

6/22/14

SERIES: LUKE: THE SON OF MAN, THE SAVIOR
HAS COME, WEEK 40

TITLE: THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL

TEXT: LUKE 6:17-20

INTRODUCTION: (1) **I'VE TITLED OUR MESSAGE
TODAY, "THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL."**

*** AND I'VE GIVEN IT THAT TITLE FOR TWO
REASONS.**

**** NO. 1 BECAUSE IT SAYS IN OUR TEXT IN V. 17
THAT JESUS CAME DOWN WITH THE 12 FROM
THE MOUNTAIN THAT HE WENT UP TO PRAY
AND CHOOSE THE 12, AND AFTER HE HAD
CHOSEN THEM, HE COMES DOWN WITH THEM TO
DELIVER A SERMON ON A LEVEL PLACE, A
PLAIN, ON LEVEL GROUND.**

***** AND NO. 2, I'VE GIVEN IT THIS TITLE**
BECAUSE JESUS LEVELED WITH THE 12 AND
OTHER DISCIPLES AND MULTITUDES OF OTHER
PEOPLE.

**** AND SOMETIMES WE USE THE EXPRESSION,
LEVEL WITH ME WHEN WE WANT SOMEONE TO
TELL US, NOT JUST THE TRUTH, BUT THE WHOLE
TRUTH.

**(2) LIKE, "DOCTOR PLEASE LEVEL WITH ME
ABOUT MY CONDITION," MEANING WE WANT TO
KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR CONDITION, OUR
DIAGNOSIS WITH NO HOLDING BACK, "GIVE IT TO
ME STRAIGHT, DOC."**

* WELL, JESUS ALWAYS TOLD THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH! HIS SERMONS WERE STRAIGHT TALK, HE DID NOT HEDGE OR TRY TO BE POLITICALLY CORRECT OR CULTURALLY SENSITIVE, HE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT BEING INTOLERANT, FOR HE **KNEW THAT PEOPLE'S VIEW OF HIM WOULD BE** SKEWED BY SIN, BY HUMAN DEPRAVITY, FROM WRONG WORLDLY THINKING. JESUS LEVELED WITH PEOPLE IN COMPASSIONATE HONESTY.

** FOR ONLY TRUTH COULD HELP HIS AUDIENCE. ONLY TRUTH COULD CHANGE HIS AUDIENCE, ONLY TRUTH COULD SAVE HIS AUDIENCE FROM THEIR SINS.

*** THUS THE TITLE, THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL, A TITLE USED A R. KENT HUGHES IN HIS VOLUME ONE COMMENTARY ON LUKE.

**** NOW WITH THAT TITLE BEFORE US, THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL BY JESUS TAKES UP THE REMAINDER OF LUKE 6 AND IS SIMILAR TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT COVERED IN MATTHEW 5-7.

(3) BECAUSE OF THAT, SOME THINK THE SAME SERMON IS GIVEN IN BOTH ACCOUNTS AND GOOD ARGUMENTS ARE GIVEN.

* HOWEVER, I LEAN THAT THEY ARE TWO DIFFERENT SERMONS WITH SOME OF THE SAME CONTENT AND SAME TRUTH AS PREACHERS A LOT OF TIMES ARE COVERING THE SAME TRUTH IN A DIFFERENT SERMON IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

** AND I SEE NO NEED TO TAKE TIME TO DEBATE BOTH VIEWS. THEY ARE BOTH THE WORD OF GOD AND BOTH PROFITABLE, PREACHED BY THE SAME PREACHER, WITH SOME OF THE SAME THINGS THAT JESUS SAID IN MATTHEW 5-7 IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

*** BUT WHAT I DO WANT YOU TO SEE IS, WHAT JESUS SAID IN MATTHEW AND LUKE IS REVOLUTIONARY.

**** IT WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE RELIGIONISTS AND THE PHILOSOPHERS OF HIS DAY WERE COMMUNICATING.

(4) I MEAN JESUS WILL COMMUNICATE BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE POOR, WHO HUNGER NOW, WHO WEEP NOW AND WHEN PEOPLE HATE YOU, TO LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU, TO GIVE AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU, AND TO BE MERCIFUL.

* NOW BY NORMAL HUMAN STANDARDS SUCH THINGS AS HUMILITY, MOURNING, PERSECUTION AND WEEPING ARE NOT BLESSINGS, NOT THE STUFF WHICH HAPPINESS IS MADE OF.

** SO THE WORLD'S RESPONSE IS, YOU ARE **CRAZY, YOUR ELEVATOR DOESN'T GO ALL THE WAY UP, YOU ARE A FEW QUARTS LOW, ETC.**

*** SUCH HAPPINESS SOUNDS LIKE MISERY.

**** THE WORLD AND SOME FALSE RELIGIONS SAY: HAPPY ARE THE PROUD, HAPPY ARE THE RICH, HAPPY ARE PEOPLE THAT HAVE FEW PROBLEMS, HAPPY ARE THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF NO. 1.

(5) BUT GOD'S WAY OF LIVING USUALLY CONTRADICTS THE WORLD. THE SERMON FROM JESUS DOES NOT FIT THE WORLD'S STANDARDS, BUT CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD, BUT OF HEAVEN.

* HIS WAY TO BLESSEDNESS, HIS WAY TO JOY, WHICH IS THE ONLY LASTING WAY IS A MUCH DIFFERENT ROUTE!

** TRUE BLESSEDNESS IS ON A HIGHER LEVEL THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD, AND IT IS TO THAT LEVEL THAT THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL TAKES US.

*** HERE IS A COMPLETELY NEW WAY OF LIFE, BASED ON A COMPLETELY NEW WAY OF THINKING. IN FACT, IT IS BASED ON A NEW WAY OF BEING, FOR IT TAKES A NEW NATURE TO LIVE OUT THESE PRINCIPLES.

**** AND WHAT I MEAN IS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO **FOLLOW JESUS' WAY OF LIVING IN HIS SERMON** ON THE LEVEL WITHOUT HAVING HIS NEW LIFE WITHIN.

(6) AND TO LIVE THESE PRINCIPLES OUT WITHOUT NEW BIRTH AND A NEW NATURE WOULD BE LIKE GOING TO A ZOO AND LECTURING A LION ABOUT A DAY IN ISAIAH 11:6&7, THAT ONE DAY HE WILL EAT STRAW LIKE THE OX AND THE WOLF WILL LIVE WITH THE LAMB.

* AND THEN TELLING THE LION TO DO THAT NOW, TO EAT STRAW, AND THEN PUT A LAMB IN HIS CAGE.

** NOW WHAT DO YOU THINK THE LION WILL DO THE MOMENT IT GETS HUNGRY?

***** IT WILL EAT THE LAMB! THAT'S A NO BRAINER - RIGHT?**

**** BELOVED, A LION WILL NOT LIE DOWN PEACEABLY WITH THE LAMB UNTIL THE DAY **WHEN THE LION'S NATURE IS CHANGED. YOU CAN LECTURE HIM ALL YOU WANT!**

(7) AND WITHOUT A NEW NATURE, WITHOUT CONVERSION - SALVATION, AN UNSAVED PERSON CANNOT LIVE OUT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BEATITUDES AND THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL.

* KINGDOM LIVING FOR HERE AND NOW IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TRULY BEEN CONVERTED.

** FRIENDS, THE BEATITUDES AND THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL ARE FOR CHRISTIANS TO LIVE OUT NOW, NOT AT A FUTURE TIME, NOR IS THE SERMON GIVEN TO EARN JUSTIFICATION.

*** THESE ARE KINGDOM PRINCIPLES TO BE LIVED OUT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED, TO LIVE A REDEEMED LIFE, NOT A FUTURE LIFE, NOR TO WORK OUR WAY TO HEAVEN.

**** AND CERTAINLY THESE TRUTHS CAN BE USED TO STRIP RELIGIONISTS OF THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS TO SHOW THEM THEIR NEED FOR THE SAVIOR AND THEIR SIN.

(8) FOR AGAIN WITHOUT A CHANGED NATURE - SALVATION, THERE IS INABILITY, WE ARE INCAPABLE OF LIVING OUT THESE TRUTHS.

* WITH THAT SAID, TODAY WE START THE SERMON ON THE LEVEL. AND WE WILL LOOK AT **JESUS' INTRODUCTION AND HIS FIRST POINT** TODAY, THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

**** AND IN DOING THAT WE'LL LOOK AT 3 POINTS.**

*** NO. 1 HIS POPULARITY, V. 17; NO. 2 HIS POWER, VV. 18&19; AND NO. 3 HIS PROCLAMATION, V. 20.

**** AND WITH THAT OUTLINE TO DIRECT US, **LOOK AT V. 17 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, HIS POPULARITY.**

I. HIS POPULARITY, (READ V. 17)

A. NOW AT THIS **POINT IN JESUS' PUBLIC** MINISTRY, HE IS VERY VERY POPULAR. AND OF COURSE THAT WILL CHANGE, BUT FOR NOW, HE WAS ENORMOUSLY POPULAR.

* AND EARLIER IN OUR STUDY OF LUKE WE LEARNED THAT HUGE CROWDS WERE COMING OUT TO THE LOCATIONS HE WAS TRAVELING TO.

** IN LUKE 4:42 IT **SAYS: "WHEN DAY**

CAME, JESUS LEFT AND WENT TO A SECLUDED PLACE; AND THE CROWDS WERE SEARCHING FOR HIM, AND CAME TO HIM AND TRIED TO KEEP **HIM FROM GOING AWAY FROM THEM.**"

***** AND THEN IN LUKE 5:15 IT SAYS: "BUT THE NEWS ABOUT HIM WAS SPREADING EVEN FARTHER, AND LARGE CROWDS WERE GATHERING TO HEAR HIM AND TO BE HEALED OF THEIR SICKNESSES."**

**** NOW BEYOND THOSE TEXTS EARLIER IN LUKE, A LATER TEXT IN LUKE 9:14 COMMUNICATES THAT HE FED 5,000 MEN PLUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN, APPROXIMATELY 20-25 THOUSAND PEOPLE, A GIGANTIC CROWD.

1. WELL IN OUR TEXT TODAY IN LUKE 6:17, ON THIS LEVEL PLACE, A PLATEAU, AS HE COMES DOWN FROM A MOUNTAIN MOST LIKELY NEAR CAPERNAUM, THERE IS A LARGE CROWD OF HIS DISCIPLES AND A GREAT THROG OR MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER, ANOTHER GREAT CROWD OF PEOPLE.

* AND THESE PEOPLE WERE FROM JUDEA, THE SOUTHERNMOST REGION OF ISRAEL, JERUSALEM THE KEY CITY IN JUDEA, THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CENTER OF ISRAEL, AND THEN FROM THE COASTAL CITIES OF TYRE AND SIDON, GENTILE CITIES TO THE FAR NORTH ON THE COAST OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

**** NOW NOTICE IN EXPRESSING JESUS' POPULARITY AT THIS TIME, LUKE SORTS OUT THE PEOPLE PRESENT ON THIS OCCASION INTO 3 GROUPS.**

***** FIRST, HIS NEWLY APPOINTED APOSTLES, THE "THEM" OF V. 17, WHOM JUST CAME DOWN WITH JESUS AFTER CHOOSING THEM, SO THIS IS THE FIRST ON THE JOB TRAINING SITE IN THEIR APPRENTICESHIP.**

***** NO. 2, THE 2'D GROUP CONSISTED OF A**
LARGE CROWD OF HIS DISCIPLES, AN
ASSORTMENT OF PEOPLE WHOM WERE
REGULAR FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AT VARIOUS
LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND
COMMITMENT, SOME TRUE BELIEVERS, SOME
CURIOUS, SOME ALONG FOR THE RIDE FOR
WHAT THEY COULD GET AND NO DOUBT SOME
BANDWAGON PEOPLE.

**** NOW THE THIRD AND FINAL GROUP
ACCORDING TO V. 17 WAS A GREAT THRONG, A
LARGE CROWD OF PEOPLE, MOST LIKELY
UNCOMMITTED, INQUISITIVE PEOPLE, CURIOUS
TO SEE JESUS AND TO HEAR AND TO BE HEALED.

2. AND AT THIS JUNCTURE OF JESUS' PUBLIC
MINISTRY, HIS APPEAL KNEW NO BOUNDS.
COMMON PEOPLE, THE RELIGIOUS AND EVEN
PAGANS WERE ALL DRAWN TO HIM, JESUS WAS
VERY POPULAR AT THIS TIME.

*** WHICH LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, HIS POWER, CHRIST'S POWER. LOOK AT V. 18 PLEASE.**

II. HIS POWER, (READ V. 18)

A. NOW THE POPULARITY OF JESUS IS ATTRIBUTED BY LUKE IN VERSE 18 FROM 3 THINGS.

*** NO. 1 THE CROWDS CAME "TO HEAR HIM," FOR NEVER A MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN, JESUS SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY AND NOT LIKE THE SCRIBES WHO WERE ALWAYS QUOTING A RABBI.**

**** SO CHRIST'S UNPARALLELED TEACHING AND PREACHING IN COMMUNICATING A MESSAGE THAT WAS COUNTER-CULTURAL WAS A DRAW AT THIS TIME.**

*** NO. 2, PEOPLE CAME TO BE HEALED OF THEIR DISEASES. AND WITH LITTLE HOPE FROM THE ARCHAIC MEDICAL COMMUNITY AT THAT TIME, PEOPLE WERE DESPERATE TO BE HEALED AND HAVE RELIEF FROM A LIFE OF SUFFERING AND PAIN. AND JESUS IN COMPASSION AND MERCY WILL HEAL, VERIFYING HE SPOKE THE TRUTH.

**** AND FINALLY IN V. 18, NO. 3 LUKE SAYS THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO WERE TROUBLED WITH UNCLEAN SPIRITS, LIT. DEMONS AND **WERE BEING CURED, WHICH SHOWS JESUS' POWER OVER THE WORLD OF FALLEN SPIRITUAL BEINGS.**

1. JESUS CAST OUT DEMONS TORMENTING PEOPLE DEMONSTRATING HIS ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OVER THE DOMAIN OF SATAN.

* SO JESUS SPOKE IN A POWERFUL WAY AND SHOWED HIS POWER THROUGH HEALING AND CASTING OUT DEMONS. AND THAT POWER IS HIGHLIGHTED IN V. 19. LOOK AT V. 19 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 19. **NOW JESUS' HEALING POWER IS** MAGNIFIED IN V. 19 BY LUKE COMMUNICATING THAT JESUS HEALED THEM ALL, ALL THAT CAME TO HIM.

* AND WHERE AS FALSE HEALERS OF OUR DAY, RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS ALWAYS HAVE AN OUT WHEN PEOPLE ARE NOT HEALED COMMUNICATING THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH FAITH, JESUS HEALED EVERYONE WHO CAME TO HIM IN THIS TEXT.

** AND MOST OF THEM, THE MULTITUDE HAD NO FAITH.

*** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, FAITH WAS NOT THE ISSUE, FOR MOST OF THE PEOPLE THERE WERE NOT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, A GREAT THRONE OF PEOPLE FROM JUDEA – JEWS, AND TYRE AND SIDON – GENTILES.

****** AND JESUS' HEALING POWER AS GOD IN THE FLESH, AS THE CREATOR OF EVERYONE THERE WAS SO POWERFUL, ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS TOUCH HIM.**

1. AND OF COURSE KNOWING THAT PEOPLE WERE TOUCHING HIM TO BE HEALED, JESUS AS ALL POWERFUL GOD HEALED THEM.

* THERE WAS NO SHOWMANSHIP, NO FANFARE, NO HISTRIONICS, NO THEATER, NO EMOTIONAL PLEAS, JUST POWER COMING OUT OF THE VERY CREATOR HIMSELF TO HEAL.

** AND THE WORD POWER IS THE GREEK WORD DUNAMIS FROM WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD DYNAMITE, AND THIS DYNAMIC HEALING POWER IS COMING OUT OF JESUS TO HEAL, FOR JESUS IS ALL-POWERFUL AS GOD ALMIGHTY HIMSELF.

*** AND HIS POWER IS EXALTED IN VV. 18&19, AFTER HIS POPULARITY IS COMMUNICATED IN V. 17, WHICH LEADS US TO HIS PROCLAMATION WHICH STARTS WITH A BEATITUDE IN V. 20. LOOK AT V. 20 PLEASE.

III. THE PROCLAMATION, (READ V. 20)

A. NOW JESUS TURNS HIS GAZE, JESUS LOOKS TO HIS DISCIPLES AS HE STARTS TO PREACH, FOR ONLY THEY CAN KNOW THESE BLESSINGS, AND HE PERSONALIZES WHAT HE SAYS TO THEM.

* BLESSED ARE YOU, WHO ARE POOR, FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. SO THESE 4 BLESSEDS THAT LUKE COVERS IN COMPARISON **TO MATTHEW'S 9 IN HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT ARE GIVEN TO CHRIST'S DISCIPLES**, HIS PRIMARY AUDIENCE.

** AND 4 WOES WILL FOLLOW THE 4 BLESSEDS IN LUKE AND ARE PRIMARILY ADDRESSED TO THE CROWD IN GENERAL.

*** BUT THE 4 BLESSEDS ARE GIVEN TO HIS DISCIPLES.

**** AND THE WORD BLESSED IS THE GREEK WORD MAKARIOS.

1. AND IT REFERS TO TRUE WELL BEING THAT COMES FROM A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD.

* THE WORD BLESSED MEANS MORE THAN HAPPINESS: IT MEANS FAVORED AND APPROVED BY GOD. IT DESCRIBES TRANSCENDENT HAPPINESS, THE KIND THAT NEITHER DEPENDS ON EARTHLY FORTUNES NOR FALTERS BEFORE HARDSHIPS.

** TO BE BLESSED IS TO EXPERIENCE JOY, WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HAPPENSTANCE OR CIRCUMSTANCE, BUT RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS.

*** WHEREAS TEMPORAL TEMPORARY HAPPINESS HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH CIRCUMSTANCE, JOY AND EXPERIENCING THE BLESSEDNESS OF CHRIST HAS NOTHING TO DO **WITH THAT. IT'S NOT A FEELING.**

**** IT IS AN INWARD CONTENTEDNESS THAT COMES FROM KNOWING AND WALKING WITH JESUS, SO TRUE HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN, TRUE JOY, TRUE CONTENTMENT, A STATE OF JOY.

2. AND ONE LAST THING BEFORE WE JUMP INTO THIS FIRST BLESSEDNESS OR BEATITUDE.

* THE WORD BEATITUDE COMES FROM THE LATIN WORD MEANING BLESSING. AND A BEATITUDE ATTITUDE AND LIFE LIVED ARE THE GREATEST BLESSING.

** NOW THE REQUIREMENT TO BE TRULY HAPPY, TO BE TRULY BLESSED, TO HAVE SPIRITUAL BLISS IN V. 20 IS TO BE POOR.

*** NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WELL, THE WORD POOR USED HERE IN THE GREEK IS FROM A VERB MEANING TO SHRINK, COWER, OR CRINGE AS BEGGARS OFTEN DID IN THAT DAY.

**** CLASSICAL GREEK USED THE WORD TO REFER TO A PERSON REDUCED TO TOTAL DESTITUTION, WHO CROUCHED IN A CORNER BEGGING.

3. AND AS THIS PERSON HELD OUT ONE HAND FOR ALMS HE OFTEN HID HIS FACE WITH THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE HE WAS ASHAMED OF BEING RECOGNIZED.

* THE TERM DID NOT MEAN SIMPLY POOR, BUT BEGGING POOR. IN FACT THIS WORD IS USED IN LUKE 16:20 TO DESCRIBE THE BEGGAR LAZARUS, IN THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

** SO ONE WHO IS POOR USING THIS GREEK WORD IN THE N.T. IS ONE WHO IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON OTHERS FOR SUSTENANCE. HE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO MEANS OF SELF-SUPPORT.

*** BUT UNDERSTAND THIS, THE WORD POOR IN THIS CONTEXT DOES NOT REFER TO PHYSICAL POVERTY BUT SPIRITUAL POVERTY.

**** YET SOME INTERPRETERS HAVE MAINTAINED THAT THE BEATITUDE OF LUKE 6:20 TEACHES MATERIAL POVERTY, BECAUSE IT SAYS IN **THIS BEATITUDE, "BLESSED ARE YOU WHO ARE POOR, FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD."**

4. BUT SOUND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE REQUIRES THAT, WHEN TWO OR MORE PASSAGES ARE SIMILAR BUT NOT EXACTLY ALIKE, THE CLEARER ONE EXPLAINS THE OTHERS, THE MORE EXPLICIT CLARIFIES THE LESS EXPLICIT.

* AND IN DOING THAT, BY COMPARING SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE WE SEE THAT THE MATTHEW ACCOUNT IS MORE EXPLICIT, WHICH SAYS IN MATTHEW 5:3, BLESSED ARE THE **"POOR IN SPIRIT."**

** BEYOND THAT, IF JESUS WERE HERE ADVOCATING MATERIAL POVERTY HE WOULD HAVE CONTRADICTED MANY OTHER PARTS OF HIS WORD - INCLUDING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT ITSELF, MATTHEW 5:42, THAT TEACH US TO GIVE HELP TO THE POOR.

*** AND IF JESUS WAS TEACHING THE INNATE BLESSEDNESS OF MATERIAL POVERTY, THEN THE TASK OF CHRISTIANS WOULD BE TO HELP MAKE EVERYONE, INCLUDING THEMSELVES, PENNILESS AND POOR. **DON'T HELP THE POOR, YOU'LL RUIN THEM FROM BEING HAPPY.**

**** BUT JESUS WAS NOT TEACHING THAT MATERIAL POVERTY IS THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY. AND MATTHEW 5:3 MAKES CLEAR THAT JESUS IN LUKE 6:20 IS TALKING ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE SPIRIT, NOT OF THE WALLET. (BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT!)

5. SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT? WELL, TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT IS TO **RECOGNIZE ONE'S SPIRITUAL POVERTY APART FROM GOD.**

* IT IS TO SEE ONESELF AS ONE REALLY IS: LOST, HOPELESS, HELPLESS AND HELL-BOUND WITHOUT CHRIST.

** THE POOR IN SPIRIT REALIZE THAT THEY CANNOT PLEASE GOD ON THEIR OWN. THEY ARE POOR OR BANKRUPT, INWARDLY UNABLE TO GIVE ANYTHING OF VALUE TO GOD AND THUS MUST DEPEND ON HIS MERCY.

*** AND BELOVED THAT IS THE POINT OF THE FIRST BEATITUDE. THE POOR IN SPIRIT ARE **THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE BY GOD'S GRACE THAT** THERE ARE NO SAVING RESOURCES IN THEMSELVES AND THAT THEY CAN ONLY BEG FOR MERCY AND GRACE.

**** THEY REALIZE THAT THEY HAVE NO SPIRITUAL MERIT AND THEY KNOW THEY CANNOT EARN **GOD'S FAVOR. THEIR PRIDE IS GONE, THEIR SELF-ASSURANCE IS GONE, AND THEY STAND EMPTY HANDED BEFORE GOD.**

6. AND FOLKS IT BOILS DOWN TO THIS, JESUS **WAS SAYING YOU CAN'T BE FILLED UNTIL YOU ARE EMPTY. YOU CAN'T BE WORTHWHILE UNTIL YOU REALIZE YOU ARE WORTHLESS APART FROM CHRIST.**

* AND UNTIL WE COMPREHEND HOW LOST WE **ARE, WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND CHRIST'S WONDROUS AND REDEEMING LOVE.**

** **UNTIL WE SEE OUR POVERTY, WE CAN'T SEE HIS RICHES. AND NO MAN ENTERS GOD'S KINGDOM WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING HIS OWN SINFULNESS AND REALIZING HIS NEED TO REPENT, PROVERBS 16:5, ISAIAH 64:6, ECCLESIASTES 7:20 (QUOTE THEM).**

*** BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT WE FACE WHEN WE WITNESS TO MANY PEOPLE. FOR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PRIDEFUL RELIGION HAVE RUINED A LOT OF PEOPLE.

**** **THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEY'RE SINNERS, BUT IN THEIR HEART, THEY THINK I'M REALLY A PRETTY GOOD PERSON. SURE I'VE FAILED, BUT NO ONE IS PERFECT! II CORINTHIANS 10:12 (THEY COMPARE THEMSELVES TO THE WRONG PERSON.)**

7. BUT YOU SEE YOU HAVE TO BE PERFECT TO GO TO HEAVEN BECAUSE GOD IS ABSOLUTELY HOLY, PURE, SINLESS AND RIGHTEOUS.

* AND THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS PERFECT WAS CHRIST AND HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS.

** AND IF YOU THINK, **O.K., BUT I'M REALLY NOT** THAT BAD, YOUR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL BLIND YOU TO THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL. JESUS CAME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS, MATTHEW 1:21, LUKE 5:32.

*** AND THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS ALL OF US WERE LOADED WITH SIN, ESPECIALLY PRIDE.

**** AND RELIGIOUS PEOPLE, WHO TRUST IN THEIR RELIGION AND THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS DO NOT LIKE TO THINK THEY ARE LOST. THEY LIKE TO LOOK DOWN ON THE UNRIGHTEOUS HEATHENS, THE UNCHURCHED, THE CONVICTS, THE DREGS OF THE EARTH, NOT REALIZING THAT THEY ARE THE DREGS OF THE EARTH WITHOUT CHRIST.

8. AND BELOVED PRIDE IS A GREAT BARRIER. IN HIS CONFESSIONS, AUGUSTINE MAKES CLEAR THAT PRIDE WAS HIS GREATEST BARRIER TO RECEIVING THE GOSPEL.

* HE WAS PROUD OF HIS INTELLECT, HIS WEALTH, AND HIS PRESTIGE. AND UNTIL HE RECOGNIZED THAT THOSE THINGS WERE LESS THAN NOTHING, CHRIST COULD DO NOTHING FOR HIM.

** UNTIL MARTIN LUTHER REALIZED THAT ALL HIS SACRIFICE, RITUALS AND SELF-ABUSE COUNTED FOR NOTHING BEFORE GOD, HE COULD FIND NO WAY TO COME TO GOD OR TO PLEASE HIM, FAITH ALONE, SOLA FIDE WAS THE ONLY WAY.

***** AND FOLKS, THAT'S WHY JESUS PUTS THIS BEATITUDE FIRST, BECAUSE HUMILITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL OTHER GRACES, A BASIC ELEMENT IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN.**

****** PRIDE HAS NO PART IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM, AND UNTIL A PERSON SURRENDERS PRIDE HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM.**

9. THE DOOR INTO CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS LOW, AND NO ONE WHO STANDS TALL WILL EVER GO THROUGH IT. AND UNTIL A SOUL IS HUMBLLED, UNTIL THE INNER PERSON IS POOR IN SPIRIT, CHRIST CAN NEVER BECOME DEAR, BECAUSE HE IS OBSCURED BY SELF.

* AND WHERE SELF IS EXALTED, CHRIST CANNOT BE. WHEN SELF IS KING, CHRIST CANNOT BE. AND UNTIL THE PROUD IN SPIRIT BECOME POOR IN SPIRIT, THEY CANNOT RECEIVE THE KING OR INHERIT HIS KINGDOM.

** AND LET ME MAKE AN APPLICATION HERE, THIS IS THE WAY INTO THE KINGDOM, THE STARTING BLOCK, BUT ONCE THIS HAS HAPPENED IN OUR LIVES BY SOVEREIGN GRACE AND WE ARE SAVED, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HUMILITY IS THE WAY TO EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

*** THERE ARE NO BIG SHOTS IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING. THERE **ARE NO CEO'S, NO ROYAL ATTITUDES, NO THINKING I'M HIGH AND YOU ARE LOW AND ISN'T IT WONDERFUL TO WORK WITH ALL THE LITTLE PEOPLE.**

**** BELOVED THERE ARE NO SUPERSTARS, NO PRIMA-DONNAS, NO BLUE BLOODS WHO ARE EFFECTIVE SERVANTS OF CHRIST, BECAUSE WE REALIZE WE ARE SERVANTS, SLAVES AND DEBTORS.

10. AND THOSE WHO WANT TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES AND WANT TO BE LIFTED UP WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE SERVANTS OF CHRIST.

** WHY? MATTHEW 23:12 SAYS: (QUOTE IT)

*** AND BELOVED, IF WE WANT TO BE USED BY THE LORD AFTER WE HAVE BEEN SAVED WE MUST BE POOR IN SPIRIT, THAT IS THE MEANS TO GLORIFYING THE KING, HE SHOULD BE PREEMINENT, THE FOCUS, HE IS THE ONE WHO IS TRULY YOUR MAJESTY AND WE ARE SERVANTS IN HIS COURT. AND WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO BE THE SERVANT OF THE KING.

**** BUT AGAIN TO BECOME HIS SERVANT, YOU MUST SEE YOUR SIN AND BY HIS GRACE BECOME POOR IN SPIRIT, HAPPY ARE THE HUMBLE. THAT IS THE REQUIREMENT FOR TRUE HAPPINESS, AND THE STARTING BLOCK TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

11. FOR THE RESULT OF BEING POOR IN SPIRIT IS HEAVEN. IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THAT THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DESTITUTE WILL GO TO HEAVEN, **"FOR YOURS IS** THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

* THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND THIS IS A FACTUAL ANNOUNCEMENT, NOT A WISH.

** FOR THE WORD TRANSLATED YOURS MEANS THE KINGDOM OF GOD DEFINITELY BELONGS TO THOSE WHO ARE POOR IN SPIRIT, WHICH DESCRIBES ALL WHO ARE CHRISTIANS.

*** BELOVED THEIR END IS HEAVEN, AND RATHER THAN COMMUNICATING THIS RESULT IN A FUTURE TENSE, LUKE COMMUNICATES THIS IN THE PRESENT TENSE, COMMUNICATING THE CERTAINTY OF HEAVEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE **"POOR IN SPIRIT", YOURS "IS" THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

12. AND IN GIVING UP THEIR OWN KINGDOM, **THE POOR IN SPIRIT INHERIT GOD'S HEAVEN** THAT WILL BE THE SURE END OF THOSE WHO ARE POOR IN SPIRIT.

AND AS I WRAP UP TODAY (1) I ASK THE QUESTION, HAVE YOU TRULY COME TO CHRIST AS A BEGGAR, AS A SINNER NOT TRUSTING ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, TURNING FROM YOUR SIN TO THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS?

* HAS GOD BROUGHT YOU TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU SEE THAT YOUR SIN IS GREAT BUT THAT THERE IS A GREAT SAVIOR?

**** THAT YOUR SIN IS GREAT, BUT GOD'S GRACE**
IS GREATER AND THAT CHRIST IS YOUR ONLY
HOPE? IF YOU HAVE, CRY OUT TO CHRIST THIS
MORNING AND ASK GOD TO HAVE MERCY ON
YOU THROUGH CHRIST.

*** TURN TO HIM AND TRUST HIM TO SAVE YOU
FROM YOUR SINS AND HIS HOLY WRATH.

(2) BELIEVER, HOW DO WE BECOME POOR IN
SPIRIT ONCE WE HAVE BEEN HUMBLD AND
SAVED FROM OUR SINS?

* WELL, IN APPLICATION LET ME GIVE YOU 3
QUICK THINGS REALIZING THAT HUMILITY IN
ITSELF IS PROPER PERSPECTIVE, SEEING HIS
GRACE AND MERCY, SEEING HE IS EVERYTHING
AND WE ARE NOTHING AND CAN DO NOTHING
TO GLORIFY HIM WITHOUT HIM, JOHN 15:5,
ROMANS 12:3.

** NO. 1 THE FIRST STEP IN EXPERIENCING
HUMILITY IS TO TURN OUR EYES OFF OURSELVES
AND LOOK TO THE LORD.

*** AND WHEN WE STUDY HIS WORD, SEEK HIS FACE IN PRAYER AND SINCERELY DESIRE TO BE NEAR HIM AND PLEASE HIM, WE MOVE TOWARD BEING POOR IN SPIRIT.

**** IT IS THE VISION OF THE INFINITELY HOLY GOD IN ALL HIS SINLESS PURITY AND PERFECTION THAT ALLOWS US TO SEE OURSELVES AS SINNERS BY CONTRAST.

- TO SEEK HUMILITY WE MUST GET OUR EYES OFF OF OURSELVES AND GAZE UPON THE ALL-MIGHTY AND HIS GRACE – **THE WORLD DOESN'T** REVOLVE AROUND US. IT REVOLVES AROUND JESUS.

(3) SECOND, WE MUST STARVE THE FLESH BY REMOVING THE THINGS ON WHICH IT FEEDS. FOR YOU SEE THE ESSENCE OF THE FLESHLY NATURE IS PRIDE, AND TO STARVE THE FLESH IS TO REMOVE AND AVOID THINGS THAT PROMOTE PRIDE.

* SO RATHER THAN LOOKING FOR PRAISE, COMPLIMENTS, AND POPULARITY, WE SHOULD BE WARY OF THEM.

** YET BECAUSE OUR HUMAN SINFULNESS HAS A WAY OF TURNING EVEN THE BEST INTENTIONS TO ITS ADVANTAGE, WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF AVOIDING PRAISE AND RECOGNITION.

*** FOR THE EVIL IS NOT IN BEING GIVEN PRAISE BUT IN SEEKING IT AND GLORYING IN IT. AND WHEN, WITHOUT HAVING SOUGHT IT, WE ARE PRAISED AND HONORED, TO UNGRACIOUSLY REJECT THE RECOGNITION MAY BE AN ACT OF PRIDE RATHER THAN OF HUMILITY.

(4) THEN THIRD AND LAST OF ALL, IN COMING TO HUMILITY WE MUST ASK GOD FOR IT I BELIEVE DAILY. WITH DAVID WE SHOULD PRAY, PSALM 51:10 (QUOTE IT).

* AND BELOVED, HUMILITY, LIKE EVERY OTHER GOOD GIFT, COMES ONLY FROM GOD. AND ALSO WITH EVERY OTHER GOOD THING, HE IS MORE WILLING TO GIVE IT THAN WE ARE TO ASK FOR IT, AND HE STANDS READY TO GIVE IT LONG BEFORE WE ASK FOR IT.

* LET US DO THAT REGULARLY. FOR REMEMBER, **HAPPY ARE THE HUMBLE. (LET'S PRAY).**