hit the snooze a sixth time though, you realize if you don't get up right this minute you will be late for work.

So, you force yourself out of bed. Crawl into the shower. Turn the water on. And scream at the top of your lungs. Of all the days, this is the day the hot water tank decides to act up. You are already running late, so you will need to take care of this problem later.

You splash some water on your face, get dressed, and head to the kitchen to make a hot cup of coffee. That will get you going. You rummage through the cupboards frantically looking for coffee beans. As your frustration builds, you remember you forgot to stop off at the grocery store on your way home from work yesterday to pick up some more.

You gasp. Then you are hit with an epiphany. You can just stop off at the Starbucks next to where you work, and pick up one of those fancy coffees you treat yourself with once in a while.

You get in the car and start on your route to work. If you hit every green light, you should only be a few minutes late. Unfortunately, you didn't take into consideration the chance of needing to stop for the 9:10am train that seems to take forever. You finally get to the Starbucks. You are only half an hour late for work at this point. But you need your coffee.

As you pull up to the drive through you wonder why it is vacant. It is usually hopping at this time. You awkwardly sit there in your vehicle waiting to hear a voice inviting you to start your order. You wait, and you wait. Finally, you decide to drive up to the window to see what is going on. You see a sign on the drive through window that states that they had to close today due to staffing concerns (**Image**). Stupid COVID.

You give up, and head across the street to work. You are only 45 minutes late now. Of course, your boss is in a bad mood today, because their favorite sports team lost last night. Your boss chews you out, and tells you that the time will need to be made up at the end of the day. What a morning? Can things get worse?

Well, I wish you didn't say that. After your lunch break, the photocopier/printer breaks down as you are printing off an important document. In the chaos of trying to figure out how to get the old machine to work again you realize that you missed your 2pm staff meeting. This just isn't your day.

Finally, the end of the work day is upon you. This is including the 45 minutes of make up time you worked to get your boss off your back. You jump in the vehicle, and head home. Luckily, the drive home is uneventful.

Because, you are so looking forward to going curling tonight. When you arrive at home, you notice that a few people have left messages for you on your cell phone. You find out that one person from your curling team is sick. Another had an engagement they needed to be at. Another isn't comfortable with the current protocols in place, and waited till now to cancel. You can't find any spares. Your team will have to forfeit the match tonight. This day just keeps getting worse.

Well, there is that favorite program on television you were recording. You can now watch it live. Not all is lost from this day. You prepare your supper. Take out your television tray. Go to turn on the television when the power goes out.

You have had enough. You go straight to bed. And as your eyes get heavy you remember you still need to call someone to fix your hot water heater. Or you might have to live this day over again tomorrow. Whatever. You'll deal with it in the morning. You're too tired now.

We've all had one of those bad days where everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

Sometimes it is a series of events that happen that make us think we are cursed or something. One example I can think of is when someone we love dies (**Image**). The old saying goes, grief comes in threes. Rarely, do we deal with just one experience of loss. Sometimes, it can be the death of three different people in our lives. Sometimes it can be a death, and then a loss of job, and then dealing with a broken relationship. Sometimes it can be a series of events that make us wonder if our fortunes will ever change.

Sports athletes or teams for that matter can go through these stretches where everything that can go wrong does go wrong. After a while they find ways to lose. They try too hard to get out of the funk, leading to more unfortunate moments or bloopers as us sports fans like to call them.

We've all had a bad day or have experienced a stretch of bad events, or have played on a team where we can't seem to get over the misfortune.

There are times in our lives where we desperately pray for Jesus to reverse our fortunes. Times where we long to experience the new life Jesus promises us.

And there are times where we actually do experience something good in the midst of that bad day or bad stretch that helps our fortunes turn. Maybe a co-worker surprises you with a coffee when you finally arrive at the office (**Image**). Or a friend who is handy comes over to fix your hot water heater after work. Or a boss who is a little more understanding doesn't get so mad at you after the morning you had.

Maybe you have a good support system of people that help you through your grief. Making it easier for you to see God's light shining in the midst of your darkness. For example, seeing the life in your grandchildren as they play around you. Or feeling the warmth and comfort that comes with receiving a hug from a good friend (**Image**). Or being uplifted by a bible verse or devotion you come across.

Maybe the puck finally bounces towards the net. Maybe the basketball finally drops in after spinning around the rim for a few seconds.

In our gospel, Jesus is preaching to a large group of people who are living through a real bad time in their lives. People who are struggling in poverty. People who are marginalized by their community. People who everyday feel like they are living through a bad day.

In response to the grief and suffering Jesus sees in the crowds, and in us, Jesus promises the crowds, and us, that Jesus has come to reverse our fortunes. Jesus has come to bring healing and redemption to our lives. Jesus has come to give us new life. Jesus has come to reveal to us the kingdom of God. A kingdom where Jesus will turn our pains of rejection into healing invitation. Turn our grief into joy. Turn our injustice into justice.

Jesus promises to turn our fortunes around.

And we see this promise being fulfilled during his ministry as he reaches out to many and changes their fortunes. Healing the sick. Welcoming the rejected. Challenging the injustices of his day.

Jesus even turns the misfortune of death on the cross at Golgotha into new life on Easter morning (**Image**). Helping us see that not even death will stop Jesus from breathing new life into us. Not even death will hinder us from living out Jesus' ministry in the world.

The resurrected Christ breathes on us the Holy Spirit, empowering us to continue his ministry. Helping people turn their fortunes around. Helping people experience God's

healing and redemption. Helping people experience new life. Helping people get a taste of God's kingdom come.

In baptism, we recognize and celebrate this gift of the Holy Spirit, as we are welcomed into this ministry, as we witnessed with Amelia today. Welcomed into this kingdom where we receive a promise that our rejections will be overcome with hospitality. Our grief will be overcome with joy. Our injustice will be overcome with justice.

In our baptism, we hear the invitation to live out this hospitality, love, and justice. So, others too can experience this kingdom come. This reversal of fortune.

Jesus turns our fortunes around. May we cling to this promise when it seems like everything that can go wrong does go wrong in our lives. And may we be encouraged by this promise to live out this kingdom come, this reversal of fortune, in the world.

Let us pray, gracious God, when life seems like one big struggle, please shine your light in our darkness. Help us cling to your promise that you will reverse our fortunes. You will bring healing and redemption to our lives. You will breathe new life in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We give thanks for the gift of baptism, that reassures us of this promise. And that empowers us to be your hands and feet in our broken world. Revealing your kingdom come. **Amen.**

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