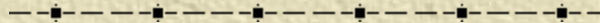




*Real Blessing: Poor in
Spirit*

Matthew 5:1-3



Christmas Guilt

✦ Two Directions of the Heart at Christmas

- Jesus is the reason for the season
- Gifts for friends and families

✦ What about the less fortunate?

- Constantly reminded that not everyone is having needs met at Christmas time
- But we are often drawn to just physical needs being met

✦ What if poverty is deeper than what we have physically?

Real Blessing: Poor In Spirit

Matthew 5:1-3 ^{ESV}

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching on a Mountain

✦ Moses: Law on Mt. Sinai

- Jesus teaches gives His interpretation and deeper meaning of the Law on a mountain
- Jesus is greater than Moses

✦ Disciples and Crowd Listen

✦ Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount?

- Moral standard for a future kingdom?
- Drive the imperfect to Grace?
- Neither?
 - Challenging and Practical ethic Jesus expects His followers to live by
 - High expectations, which drive us to grace, but through the help of the Holy Spirit and Christian community we are to try and live them today

Beatitudes

- ✦ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.
- ✦ Beatitudes set up the character of the ideal, repentant Christian
- ✦ Essence of the Sermon on the Mount
- ✦ What a repentant follower of Jesus should look like
- ✦ The Kingdom of Heaven is given to the unexpected

Blessed

- ✦ More than Happy, More than a feeling
- ✦ Blessed is what God thinks about us
- ✦ Spiritual Well-being, having the approval of God
- ✦ “Blessed are...” not “Blessed will be...”
- ✦ Deep inner joy for those who have long awaited the salvation promise by God...realized in the here and now
- ✦ Point to present blessing, but also point to a final, ultimate and great fulfillment in the future
- ✦ We don't have to wait for the future to know we are Blessed by God

Blessed Who?

- ✦ Poor in spirit
- ✦ Not Materialistically poor
- ✦ Since the Poor's only refuge is in God, poor came to have spiritual overtones
- ✦ What does it mean to be poor?
 - Lack or be in need of something
 - Many times it is the poor that are most aware of their spiritual need
- ✦ Poor in spirit means to be spiritually bankrupt

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

✦ Two Kinds of Poor

- Beggarly, having nothing. No skills or ability to get out of poverty
- Working poor, having to work to meet needs; pay check to pay check

✦ Jesus is using the first kind of poor

✦ Poor in spirit cannot get themselves out of their condition

- They are bankrupt

✦ It is a recognition of our need for God's special intervention and our looking to God for salvation and vindication

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

✦ Poor in spirit is not...

- Being sad
- Being depressed
- Having a bad day
- Lack of courage – D.A. Carson

- "To be poor in spirit is not to lack courage but to acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy. It confesses one's unworthiness before God and utter dependence on Him."

✦ Recognition that our only way out of our spiritual condition is to trust in Jesus, rather than trusting in favors from the powerful or our own abilities

- The Pharisees trusted in their own obedience and so did not see they were poor in spirit

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

- ✦ Repentance in light of the kingdom being near excludes self interest and self righteousness
- ✦ The greater the spiritual need, the more likely one is to depend on God
- ✦ We have nothing to offer God
- ✦ We are in His debt
- ✦ We are drowning in debt
- ✦ We cannot do or say enough to swim ourselves out of the debt

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

✦ God has made away for the poor in spirit

– *Isaiah 61:1-3* ^{ESV} ¹*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.*

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

- ✦ The Kingdom of Heaven is for those who acknowledge their spiritual bankruptcy and acknowledge that it is only God who can bring them out.
- ✦ Throughout the Old Testament God is on the side of the poor and is the source of their deliverance:
 - 1 Samuel 2:8; Psalm 9:18, 34:6, 40:17; Proverbs 17:5
 - Isaiah 29:19, 41:17, 66:2
- ✦ Reality Check: Everyone is Poor in spirit
 - Depravity: we can do nothing to save ourselves
 - We need help
 - We need a Savior

God Has Provided for the Poor in Spirit

- ✦ God needs to save us from our spiritual bankruptcy
- ✦ The same God to whom we are in debt has supplied the payment for our debt
 - This is no just forgive it and forget it
 - Someone paid their life for our debt – Jesus
- ✦ The Story of Christmas
 - Jesus willingly gave His life to pay your debt and my debt
 - Everyone is poor in spirit, but it is only those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty and trust in Jesus Christ who are Blessed and gain the Kingdom of Heaven
- ✦ Are you realizing your spiritual poverty?
- ✦ Who are you trusting to pay your balance?