

The Spirit of Jesus 1: Poverty of Spirit

I. WHY STUDY THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT?

A. Last year, the Lord had me travel to 6 different nations and 14 different cities. He told me to focus on preaching only “the gospel of the kingdom” simultaneously as I read through the New Testament with one objective: to receive a clearer view of Jesus and His Church.

B. While I traveled one of several defining moments for me involved in the Lord speaking to my heart with deep conviction, “Caleb, contend for the ministry of the Word.” And then another time, “You must teach the whole counsel of God.”

“4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4)

“25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:25-28)

C. He made it apparent with this charge that the ministry of the word is important to escaping deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. It aids us to stay sober and alert. It continues to build us up and to aid us to lay hold of THE inheritance: the knowledge of God through Christ by the Spirit that promotes a good conscience, good works, and eternal rewards in the age to come.

“29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:29-32)

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared...”

“11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.”

16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Tim. 1-2, 11-16)

- D. Another admonishment came through an observation by the Holy Spirit concerning the matriculation of the body. From calling (being born-again) to commissioning (sent) there is a divine vision and plan for our training and employment in the will, ways, and works of God. God wants to see us mature.

“11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Heb. 5:11-14)

“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.” (Heb. 6:1-3)

“11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph. 4:11-16)

- E. Though God is the one that causes growth as the Scripture notes, it is through being trained in righteousness by the Scriptures, to live life by the Spirit, and do the works of the Father. This happens when faithful teaching is matched with faithful practice.

“40 The child grew more powerful in grace, for he was being filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.... 52 As Jesus grew, so did his wisdom and maturity. The favor of men increased upon his life, for he was loved greatly by God.” (Lk. 2:40, 52)

“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?” (1 Cor. 3:1-3)

“5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. (1 Cor. 3:5-9)

“11 When I was a child, I spoke about childish matters, for I saw things like a child and reasoned like a child. But the day came when I matured, and I set aside my childish ways.” (1 Cor. 13:11)

II. THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

- A. The calling of Elisha is very similar to our own. He has a definitive moment where he goes from merely a farmer to something altogether different upon receiving a divine calling from God. Elisha does what every disciple is called to do, he forsakes his former life and pursues the man who called him.

“Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah... Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.” (1 Kings. 19:21)

“16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Mk. 1:16-18 cf. Mk. 10:17-27)

- B. Elijah was not only a prophet but he reestablished and led a school of prophets (2 Kings 2 “sons of the prophets”). Essentially, Elijah was a disciple maker (sharing best practices, upholding the word of God, identifying more prophets etc.) and Elisha not only assisted him closely but was also added to Elijah’s school. In a similar way, upon our following Jesus, He adds us to His other disciples for us to learn His ways together.

- C. When the Lord was going to “***take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind***” Elisha is tested in his commitment to follow his teacher unto the end. Right before this particular ascension Elijah encourages Elisha to ask a request. Possibly due to his close relationship with Elijah, Elisha asked as only for a double portion (as the eldest-son only had authority to; cf. Deu. 21:17) of “the spirit of Elijah”.

“9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me. 10 And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” 11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more. ” (2 Kgs. 2:9-12)

- D. *The request for a double portion (v. 9, 'share', rsv, neb, jb), was not that he might excel his master but that he should receive the eldest son's share according to the law (Deut. 21:17). **Such a son had the responsibility to carry on the father's name and work.** The 'hard thing' (rsv, niv difficult thing) for Elijah was that **since God alone can make the gift of his Spirit to anyone** (cf. John 3:34; 1 John 3:24; 4:13) it was impossible for him to meet Elisha's request. The test would be to see if Elisha had 'the ability to see and comprehend the spiritual world ... and of a visionary to penetrate the heavens' (Jones, p. 385).¹*

"45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Lk. 24:44-29)

"7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." (Acts 1:7-9)

- E. It wasn't enough for Jesus to leave us with His teaching without His Spirit. He was very adamant that every disciple is filled and operating in His Spirit. Every disciple should be praying for on-going infilling of the Spirit not only for the mental ascent of knowledge. Jesus gives us a promise that if we persistently asks the Father for the Holy Spirit, it will posture us a life filled to overflowing with the Spirit.

"9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Lk. 11:9-13)

"15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." (Jn. 14:15-17)

"25 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your

¹Wiseman, Donald J. 1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary. InterVarsity Press, 1993.

remembrance all that I have said to you.” (Jn. 14:25-26)

“26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (Jn. 15:26-27)

“7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:7-15)

III. POVERTY OF SPIRIT

- A. A life led by the Spirit is distinct and observable. Such as a renewed nature, sanctified affections and passions, manifestations of multiple graces and power, and a holiness of character and conduct. He is the source of God’s predestined will to transform the entire family to be like our eldest brother Jesus.

“13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Rom. 8:13-14, 28-30)

“11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” (Eph. 1:11-14)

“5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” (1 Jn. 2:5-6)

- B. One of my favorite quote in “Rees Howell Intercessor” is once said, *“When the divine owner takes possession of a property, He has a twofold objective: intense cultivation and abounding fruitfulness. But if the land is fallow ground, He can only till it acre by acre. We shall see the Owner now at work in His newly-claimed estate.”*²
- C. Following His preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus sits His disciples down and begins to train and teach them. Every rabbi had a concentration (kind of like doctoral students), however it was common that most (dare I say every) rabbi had committed to an interpretation of the Law (or sum of the law; ten commandments).
- D. Jesus doesn’t immediately share His interpretation of commandments one through ten. He because to talk about the kinds of people will enter into, receive the bounty, and rule in the dawning kingdom of God.
- “When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the hillside, and sat down. His disciples came to him. 2 He took a deep breath, and began his teaching: 3 ‘Blessings on the poor in spirit! The kingdom of heaven is yours.’” (Matt. 5:1-3 NTE)***
- E. According to Paul, as I mentioned earlier the kind of person that will be rewarded in the kingdom of God, one that has been fashioned after the nature, character and conduct of Jesus. Jesus isn’t just listing attributes he wants to see in us to look favorably on us, but He is revealing attributes of His own nature, character and conduct, hence the call of the four in 4:18–22 is to follow Jesus and be prepared by him for a role patterned on his own practice.
- F. First and foremost, Jesus mentions poverty. What was looked down upon in the pervasive culture is now being lifted up in the kingdom of God as a qualification for possession of the Kingdom of God. This poverty though it plays on what we usually think of such as material/economic lack and disadvantage, hardship etc. it seems that Jesus is hinting at something holy and filled with value in heaven. Jesus seems to be referring an all-encompassing humility. Jesus is poor in spirit (lowly in heart) and he calls His disciples to be poor in spirit.
- “28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* (Matt. 11:28-30)**
- G. According Luke there was a young rich man (most likely a Pharisee or a member of the Sanhedrin) that came to Jesus. He is presented as a religious leader whose moral and religious life (in his eyes and the eyes of his peers) were exemplary, his credentials were seemingly impeccable. Scholars assume that he may have become wealthy because he inherited his wealth, his ways in that his father was a ruler also.

18 And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Lk. 18:18)

² Norman Grubbs, Rees Howell Intercessor, pg. 41

- H. Scholar say, this ruler knelt to flatter Jesus, calling Him *good* even though Jews believed only God was preeminently good, and in all that he has inherited from his forefathers, he now obviously hearing of the workings of Jesus and His teachings is found running not in the willingness of becoming a disciple but in his desire to “inherit” eternal life. This is in contrast to the “poor in spirit” that intimately knows their need for God.
- I. Like the young rich ruler would have, we have the potential of great reward if we choose poverty of spirit (lowliness of heart). To be His disciple, to know Him, to love Him and practice after His pattern of livings. Jesus is poor in spirit. This is the foundation of all other beatitudes.

21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.
22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. ” (Mk. 10:21-22)