

# POOR IN SPIRIT, RICH IN CHRIST

(No. 1249 – 6/17/24 – Sermon Online Zoom)

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. **Mat. 5:1-6:** <sup>1</sup>*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, <sup>2</sup>and He began to teach them, saying: <sup>3</sup>“**Blessed are the poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>**Blessed are those who mourn**, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup>**Blessed are the meek**, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

1. God’s kingdom is spiritual—it seems opposite everything we think is normal (love our enemies, etc.)
2. God’s thoughts and ways are not like ours; we don’t normally think of being poor, sad, or hungry as a blessing!
3. We need to be born again to understand—these things sound like foolishness to a natural person who isn’t saved.

B. “Poor” [Gk. *ptōchos* = “to crouch or cower like a beggar or pauper; poor, distressed, worthless”]

1. Luke 4:18 – preach the gospel to the poor
2. Luke 16:20, 22 – translated “beggar” in the story (not specifically called a parable) of the rich man and Lazarus
3. The word *poor* is often paired with the word *needy* in Scripture (note in the psalms how David, though fabulously rich in material things, described himself as poor and needy):
  - a) **Ps. 40:17:** *Yet **I am poor and needy**; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.*
  - b) **Ps. 70:5:** *Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.*
  - c) **Ps. 86:1:** *A prayer of David. Hear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.*
  - d) **Ps. 109:22:** *For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*

- e) **Isa. 41:17:** *The **poor and needy** search for water, but there is none; their tongues are **parched with thirst**. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.*
4. As we will see in this study, “poor” and “needy” can refer to physical or spiritual poverty.

## II. POOR IN SPIRIT

- A. We realize that in ourselves, we are spiritually bankrupt—paupers and beggars; we cannot save ourselves—no matter how hard we try, we can’t stop sinning and doing wrong things:
  1. **Rom. 3:9-12, 23:** *<sup>9</sup>What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are **all under sin**. <sup>10</sup>As it is written: “There is **no one righteous, not even one**; <sup>11</sup>there is **no one who understands, no one who seeks God**. <sup>12</sup>**All have turned away**, they have together become worthless; there is **no one who does good, not even one...**” <sup>23</sup>for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.*
  2. **Rom. 7:18-25 (NKJV):** *<sup>18</sup>For I know that **in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells**; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup>For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. <sup>23</sup>But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>**O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me** from this body of death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God—through **Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

- B. This realization produces godly sorrow that leads to deep repentance and salvation:
1. **Mat. 5:4:** *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
  2. **2 Cor. 7:9-11:** <sup>9</sup>*Now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because **your sorrow led you to repentance.** For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. <sup>10</sup>**Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation** and leaves no regret, but **worldly sorrow brings death.** <sup>11</sup>*See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.**
  3. **Ezek. 9:4** [The LORD to His angel]: *Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of **those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.***
- C. We are needy—hungry and thirsty, in desperate need of God:
1. **Mat. 5:3** (NLT): *God blesses those who are **poor and realize their need for Him,** for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*
  2. **Mat. 5:6:** *Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness,** for they will be filled.*
  3. **Luke 1:52-53** (NKJV): [Mary’s song of praise]: <sup>52</sup>*He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. <sup>53</sup>**He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.***
  4. **John 7:37-39:** <sup>37</sup>*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “**If anyone is thirsty,** let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup>*Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” <sup>39</sup>By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

D. Jesus said we can't do *anything* without Him:

1. **John 15:1, 4-5:** <sup>1</sup>*I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener...* <sup>4</sup>*Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. **No branch can bear fruit by itself**; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.* <sup>5</sup>*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from Me you can do nothing.***
2. We are insignificant without Christ:
  - a) **Mat. 5:3** (AMP): *Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the **poor in spirit (the humble, who rate themselves insignificant)**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!*
  - b) **Rom. 12:3:** *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought**, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*
  - c) **Gal. 6:3:** *If anyone **thinks he is something when he is nothing**, he deceives himself.*
3. We cannot produce any good fruit on our own—that is why Paul called it the “fruit of the Spirit”:
  - a) **Gal. 5:16-23** (NKJV): <sup>16</sup>*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* <sup>17</sup>*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that **you do not do the things that you wish.*** <sup>18</sup>*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* <sup>19</sup>*Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup>envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* <sup>22</sup>*But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control.*

- b) **Phil. 3:3-8:** <sup>3</sup>*For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who **put no confidence in the flesh**—*<sup>4</sup>*though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, **a Pharisee;** <sup>6</sup>as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for **legalistic righteousness, faultless.** <sup>7</sup>**But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.** <sup>8</sup>*What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

E. The Laodicean church had the *exact opposite spirit* of what Jesus was teaching in Matthew 5:3:

1. **Rev. 3:14-19:** <sup>14</sup>*To the angel of the church in Laodicea, write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. <sup>15</sup>I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup>So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup>**You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'** But you do not realize that you are **wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.** <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. <sup>19</sup>Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So **be earnest, and repent.***
2. They thought they were rich and didn't need anything, but they did not REALIZE their true spiritual state—Jesus told them to REPENT!

F. Summary

1. To be poor in spirit is an acknowledgement of our spiritual bankruptcy and poverty—we lack and are in great need.
2. This produces repentance, genuine humility, an emptying of self, and total dependence on God.

### III. RICH IN CHRIST

- A. When we empty ourselves, then we can be filled with the riches of Christ—this is called *The Great Exchange*:
1. **John 3:30** (NKJV): ***He must increase, but I must decrease.***
  2. **Gal. 2:20**: *I have been crucified with Christ; it is **no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*
  3. The good news of the Gospel is that when we surrender to God and stop trying to “be a Christian” in our own strength, God changes us into a new creation in Christ!
  4. All we need is faith in Jesus:
    - a) **Eph. 2:8-10**: <sup>8</sup>*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this **not from yourselves**, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
    - b) **James 2:5**: *Has not God chosen those who are **poor in the eyes of the world** to be **rich in faith** and to **inherit the kingdom** He promised those who love Him?*
- B. When we become poor in spirit, Jesus makes us truly rich:
1. **Rev. 3:17-22**: <sup>17</sup>*You say, ‘**I am rich**; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But **you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.** <sup>18</sup>**I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich**; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. <sup>19</sup>Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. <sup>20</sup>Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup>To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. <sup>22</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*
  2. **Luke 16:11**: *So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with **true riches**?*

C. Jars of clay filled with the treasure of God's power and glory:

1. **2 Cor. 4:5-7:** *<sup>5</sup>For we do **not** preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup>But we **have this treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is **from God and not from us**.*
2. **2 Cor. 3:3-6:** *<sup>3</sup>You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. <sup>4</sup>Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. <sup>5</sup>**Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. <sup>6</sup>He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***
3. **Col. 1:27:** *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the **glorious riches** of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**.*

D. The goal is to be rich toward God, not rich in this world

**Luke 12:16-21:** *<sup>16</sup>And He told them this parable: "The ground of a certain **rich man** produced a good crop. <sup>17</sup>He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' <sup>18</sup>"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." <sup>20</sup>"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' <sup>21</sup>"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is **not rich toward God**."*

E. God begins to do great things when we get out of the way!

1. Jesus said we can do nothing *without* Him, but *with* Him all things are possible:

**Phil. 4:13:** ***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***

2. In 2 Chron. 20, we read about King Jehoshaphat and how he prayed when a vast army came to attack Judah and Jerusalem:
  - a) **2 Chron. 20:12:** *“O our God, will you not judge them? For we have **no power** to face this vast army that is attacking us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.**”*
  - b) **2 Chron. 20:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>*He [Jehaziel the prophet] said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s...’* <sup>17</sup>*You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; **stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.**”*

<p><b>Testimony:</b> Cake for lady in Queens</p>
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#### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. God’s kingdom is the exact opposite of the world—the poor, the humble, the sorrowful, the hungry, and the persecuted are the ones who are blessed!
- B. God blesses those who are poor in spirit; this means we humble ourselves and acknowledge our spiritual poverty and weakness, putting our total dependence on God.
- C. What is the reward for those who are truly poor in spirit?  
**God’s kingdom!**  
**Mat. 5:3:** *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***
- D. Let’s empty ourselves so God can fill us with the riches of Christ!