



The Sermon on the Mount

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

I. AWAKENING

- A. For five weeks I had been having an encounter with God, but I didn't realize it at the time.
 - 1. Began with a time of profound sense of ineffectiveness, unfruitfulness, and floundering
 - a. Spirit was filled with shades of gray and black
 - 2. Continued with four weeks irritation with externals; desire for intimate submission to God
 - a. Increasing intensity of desire to block out distractions and focus on Him
 - b. Sorrow at my condition
 - c. Conviction by God
 - d. God was revealing a poorness of spirit
 - 3. To quote Mary Magdalene's line in The Chosen:
 - a. 'I once was one way, now I'm different, and the thing that happened in between was Him'
- B. We are beginning today a new series based on the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew chapters 5-7.
- C. Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (NIV)
- D. Overview
 - 1. This verse is the first of a series of 'beatitudes' which are an introduction to an extended sermon on what life in Christ looks like.
 - 2. Intended to express what genuine following of Christ looks like.
- E. Implications
- F. Foundational Beatitude
 - 1. In my opinion this is third in importance only to Greatest Commandment and the 2nd.
 - a. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and
 - b. Love your neighbor as yourself
 - c. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.
 - 2. Speaks to the condition of one's heart.
 - 3. The rest of the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount rest on the foundational humility engendered by being poor in spirit.
 - 4. Possibly the most difficult of the Beatitudes because it requires a foundational change in life-direction

II. AWARENESS

- A. Definitions
 - 1. Blessed
 - a. The English word blessed is used to translate an Aramaic word which has a wide variety of meanings.
 - 1) Great happiness, prosperity, abundant goodness, and delight.
 - 2) Blissfully serene is a better translation.
 - 3) Implication: The poor in spirit have only one remedy and that is trusting in God.
 - b. A blessed person is in touch with the fruitfulness of God himself.
 - c. That person lives a fulfilled life; one God intended him to live.
 - 2. Poor in Spirit
 - a. Means to be aware of the need for greater spiritual growth.
 - 1) Recognizes powerlessness
 - 2) Recognizes spiritual neediness and deficiency.

- 3) Recognizes our deep need of God.
- 4) Stimulates an effort to draw closer to God.
- b. Poor in spirit does not imply a lack of courage
 - 1) In fact implies great courage as one faces challenges with very few resources.
 - 2) Does acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy
 - 3) Confesses one's unworthiness before God and utter dependence on Him.
- 3. Kingdom of Heaven
 - a. Present tense implies we already have the Kingdom if in our hearts we have the reality of 'poor in spirit'

III. ASSESSMENT

- A. Three ways to respond to our spiritual connection to God.
 - 1. Passively. To see how superficial our spiritual condition is, but it doesn't move us to action.
 - a. It's so bad I can't possibly fix it so I'm not going to even try.
 - 2. Pridefully. To not even see the lack, but to think we are doing great nonetheless, and so missing what reality is.
 - a. I'm doing really well; I don't see a problem.
 - 3. Pursuingly. To see the lack, respond even if in a weak way, and look for 100-fold return.
 - a. I've applied so little of what's available to me, please help me!
- B. In the 1st Beatitude, God is asking a question: Where do you think you are?
 - 1. Realize your spiritual poverty.
 - 2. If you think you are doing well, you are even blinder and poorer than you think.

IV. APPLICATION

- A. John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me; I have also loved you. Abide in my love." (NASB)
- B. For a long time I was troubled by the word abide. What does that mean?
 - 1. If I am a child of God, don't I already live (abide) in Your house?
 - 2. Don't You already abide in my heart?
- C. Abide has more to do with relationship than residence.
 - 1. Abiding carries implications:
 - a. Do we spend time with Him?
 - b. Do we talk with Him?
 - c. Do we listen to what He has to say?
 - d. Do we constantly recognize a need to be with Him?
 - 2. Approach God like the tax collector, not the Pharisee
 - a. Do not be concerned about externals
 - b. What is the condition of your heart?
 - 3. Be a vehicle of blessing to others
- D. Give thanks for everything in your life; both good and bad
 - 1. What is there in the bad thing that can be turned for good?
- E. Have dozens of little 1-5 second conversations with Him throughout the day.
 - 1. Your creation is beautiful God
 - 2. Why did I have that thought God?
 - 3. Why am I irritated with that person?
- F. Have one 'solid rock' of time with Him in your daily schedule. Suggest starting out with 30 min.
- G. Times/conversations will begin to increase; will begin to mourn your spiritual poverty
 - 1. Subject of next Beatitude