



Sermon Text: Matthew 5:1-3

Sermon Date: May 5, 2019

Sunday we began an extended sermon series through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Pastor Justin opened by providing some important clarifications so that we can study the Sermon properly.

- **The result of salvation, not the requirement for salvation.** The Sermon isn't a rule book we follow in order to enter God's Kingdom. It is, instead, a description of the life of the Kingdom. Martin Luther said, *"Christ is saying nothing in this Sermon about how we become Christians, but only about the works and fruit that no one can do unless he already is a Christian and in a state of grace."*
- **Impossible in our own strength, but not by God's Spirit.** While this lifestyle is utterly impossible in our own strength, believers have the power of God's Spirit within them. Jesus wants and expects His followers to exhibit the radical righteousness of this Sermon.

THE BEATITUDES

The first leg of our adventure through Christ's Sermon is a journey through The Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are pronouncements of divine blessing. The fact that Christ begins the Sermon with blessings before obedience must lead us to read the entire Sermon in the context of grace.

We began by focusing on the first Beatitude – "Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." We examined this verse from two angles.

- **A truth that devastates.** Jesus is calling every one of us spiritual beggars, penniless and bankrupt. He is telling us two devastating facts about ourselves. First, **you can't earn God's favor.** You don't have any spiritual currency to buy citizenship into God's Kingdom. Second, **you can't accomplish God's commands.** The opening words of the Sermon set the tone for everything that follows. Carson says, *"At the very outset of the Sermon on the Mount, we learn that we do not have the spiritual resources to put any of the Sermon's precepts into practice. We cannot fulfill God's standards ourselves."*
- **A truth to celebrate.** In the devastation of Christ's words, we find cause to celebrate—the beggar is blessed! The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who recognize their spiritual poverty. This is the message of the gospel. Since Jesus paid it all, both God's requirement and sin's punishment, the kingdom is offered to beggars free of charge.

HOW TO GRASP YOUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY

How do we grow to grasp our spiritual poverty? What can we do to recognize our bankrupt state and live embracing it?

- **You can't do it yourself.** First, we must grasp that we can't do it ourselves. Poverty of spirit is embracing your unworthiness and inability. It is self-refuting to think you have the ability to lead yourself to embrace your inability.
- **Stop comparing yourself to others.** You will always be able to find a person who is worse than you, and if you compare yourself to him/her, you will feel rich in pride. But other people are not the standard; God's perfect holiness is.
- **Don't see spiritual poverty as an entry exam but as an everyday reality.** Spiritual poverty isn't simply how we get into the kingdom; it is the lifestyle of the kingdom. We never outgrow this first beatitude. We cannot be filled by God's grace if we don't live aware that we are empty in ourselves.
- **Encounter God in the Scriptures.** Poverty of spirit is born from encountering God. And we encounter God most clearly in His Word. An empty spirit will not occur with an unopened Bible.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why is it important to read the Sermon on the Mount in the context of grace?
3. What hinders you from living each day aware of your spiritual poverty?