

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

MATTHEW 5

Text: Matthew 5:3

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

Introduction:

Few passages in the Bible are more misunderstood and misapplied than the Sermon on the Mount. Often people will take a single verse or phrase and build an idea and disregard the entire context of the passage. It is important that we have a total and complete view of this important sermon.

The theme of this sermon is given to us by Christ in verses 17-20.

Matthew 5:17-20

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. [18] For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. [19] Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of

heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The theme of this sermon is true righteousness as opposed to the false righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. It is important to remember that the people looked to the scribes and Pharisees as their models and teachers in the things of God. They set the rules and determined what was holy and unholy. One reason why the scribes and the Pharisees hated Jesus is because He exposed their shallowness and deceit in this sermon.

This sermon does not deal much with doctrine but rather more with the things that are to be done.

As we looked last week at the theme of this message, "Righteousness" we will now take a more depth look at the rest of this message the Lord preached.

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.

This evening we begin with the first verse of the Sermon on the Mount. Every word the Lord spoke He spoke on purpose, and for a purpose. Every word that He spoke He spoke in the correct order and time. He begins this sermon in Matthew 5:3.

Read Text Verse Matthew 5:3

Matthew 5:3

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

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.

The Lord tells us that the secret to living righteously and being truly happy is to be poor in spirit.

Being poor in spirit does not mean to be poor spirited. Jesus isn't encouraging a bad attitude.

And Jesus isn't talking about physical poverty.

Our spirit would be our attitude.

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 Jesus is so poor that he has to continually ask for help.

One commentator said, "Poverty of spirit then, is the person 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 has to ask God for everything

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

1. SALVATION

Who did Jesus come to save?

Luke 5:32

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

Luke 19:10

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.

As a poor lost sinner, you turn to the Savior, the Lord Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21

You turn to the Savior and place your faith and trust in Him for eternal life. John 3:36

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Jesus told a story about two men in Luke 18:10-14,

Luke 18:10-14

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 cause 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.

B. How do we become poor in spirit?

1. Compare ourselves to Jesus 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.

2. Surrender your “rights” to God

- When you have no rights there’s no reason to get upset with anything.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

3. Live to please God

- The person who is poor in spirit is not disturbed by the attitudes or criticisms of others, because he lives to please God.

Deut. 10:20

Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

4. Look continually to God and not to yourself to fulfill every need. Be a humble beggar before God.

Psalms 123:2

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

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:

ÿ Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8

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

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 sheepcote, 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

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."