

Journey Through the Bible

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Message 3: A NEW SPIRIT (3): The Poor in Spirit

Outline:

I. "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—Matt. 5:3a:

- A. To be poor in spirit does not mean to have a poor spirit; our spirit should never be poor— cf. Dan. 5:12.
- B. To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble, but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depths of our being, not holding on to the old things of the old dispensation, but unloaded to receive the new things, the things of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 5:3a:
 1. Our human spirit, the deepest part of our being, is the organ for us to contact God and realize spiritual things—John 4:24.
 2. We need to be poor, emptied, unloaded, in this part of our being so that we may realize and possess the kingdom of the heavens:
 - a. When the Lord Jesus came to the Jewish people, their spirits were filled with many other things—cf. Matt. 22:2-5.
 - b. The Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and chief priests were all filled up in their spirit with their traditions, religion, rituals, scriptural knowledge, forms, old religious Jewish practices, concepts, and philosophical reasonings—15:1-2; 12:1-2, 14; John 7:40-42, 52; Luke 7:39; Mark 2:5-7.
 - c. Because of their association with these religious things, they thought they knew God; all the things they treasured had filled them up so that nothing of the Lord Jesus could get into them—John 1:11; 9:39-41.
 - d. We should not keep any knowledge, tradition, form, religion, or anything else other than God in our spirit; we should let our spirit be emptied of other things, and be absolutely and fully for God—Phil. 3:4-7.
- C. To be poor in spirit is to think that we have nothing, know nothing, and are nothing—Isa. 57:15; 66:2; cf. Matt. 18:2-4:
 1. The kingdom is not with those who hold the attitude that they are everything and know everything.
 2. We need the mercy and grace of God to say, "Concerning God's economy, I know nothing, I have nothing, and I am nothing; I am nobody"; this is what it means to be poor in spirit, to be without boasting or pride—cf. Dan. 4:37.
- D. We all need to heed the Lord's word about being poor in our spirit and say, "Lord, unload me; empty my spirit; I do not want to store anything in my spirit; Lord, I want the full capacity in my spirit to be available for You."

II. "For theirs is the kingdom of the heavens"—Matt. 5:3b:

- A. The kingdom of God is God's general reign from eternity past to eternity future (Psa. 145:13); the kingdom of the heavens is a specific section

within the kingdom of God, composed only of the church today and the heavenly part of the coming millennial kingdom—Matt. 3:1-2; 16:18-19; 8:11

- B. If we are poor in spirit, the kingdom of the heavens is ours; we are in its reality now in the church age, and we will share in its manifestation in the kingdom age—5:3b.

Focus: We need to be poor in spirit—emptied, unloaded, in the depths of our being, not holding on to anything old—in order to continually and freshly receive the new things of the Lord in our spirit and participate in the kingdom of the heavens.

READING EXCERPT

The Poor in Spirit

In [Matthew 5:3 the Lord Jesus, the new King, said,] “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.”

The spirit in verse 3 refers not to the Spirit of God, but to our human spirit, the deepest part of our being, the organ for us to contact God and realize spiritual things. To be poor in spirit does not mean to have a poor spirit. Our spirit should never be poor. To have a poor spirit would be pitiful. But if we are poor in our spirit, we are blessed. To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble, but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depth of our being, not holding on to the old things of the old dispensation, but unloaded to receive the new things, the things of the kingdom of the heavens. We need to be poor, emptied, unloaded, in this part of our being so that we may realize and possess the kingdom of the heavens. This implies that the kingdom of the heavens is a spiritual matter, not a material one.

We need to empty our spirit of all the old things that have filled it. Those who are the most filled in their spirit are the Moslems. There is absolutely no empty space in their spirit. For this reason, it is very difficult to talk with them about the gospel. The Devil has utterly filled their spirit. Because their spirit is so filled, it is difficult for any Moslem to believe in the Lord Jesus. The Jews also are filled in their spirit. Their spirit is fully loaded with the things of their religion. The Greeks are filled in their spirit with their philosophy. They are not nearly as stubborn as the Moslems. Today a great many Christians are also loaded in their spirit. Nearly every kind of Christian today is filled in his spirit with something other than God.

When the Lord Jesus came preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near” (4:17), not many could receive His word because their spirit was filled with other things. The best drink was being offered, but their vessel was already filled. Thus, they were not thirsty. When our spirit is filled, we have no capacity in our vessel for even the best drink. Therefore, when the Lord spoke to the disciples on the mountain, the opening word of His decree was that we must be poor in spirit, that our spirit must be emptied of everything.

We all need to heed the Lord’s word about being poor in our spirit and say, “Lord, unload me. Empty my spirit. I don’t want to store anything in my spirit. Lord, I want the full capacity in my spirit to be available to You.”

[Matthew 5:3] says that those who are poor in spirit are blessed because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. If we are poor in spirit, the kingdom of the heavens is ours: we are in its reality now in the church age, and we shall share in its manifestation in the kingdom age.

Those who are poor in spirit are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. (Notice that the Lord did not say, "For theirs is the kingdom of God.") When we become poor in our spirit, we are ready to receive the heavenly King. When He comes in, He brings the kingdom of the heavens with Him. Immediately after receiving the heavenly King, we are in the church, where the reality of the kingdom of the heavens is. If we are overcomers, at His coming back the Lord will bring us into the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens. To have the kingdom of the heavens is firstly to participate in the proper, normal church life and secondly to inherit the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the upper part of the millennium. This is the meaning of the words, "For theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." Those Christians who backslide will lose the reality of the kingdom of the heavens in this age and will miss the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age. What a blessing it is to be poor in spirit! If we are poor in spirit, ours is the kingdom of the heavens. Hallelujah for the first blessing and for the kingdom of the heavens! How good it is to be poor in our spirit!

Questions:

1. What was the burden of today's message? Discuss.
2. Name some practical, positive things we tend to hold onto that might prevent us from receiving the new things the Lord has prepared for us today. Share any past or current experiences related to this.

Scripture Reading:

Matt. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Prov. 16:19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, / Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Prov. 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, / But he who is of a lowly spirit will obtain honor.

Isa. 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isa. 66:2 For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Luke 1:53 The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

Eccl. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

John 12:3 Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Phil. 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ