

Title: The Blessing of Poverty

Text: Mt 5: 3

Date: Aug 9, 2020

Place: SGBC, NJ

Thursday we looked at the subject of assurance. Our true assurance is objective assurance, certainty in the object of our faith. In Christ all our blessings and all our covenant promises are sure. But when we think of assurance, we tend to think of subjective assurance: certainty in heart, in feeling, in spirit. While I thought on this it came to my mind what our Redeemer taught us, he said,

Matthew 5: 3: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Subject: The Blessing of Poverty

Proposition: Christ is here describing a very small remnant who know what they really are in themselves before God.

I only want to deal with verse 3 but let's read the whole passage so we hear how Christ describes those who are truly blessed. This is not how believers ought to be or how we become as time goes by—this is what every regenerated, sanctified child of God.

Matthew 5: 3: Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4: Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5: Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6: Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7: Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8: Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9: Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10: Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11: Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5: 3: Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Divisions: 1) The Persons; 2) Their Privilege 3) Their Portion

THE PERSONS—*the poor in spirit*

Note this is poor "*in spirit.*" According to God's purpose and predestination the majority of those God saves are poor in worldly possessions.

1 Corinthians 1: 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;...

James 2: 5: Harken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him!"

But if we be poor in worldly things, it is ok because God ordained it and brought it to pass

1 Samuel 2: 7: The LORD maketh poor...

Christ came from the riches of glory and became poor. He walked this earth having nothing. While he did so our Savior cared for and identified himself with the poor and needy and lowly.

2 Corinthians 8: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor,, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.

He called out poor fishermen and spent his days with them. Christ owned no land and had no place to lay his head. He warned about the riches of this world.

Likewise, the apostle Paul was rich in worldly possessions before conversion. Afterward, he became poor for the gospel's sake. He described his state as "troubled, persecuted, cast down, poor, and having nothing." Yet, the believer in Christ is "poor, yet making many rich. Having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Still, a sinner can be poor in worldly possession yet think himself *rich in spirit*. Fact is, all are poor in spirit but not all know it. The majority think themselves rich, increased and in need of nothing. The rich in spirit thinks himself powerful in will, wise in the knowledge of God, strong in faith, full of good works, triumphing over his sin and excelling over others in holiness. He can point out the sins in others but does not see his own sins ten-fold more in himself. Among naturally, religious men and women you will not find "poverty of spirit" but the opposite—rich in estimation of self.

Christ declares the blessed are "poor *in spirit*." What is that? It is to see yourself as nothing but a destitute sinner in need of God's mercy every hour of every day: not only in doctrine but in truth, not only in truth but in act, not only in act but in heart. If spiritually, you are nothing, having nothing and can do nothing then you are poor in spirit. Are you flat broke spiritually? Bankrupt spiritually? In debt spiritually? Are you possessed of total inability? That is poverty of spirit! The word also means "blessed are the beggars."

The poor in spirit believe on Christ because the Holy Spirit has come and made you see you are poor. No one knows poverty of spirit until Christ gives them life and faith to know it. So the poor in spirit believe on Christ. True beggars look to Christ alone for complete redemption from the curse of the law. Their only righteousness and only holiness is Christ. But apart from Christ giving and sustaining faith in them they cannot believe. They see themselves more unbelieving than believing. They are constantly begging for Christ to give them more faith

The poor in spirit know what it is to be assaulted by Satan and by their old sinful nature every day, every hour. They are no match for either one. They have no ability to save themselves from either. The poor in spirit weep because their love toward Christ is so cold and faint, while Christ's love toward them is so great and boundless

When Christ sat at the table and said, "One of you will betray me tonight?" Poverty of spirit said, "Lord is it I?" Judas was the last to ask that question. He was surprised it was him. But the believer with true poverty of spirit would not be surprised because he sees what a sinner he is. Poverty of spirit says if the Lord does not save me then I will not be saved. If I am not found in his righteousness alone then I certainly have none to offer. None of my works commend me to God, only Christ and his finished work!

We make a mistake looking for this grand feeling of assurance in our own spirits. No doubt, God will make you know his everlasting arms are underneath you. But to be *poor in spirit* is to be thankful that all spiritual blessings are IN CHRIST—I want my blessings in Christ's hand, not mine. It is be thankful Christ is the Author and Finisher of faith rather than the quality or quantify of my little mustard seed. Poverty of spirit is to be thankful Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God because have none apart from him. It is to be thankful that "if my heart condemns me, God is greater than my heart." It is to be thankful "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS." I may come to time when I don't know myself, much less him. "But the LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS."

THEIR PRIVILEGE—*blessed*

The word means "well-off" and "happy."

Natural man—especially natural religious man—says, "No!" to this truth; it does not make sense to sinful flesh. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit?*" Natural man says, "No! Blessed are the rich in spirit." "*Blessed are they that mourn?*" Natural man says, "No! Blessed are they that rejoice." "*Blessed are the meek?*" Natural man says, "No, our will is our own; don't infringe on my rights." "*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness?*" Natural man says, "No! Blessed are they that are well fed and fat, can point you to their many wonderful works of righteousness!" "*Blessed are the merciful?*" Natural man says, "Look how they treated me, you expect me to be merciful? I'm taking vengeance!" "*Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the peacemakers?*" Natural man says "Oh, that certainly describes me; I am holier

than thou, come not near me, or I'll wage war on you." *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake?"* Natural man says, "No! Blessed are those who are at ease in Zion." God pronounces woe on those at ease in Zion!

Believer are you suffering from poverty of spirit. Are you longing for a token of Christ's presence? Christ says, "You are blessed!" Christ says you are well-off! Are you mourning over your poverty of spirit, over your sin, over your unbelief? God declares you are blessed! You shall be comforted! There is great happiness to a believer who mourns his sin when Christ is his only Comfort!

Are you meek?—lowly, contrite, broken hearted? Christ says you are blessed because you shall inherit the earth. God says to this man will I look, the man who is broken and contrite in spirit.

Do you hunger and thirst for Christ your only Righteousness? Christ says "Blessed!" You shall be filled! Only those truly empty are filled by God. Only those truly hungry and thirsty does God make to delight themselves in fatness in Christ. God feeds you with the gospel of God's sovereign electing grace—freely chosen, freely blessed. He feeds you with the word of Christ' particular redemption, that is, Christ accomplished redemption for all his chosen people. God feeds you with the Spirit's irresistible grace making you will to desire the sincere milk of the word. Christ says, "You are blessed!" Well off!

The true child of God sees himself poor. Sin is his only possession. He is empty of righteousness in himself. He is tossed and turned by satan's buffeting. But Christ says that very poverty is the result of God richly blessing you by his free and sovereign grace. This sinful, self-righteous world does not see themselves as poor in spirit.

Our poverty of spirit does not change God's everlasting covenant of grace but is the result of it. Poverty of spirit does not affect our interest in the unsearchable riches of Christ, it is the result of it. Natural man—no matter how religious—is not poor in spirit and cannot make himself poor in spirit! Only those blessed of God with the true riches that are in Christ are poor in spirit! Christ says to every child of God in poverty of spirit—"Blessed are the poor in spirit." How? Listen!

Ephesians 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.

Our blessings are *in Christ*—in his heart, rather than ours; in his hand, rather than ours; by his works, rather than ours.

Ephesians 1: 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8: Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Love in our heart waxes and wanes—but love in God's heart is everlasting, without variableness or shadow of turning. The blessing of eternal life is safe in Christ our Life. The blessing of eternal redemption is safe in Christ. Look to the object of faith for assurance, not to your spirit.

Do you know the sound of this trumpet? Do you rejoice in it? Is it a joyful sound to you?—"*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.*" Remember, Christ was anointed to preach the Gospel—not to the rich in spirit—but to the poor. Only the poor in spirit hear this sound and rejoice!

Our blessing, happiness, riches is that "when I am weak, then am I strong for the power of Christ rests on me." Our happiness, our blessing is: free pardon, justification, acceptance with God, unchanging grace, constant preservation and the hope of glory all flowing from our great King- Priest. The blessed happiness of the poor in spirit is knowing I am nothing but Christ is All! Our blessedness is in knowing I am vile, corrupt, totally depraved but in the person of our great and glorious Head we are without spot, blemish, or any such thing; perfect, accepted, complete in Him.

The sinner poor in spirit—who owns himself to be the helpless sinner he is—is the one blessed of God. What happiness to have all poverty in self and all riches in Christ!

THEIR PORTION— *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

Now listen carefully you who are poor in spirit. Christ says that true spiritual poverty, rather than disqualify us for what is to come, is instead the earnest and foretaste of the enjoyment of his enduring, eternal riches—“*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” For those truly poor in spirit, Christ says, “All things are yours...and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s”—“*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!*”

Amen!