

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 15

(The Beatitudes) (pt A)

In our last study, we took the Sermon on the mount as a whole, stopping at the last two verses of Matthew chapter seven as our text and subject matter.

There we read; **“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”** (Mat 7:28-29).

I pray this will be our key for the Lord to open His Word to our hearts as we go through this sermon in sections, considering this one who teaches as one having authority, and not as the scribes!

First, Let's read verses 1-12 of Matthew chapter 5

Let's begin by considering the difference between religions, there are only two types of religion, true or false, works or grace, and most are religions of works, a false teaching that men love for it declares their part as the basis for their salvation, *“I did this or I did that, and received the reward of God's work”*. Works religion condemns men to their sinful works, whether it be something physically or mentally, if your salvation is at any point depending on something of you, your decision, your works, what ever it may be, it is a works religion that will dam you to eternal torment, that is the religion of the scribes, if you do this you will be saved. Their faith was based on their ability to do God's commandments, let's consider verse 3 of Matthew chapter 5; **“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”**. The works religionist would read that as if you are “Blessed” if you make yourself poor in spirit, and the reward of the Kingdom of heaven will be yours, but that's not what it says does it?

“Blessed” comes first, those who are blessed are the poor in spirit, or another words, if you are blessed of God you **“are poor in spirit”**.

Taking the whole counsel of God into consideration with this statement **“poor in spirit”** we see it is not a natural state to the unregenerate man; **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom 8:7-8).

To be truly poor in spirit one must be made poor, the old stoney heart, full of pride must be cut away and made poor, a new heart, one that God reveals His truth of their condition before a Thrice Holy God. **“Dead in trespasses and sin”**

According to the Book of God, there are some people in this world who are truly blessed, blessed of God, blessed from eternity, blessed now, and blessed forever in Christ, blessed with all the blessings of grace here and all the blessings of everlasting glory hereafter (Eph 1:3) **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.**

There are some sons and daughters of Adam who truly are blessed of God. Who are they?

They are Those who were Chosen in Christ in Eternal Election (Eph 1:3-6) **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

They are Those who Trust the Lord (Jer 17:7) **Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is;**
(Luk 11:27-28) **And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**

They are Those who Fear the Lord (Psa 128:1) **Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.**

They are Those whose Sins are Forgiven (Psa 32:2-3) **Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity;** or as the Apostle Paul puts it; (Rom 4:8) **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**

Who are the blessed of God? Those who are Not Offended by Christ (Luk 7:23) **And blessed is whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

The blessed of God are Those who Endure Temptation (Jas 1:12) **Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.**

There are some in this world who are blessed of God. Are you among these blessed ones? Am I? In these twelve verses the Lord Jesus sets before us the character of those men and women who are blessed of God.

(Joh 6:45) **It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.**

Our teacher here is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the true preacher, the true Prophet of His church. He of whom the prophets spoke is now the Preacher. The voice we hear in these verses is the voice of our Master. It is the voice of Him who “**spoke as never a man spake**” (Joh 7:46).

The place was on a mountain in Galilee. It was not Mt. Sinai, or Mt. Olivet, or Mt. Calvary, but a common Galilean hillside. But on that common hillside the Son of God met with and instructed His disciples! The congregation was His disciples. The sermon was addressed to those who professed to be His followers. Others may have been present and heard the message. But the message was particularly addressed to men and women who had publicly avowed their faith in Christ by baptism and hoped that they would live with Christ forever in heaven.

In a word, this sermon was addressed to people just like you and I.

Our text; Mat 5:2 – **“He opened his mouth, and taught them”**.

When our Savior’s mouth was closed, He taught by example. Yet, He did not refrain from speaking, as well as living the truth. And when He spoke, He spoke earnestly. He **“opened his mouth and taught.”** He did not mumble, mutter, or stutter. – When He opens His mouth let us open our ears!

What a blessed scene, We have before us! As the law was given from the Mount, the Lord Jesus went up on the Mount to proclaim the gospel. But there is a great contrast. At Mt. Sinai boundaries were set, which the people were not allowed to cross. When our great Savior came preaching the gospel, He set no boundaries sinners could not cross. He said, **“Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go”** (Isa 48:16-17). What loving gracious words proceeded out of His mouth!

Now, let’s consider the attitudes given in Mat 5:3-12. Here the Son of God describes His people by eight distinct characteristics, and pronounces eight beatitudes, eight blessings of grace upon them. He is himself the great comprehensive blessing of all blessings and the blessedness of His people.

In these verses our Savior gives us eight distinct characteristics of blessed people, eight things found in all who are saved by his matchless grace. They are...

Poor in spirit.

People who mourn.

The meek of the earth.

People who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The merciful.

The pure in heart.

Peacemakers.

And those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

When I read these verses, the question immediately arises in my mind, “*Where are such people to be found?*” can any among the fallen sons and daughters of Adam possess such traits. Scriptures declare there are none who are good, none who do good, and none who seek after God; **“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one”** (Psa 14:1-3), **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes”** (Rom 3:10-18).

Obviously, those who are here described are something more than natural man, those described can only be the redeemed of the Lord, His own elect, those who were given to Him by the Father, made blessed in the righteousness of the Son, and regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

We see in verse 3; **“Blessed are the poor in Spirit.”** Notice He did not say, “Blessed are the poor.” He said, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”**

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“Those who are poor in spirit are men and women who, in their own judgment and esteem, are spiritually poor. Their souls are barren and empty before God”*. –

-“They have no righteousness of their own, no good works, no good thoughts, nothing with which to commend themselves to God. As John Gill wrote, “Being sensible of their poverty, they place themselves at the door of mercy and knock there. Their language is, ‘God be merciful...’ They are importunate, will have no denial, yet receive the least favor with thankfulness.”

Before God lifts us up by His grace, He brings us down. Until we are poor in spirit, we will not seek mercy in Christ. It is painful, but blessed work when God puts a soul into a bankrupt state!

Jacob was brought down (Gen 32:27).

Isaiah was brought down (Isa 6:1-8).

The woman with an issue of blood was brought down (Luk 8:43).

Onesimus was brought down (Philemon 1).

The prodigal son was brought down (Luke 15).

God knows how to make proud, self-sufficient sinners poor in spirit.

He knows how to bring sinners down; **“Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.**

Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.

He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing” (Psalms 107:10-22).

Those who are poor in spirit are people who have been made to know their desperate need of free grace in and by Christ, their all-sufficient Savior.

They have nothing. They can do nothing.

They must have someone to atone for their sins.

They must have someone to make them righteous before God.

They need pardon and grace for their countless sins.

A man by the name Rowland Hill wrote, *“Poverty of spirit is the bag into which Christ puts the riches of his grace.”* Saved sinners are men and women who know their utter poverty of soul before God. They are people convinced of their sin by God the Holy Spirit.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” — (Psa 51:17) **“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”**.

The Lord God declares, **“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”** (Isa 66:2).

If a person is ever brought to the place that he has nothing in himself, he will have everything by grace in Christ. But as long as a person imagines that he has something in himself, he has nothing. Nothing is more painful to our proud flesh; but nothing is more needful than that we be made **“poor in spirit”** before God.

Are you poor in spirit? If you are, you are blessed. God made you poor. And he has made you an heir of His kingdom in His Son the lord Jesus Christ.

Lets consider one more for tonight, verse 4 “**Blessed are they that mourn.**” — There is a mourning that is sinful, as when Jonah mourned over a withered gourd. There is a mourning that comes natural, as when we mourn over the death of a loved one. And there is mourning that is the result of God’s operations of grace in the heart. Those who mourn in this sense, our Lord Jesus declares are blessed.

The mourners our Savior here declares to be blessed are those who mourn over their sins; (Psa 51:1-17) **Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**

No sooner is grace poured into our hearts, giving us the knowledge of Christ as our Savior, than we are made to see and know the wretchedness that is ours by nature;

(Zec 12:10). **And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.**

When Christ is revealed in us, our hearts melt before Him. *“I can not understand, how one who claims to be a believer of truth, in whom sin is not the greatest burden, the greatest sorrow and trouble to them.”*

Indwelling sin is to the believing soul a constant source of bitterness and sorrow. Like Paul, the believer cries out, **“Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”** This mourning over sin, the sin that is in us, is a lifelong experience, causing God’s saints to be in a state of continual repentance, ever looking to Christ alone for redemption and righteousness.

The more fully we are made aware of our sin, the more we mourn over it, the more we are compelled to look out of ourselves to Christ alone for righteousness, and the more He is endeared to our hearts. **“Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious”** (1Pe 2:7).

How wonderful it is to hear our Savior declare, **“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted!”** Those who mourn because of their sin shall be comforted here by the revelation of Christ in their hearts. Though we mourn because of our sin and utter corruption, we are comforted by the knowledge and assurance of Christ’s all-sufficiency as our Surety, our Substitute, and our Savior.

His righteousness is ours. His satisfaction is ours. He has, by His one great sacrifice, put away our sins forever. — How comforting it is to hear the Gospel of God’s free grace in His darling Son! — How comforting it is to hear Him speak to our hearts by His Holy Spirit through the Scriptures! — How comforting it is to remember our dear Savior as we eat the bread and drink the wine at the Lord’s Table! — How comforting it is to seek grace and mercy from the throne of grace in every time of need, by prayer and supplication! —

How comforting it is to know that He who loved us and gave Himself for us rules all things for our good, ordering all the affairs of providence according to His infinite wisdom and goodness and according to His own infinite, eternal love for us!

Yes, those who are taught of God to mourn over their sin are comforted here. And when we drop this robe of flesh in the grave and are brought into heavenly glory, dwelling forever in the presence of our God and Savior, we shall be fully and eternally comforted; **“In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve”** (Jer 50:20).

In that great day, our God shall wipe all tears from our eyes. Then we shall be free from sin, free from all the evil consequences of sin, free from sorrow, and made possessors of all the glory the Father has given to the Son as our Mediator;

(Joh 17:5) And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;

(Joh 17:21-22) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

The Lord Jesus who speaks as one of authority, graciously blessing a people and the results are, versus the blind religious scribes of this world teaching you can achieve these blessings if you will just..... Add this or add that!

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mat 7:28-29).