

Blessed - Sermon 2 - Poor in Spirit

Matthew 5:1-3

TEXT: Matthew 5:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

What does it mean to be Poor in Spirit?

To understand poverty of Spirit you have to really understand what is meant by the word SPIRIT. Well, first of all Jesus is not referring to the Holy Spirit, but the Human Spirit. You see each individual is comprised of three distinct parts.

THE TRICHOTOMY OF A PERSON: You are made up of three parts: Body, Soul, and Spirit

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (ESV) Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Body** - Your body is that material part of you.
2. **Soul** - Your soul is made up of your *mind, will and emotions*
3. **Spirit** - Your spirit is your eternal self. It is through your spirit that you can relate to God and God can relate to you.

ILLUSTRATION:

- **Plants** - have a body, but no soul or spirit.
- **Animals** - have a body and soul, but no spirit
- **Humans** - have a body, soul, and a spirit (God breathed into Adam and made him a living Spirit).

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV) 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of **soul** and of **spirit**...

Before you are saved you are Spiritually dead.

God warned Adam in the garden not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because the day he eats of it he will surely DIE. Well he didn't die physically that day... he died SPIRITUALLY.

That is why Paul writes in Ephesians 2:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were **dead in our trespasses**, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...

So note that here in **Matthew 5:3** Jesus is speaking of poverty of SPIRIT.

Jesus did NOT say -

- **“Blessed are the poor” - that would have referenced material or physical poverty.**

There is no evidence that there is spirituality in trying to be as poor as we can be.

I have met very **spiritual** people who are very wealthy. Abraham, Job, David
I have met very **worldly** people who are very poor. Every conversation revolves around money.

So he’s not saying, “Blessed are the poor”, but rather, “blessed are the poor in SPIRIT”.

- **Neither did he say, “Blessed are the poor of SOUL” that would be emotional poverty.**

Some act look like they were baptized in vinegar and anointed with pickle juice. They are convinced that **Holiness** and **Happiness** contradict each other.

ILLUSTRATION: A schoolchild that was asked what God was like said, “As far as I can make out, God is the kind of person that is always snooping around to see if anyone is enjoying himself so that he can put a stop to it.”

Friend you will never be happier than when you are rightly related to GOD.

Jesus said, I have come that you may have life and that you may have it more abundantly.

- I love pictures of Jesus smiling!
- He was anointed with the oil of joy!
- He took great delight in the simple pleasures around him.
- He enjoyed weddings and banquets.
- He was the life of every party
- He attracted little children to them.
- He had an awesome sense of humor! Ex. Word Picture Plank in eye as he tries to remove sawdust in a brother’s eye.

If you don't have a sense of humor we ought to put you on the prayer list. Life can be very long without it.

Jesus didn't say blessed are the poor materially, nor blessed are the poor emotionally...

• **JESUS SAID, "Blessed are the poor in SPIRIT"**

That is a distinct category.

That is to say - BLESSED is the person who doesn't believe he/she can in and of themselves do anything that merits personal redemption or accomplishes eternal good.

Jesus said it this way in John 15:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, **for apart from me you can do nothing.**

When I read that as a new believer I thought to myself, but wait a minute. I can do lots of things apart from Jesus... but here is what he is saying... you can do NOTHING of eternal value apart from Jesus.

Beware of taking the attitude of those Christians in Laodicia - **Revelation 3:15–17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

The poor in spirit sees himself or herself as God sees them.

They are dependent on Him. They lean on Him. They boast in Him.

- Like Mephibosheth of the Old Testament, we have legs no impulse to walk.
- Like Bartimaeus we have eyes, but not a spark of sight.
- Like Lazarus we are spiritually bound in grave clothes helpless to rise apart from the summon on Savior.

*All is vain, unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down.
Brethren PRAY and holy manna will be showered all around.*

Don't you see the danger we are in? The damnable danger of self sufficiency. We have education, we have tools, we have finances, we have buildings... the Early Church had none of those things, yet it turned the world upside down.

And beyond this - we have morality! We pray with the Pharisee, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men...."

Charles Spurgeon said it so well - *"Our imaginary goodness is harder to conquer than our actual sin."*

But conquer it we must if we are to join the ranks of the BLESSED.

In Psalm 14:2, 3 we read: "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Jeremiah 17:9 says that "the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it."

Ecclesiastes 9:3 declares a similar truth: "...the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts through their lives."

Anthropologists tell us that one-third of all human beings who have lived on this planet have died at the hands of their brothers—that mankind has killed one-third of the human race.

Consider, even, this past century in which we lived. We had seen the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi Holocaust, the Japanese prison camps, and 135 million people slaughtered by the Communists.

Romans 3:9-18 (NASB95)

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Jesus said, "There is no one good except God alone". You have to believe that if you are to be poor in spirit.

If you are to tap in to the BLESSEDNESS of this first beatitude you MUST declare your complete and total inability to bring about any eternal benefit in and of yourself... Then and only then are you handed the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The good news is - the rung of the ladder of blessedness is not far from anyone who will simply believe scriptures testimony about us.

Oh becoming PURE in heart may be a challenge.
Becoming PERSECUTED for Christ's sake will be difficult.

But poverty of spirit is the first step of the blessed staircase. We all qualify if we will simply see ourselves as God sees us.

If anyone had the right to boast in his human accomplishments it was the Apostle Paul...Listen to what he says...**Philippians 3:4–8 (ESV)**

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as **rubbish**, in order that I may gain Christ

Again he said in Galatians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Let me ask you - what do you take pride in?

- Your wealth?
- Your beauty?
- Your education?
- Your accomplishments?

Which of those things would you trade for a Key to God's Kingdom?

ILLUSTRATION;

J. Vernon McGee tells the story of a young man who had much training in the art and science of preaching. He had been called to a great Church and he had prepared an awesome sermon. The Deacons met with him prior to the service to pray for him and he told them that there was no time... besides, he was ready to preach. He went boldly into the pulpit, then stumbled all over himself and mixed up his words. The Jokes weren't funny. And finally he came down from the pulpit with his head held low, obviously humbled. A wise old man said to him, "Son if you went up in that pulpit the way you came down, you would have came down the way you went up".

LISTEN - if you find that pride and arrogance are alive in your heart... don't pursue humility... pursue Christ.

If you cannot approach Christ WITH a poor spirit, approach Christ FOR a poor spirit.

The closer you get to Jesus, the smaller you will become in your own eyes.

If you will draw near to God, declare your own poverty of Spirit.... This text promises that the Kingdom of Heaven will be your's TODAY!

Don't you see my friend, this is not a promise of a future gift but a declaration of a present reality!

Theirs IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. You can walk out of this building today with heaven in your heart and a smile on your face.

ILLUSTRATION: The story was told of a Billy Graham Crusade many years ago. The time came for the invitation. Billy Graham said, "Every head bowed and every eye closed". As the invitation began the counselors began to walk forward as well as those who were ready to be saved.

Something you may not know, is there are also counselors who watch various parts of the crowd looking for people who seem to be under conviction.

One counselor in particular noticed a man who was obviously broken, he was weeping, and convulsing in emotion. The counselor came to him and said, "sir wouldn't you love to walk forward and give your heart to Jesus". The man said, "No, I'm a leader in this community, what would people think... can't I just do it here in my seat?" The counselor replied, "NO! You will get saved down there or not at all".

The next night, same section, same man, same emotions... the counselor said, "sir wouldn't you love to walk forward and give your heart to Jesus". The man said, "No, my father is a minister in this community... what would people think... can't I just do it here in my seat?" The counselor replied, "NO! You will get saved down there or not at all".

The third night... same section, same man, same emotions... the counselor said, "sir wouldn't you love to walk forward and give your heart to Jesus". The man said, "I haven't slept in three nights... I'm miserable... I've never felt so lost and empty... if I have to go down with all those people to get saved.... I'll do it... the counselor said, "Now you can get saved right where you are at".

Friend, "God breaks a heart before He blesses a heart"

Are you broken... are you empty... good news... YOUR'S is the Kingdom of Heaven.