

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

MATTHEW 5:3

Text: Matthew 5:3

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³ Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Introduction:

As we begin looking at this sermon in more detail, the first verses are known as the beatitudes. Someone has said that these are ‘attitudes that should be obvious in every Christian.’

Each of these beatitudes begins with the word ‘blessed’. The Greek word also means ‘happy’.

The whole world is longing for and looking for happiness and a vast majority are doing so in a way that is bound to produce misery.

Anything which merely makes people happy for the time being, is ultimately going to have going to add to their misery and problems.

Many have turned to drugs, alcohol, sex and other vices for happiness only to discover that they are more miserable than they ever were.

This is where the deceitfulness of sin comes in; it is always offering happiness, and always leads to unhappiness and wretchedness.

The Sermon on the Mount says, however, that if you really want to be happy, here is the way.

This and this alone is the type of person who is truly happy, the one who is truly blessed.

There are some general lessons to be drawn from the beatitudes.

- First – All Christians are to be like this.
- Second – All Christians are meant to manifest all of these characteristics.
- Third – None of these descriptions are a natural tendency.

Let's look now at this first beatitude.

These first three beatitudes deal basically with what we are.

What we are is more important than what we do.

We do what we do because we are what we are.

This first beatitude speaks of those who are poor in spirit.

This first demand is for humility.

Note: Isaiah

Isaiah 5:8-23

⁸ Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! ⁹ In mine ears *said* the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, *even* great and fair, without inhabitant. ¹⁰ Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah. ¹¹ Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! ¹² And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. ¹³ Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. ¹⁴ Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. ¹⁵ And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: ¹⁶ But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. ¹⁷ Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. ¹⁸ Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: ¹⁹ That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it*: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it*! ²⁰ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe unto them *that are* wise in

their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! ²² Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: ²³ Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

In this he poured out his compassion of conviction on Israel, but note the change when he found himself in the presence of the Lord.

Isaiah 6:1-5

¹ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

A sense of God's presence deals instantly with the haughty spirit that each of struggle with at times.

It interesting how each of these beatitudes builds off of the previous beatitude. This is the foundation of each beatitude.

There are things that must be done first before other things can be done. There are basics that must be done first before more complex things can be attempted and accomplished.

Illustrations:

- The best pianists had to first learn notes
- The fastest typist had to first learn the keyboard
- The artistic skater didn't start with a fancy routine; they first learned how to skate.

Why is it important that we find this first beatitude in our lives?

This is the verse upon which the whole Sermon of the Mount builds upon. This is the first step to living the Christian life. It is also the first step to becoming a Christian.

Being poor in spirit doesn't mean to be poor spirited. The Lord isn't encouraging a bad or poor attitude, not is the Lord speaking about physical poverty.

The word translated for poor here is the word used for someone who is so poor he has to beg. I have known poor people who didn't have much, but were able to survive. The person described here by the Lord is so poor that he has to continually ask for help.

One commentator said, "Poverty of spirit then, is the person's acknowledgment of spiritual bankruptcy."

You realize that you have no righteousness good enough for God. You realize that you do not have the resources to live righteously within yourself. Your only hope is to cry out to God for help. This, my friend, is true humility.

The Spiritual Beggar knows:

- That He Is Nothing
- That He Has Nothing
- That He Is Dependant of God For Everything

There at least three areas that are affected by being poor in Spirit

Note:

1. SALVATION

Who did Jesus come to save?

Luke 5:32

³² I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

If Jesus came to save sinners, you must admit that you are a sinner to be saved.

If Jesus came to save the lost, you must admit that you are lost.

To truly be saved you must begin by admitting that you are a poor lost, sinner! You have to be poor in spirit realizing that you have no hope of forgiveness in yourself.

Illustration: Luke 18

Luke 18:10-14

¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

One showed his pride. The other showed his humility. The one who humbled himself before God was the one who was righteous.

It is the person who humbles himself towards God and turns to Christ by faith, poor in spirit, broken, knowing he deserves nothing that is saved.

2. SUBMISSION

A Christian who is poor in spirit is submissive to God.

- He realizes that he has done nothing to save himself.
- He realizes that he can do nothing in his own power.
- He realizes that apart from Christ he is nothing.

What causes us to fail to be submissive? What causes us to not be poor in spirit?

A. It is Pride

It is pride that makes us think that we are so important that we worry about what others think.

It is pride that often causes our feeling to be hurt because we think that we should have things our way.

It is pride that makes worry about ourselves and our well-being.

It is pride that causes many to make financial decisions that makes us feel good or have something to impress someone else.

It is pride that causes to be critical of others.

It is pride that makes us refuse to change what we know that we should change.

How do we become poor in spirit?

Compare ourselves to the Lord and no one else.

- When we compare ourselves favorably to others we usually end up feeling pretty good.
- When we compare ourselves with the Lord Jesus we will come away humble.

3. SERVICE

The person who is truly poor in spirit is available to God, even though he realizes that he in himself is nothing.

Illustrations:

- Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8

¹ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy,

holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

- David

2 Samuel 7:1-18

¹ And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; ² That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. ³ And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the LORD *is* with thee. ⁴ And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, ⁵ Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? ⁶ Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷ In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? ⁸ Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: ⁹ And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. ¹⁰ Moreover I will appoint a place for my

people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, ¹¹ And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. ¹² And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: ¹⁵ But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. ¹⁶ And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. ¹⁷ According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. ¹⁸ Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

- Peter

Luke 5:1-10

¹ And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, ² And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets. ³ And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. ⁴ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. ⁵ And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. ⁶ And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ⁷ And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in

the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. ⁹ For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: ¹⁰ And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Close:

It is really easy to make excuses not to be used of God.

Most excuses that we offer or make can be traced back to our pride.

The great men of the Bible who were used by God were men who recognized their inability, but then allowed God to work through them.

Are we willing to do the same?

Are we ready to be used by God?

We first must become "Poor in Spirit."