

**Text: Matthew 5:1-12**

*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:*

**"Blessed (Makarios) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

<i>"Blessed are the meek</i>	<i>for they shall inherit the earth.</i>
<i>"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness</i>	<i>for they shall be satisfied.</i>
<i>"Blessed are the merciful</i>	<i>for they shall obtain mercy.</i>
<i>"Blessed are the pure in heart</i>	<i>for they shall see God.</i>
<i>"Blessed are the peacemakers</i>	<i>for they shall be called sons of God.</i>
<i>"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake</i>	<i>for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</i>
<i>"Blessed are you when men reviled you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad</i>	<i>for your reward is great in heaven for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you."</i>

**The Structure of CJ's City Sunday Service:**

<b>1. TEACH: Communicate the Way (the nature and purpose) of the Kingdom</b>
<b>2. PREACH: Communicating the Coming Kingdom (proclaiming the good news that God's Kingdom is near, that His sovereign purposes in history were finally realized</b>
<b>3. HEALING: Demonstrate the Purpose and Power of the Kingdom by Healing the Sick (A sign that the Kingdom had come).</b>

**THE CONTEXT:**

Matthew 5:1ff.

- **He saw the crowds, went to the mountain, sat down**
- **The Disciples came to him and he taught them**

## 2

The Audience is three concentric circles

- The Disciples (Inner Circle)
- The Crowds (Outer Circle)
- The World (Both Circles)

At CJ's City teach and preach primarily for the edification of the saints, but when skeptics, searchers and sinners come, we want the Spirit to awaken them to the Truth.

### THE BLESSED PRONOUNCEMENT!

We call these pronouncements "beatitudes" from the Latin word for happiness or blessedness.

- The word "blessed" is more than just "happiness" (circumstantial) it means the ultimate well-being through Christ.

Beatitude 1 and 8 an identical promise, **"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

But the other six beatitudes sandwiched between these two are all different.

Verse 4: "For they shall be comforted."   those who Mourn
Verse 5: "For they shall inherit the earth."   The Meek
Verse 6: "For they shall be satisfied."   those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness
Verse 7: "For they shall obtain mercy."   Merciful
Verse 8: "For they shall see God."   Pure in heart
Verse 9: "For they shall be called the sons of God."   Peacemakers

**Text: Matthew 5:3-4**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

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Definition: Those not Poor

- **Those who pursue Self-reliance, Self-confidence, Self-determination, and Self-esteem**

*Any Messiah who comes along and proposes to replace self-reliance with childlike God-reliance, and self-confidence with submissive God-confidence, and self-determination with sovereign grace, and self-esteem with magnificent mercy for the unworthy—that Messiah is going to be a threat to the religion of self-admiration.*

*That religion has dominated the world ever since Adam and Eve fell in love with the image of their own independent potential when they it saw reflected back to them in the eye of the serpent: "You will not die; you will be like God." John Piper*

**Quote!**

*Trust thyself, every heart vibrates to that iron string. Discontent is the want of self-reliance. It is infirmity of will. Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The need for a Savior is offensive to those who pursue the religion of Self-Reliance.

**BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> **1)** reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms  
**2)** destitute of wealth, influence, position, honour  
**a)** lowly, afflicted, destitute of the Christian virtues and eternal riches  
**b)** helpless, powerless to accomplish an end  
**c)** poor, needy  
**3)** lacking in anything

## Biblical Examples of those Who Were Poor in Spirit

What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

**Abraham-** *"I who am I but dust and ashes?"*<sup>2</sup>

**Jacob-** *"I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness..."*<sup>3</sup>

**Moses-** *"I am not eloquent"*<sup>4</sup>

The reason God got angry with Moses is not because of his humble assessment of his own abilities, but of his lack of faith in God's ability.

God responded and said to Moses, "Who made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak" (Exodus 4:11–12).

### a) as respects their spirit

**1)** destitute of wealth of learning and intellectual culture which the schools afford (men of this class most readily give themselves up to Christ's teaching and proved them selves fitted to lay hold of the heavenly treasure)

<sup>2</sup> In dealing with the Lord about Sodom and Gomorrah, he said, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27).

<sup>3</sup> When Jacob returned to the promised land after spending 20 years in exile, he wrestled with God in prayer and said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies" (Genesis 32:10).

<sup>4</sup> When God came to him with a mission to lead his people out of Israel, he said, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? . . . Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue" (Exodus 3:11; 4:10).

**David-** *"Who am I, and what is my people...?"*<sup>5</sup>

**Solomon-** *"...although I am but a little child..."*<sup>6</sup>

**Isaiah-** *"Woe to me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips..."*<sup>7</sup>

So we learn from Job and Isaiah that one source of lowliness is to see God in his power and holiness.

**John the Baptist-** *"...I am not worthy to untie...He must increase, I must decrease"*<sup>8</sup>

**Peter-** *"...for I am a sinful man, O Lord"*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> When the collection for the temple was being taken, David prayed, "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14).

<sup>6</sup> "O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in" (1 Kings 3:7).

<sup>7</sup> "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5).

<sup>8</sup> "I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie . . . He must increase, I must decrease" (John 1:27; 3:30). Could this be why Jesus said, "Among those born of women, none is greater than John" (Luke 7:28)? "If anyone would be first he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

<sup>9</sup> When he saw the power of Jesus on the Lake of Gennesaret, "Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (Luke 5:8).

Paul- "...nothing good dwells within me" and "I am the foremost of sinners"<sup>10</sup>

### Definition: Poverty of Spirit

• It is a sense of powerlessness in ourselves.
• It is a sense of spiritual bankruptcy and helplessness before God.
• It is a sense of moral uncleanness before God.
• It is a sense of personal unworthiness before God.
• It is a sense that if there is to be any life or joy or usefulness, it's all of God and all of grace.

The reason it's a SENSE of powerlessness and a SENSE of bankruptcy and a SENSE of uncleanness and a SENSE of unworthiness, is that, objectively speaking, everybody is poor in spirit. Everybody, whether they sense it or not, is powerless without God and bankrupt and helpless and unclean and unworthy before God.

But not everybody is "blessed."

### Who Is Blessed?

When Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," he does not mean everybody.

He means those who feel it. That is why it is so appropriate to take the first and second beatitudes together.

***"Blessed are those who mourn,"*** clarifies the subjective side of being poor in spirit.

Blessed are the poor in spirit who mourn.

Blessed are the people who feel keenly their inadequacies and their guilt and their failures and their helplessness and their unworthiness and their emptiness—who don't try to hide these things under a cloak of self-sufficiency, but who are honest about them and grieved and driven to the grace of God.

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<sup>10</sup> "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" (Roman 7:18). "I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life" (1 Timothy 1:15–16).

Blessed are you! because you are going to be comforted. Fear not, you worm, Jacob! Fear not, Moses, Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:6–8), Isaiah, Peter! For I will be with you, I will help you, I will strengthen you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Yours is the very kingdom of God. Amen.

Our prayer is that all of us at CJ's City will find the secret of productivity and usefulness and happiness NOT in the pleasures of self esteem, but in the power of sovereign grace. "Fear not you worm Jacob . . . I will help you, says the Lord."

### **The Answer to the Paralysis of Low Self-Esteem**

What is the biblical solution when a person is paralyzed by a sense of guilt or unworthiness or uselessness?

The answer is not self-esteem. God did not say to Moses, "Stop putting yourself down. You are somebody. You are eloquent." That is not the biblical way.

What God said was, "Stop looking at your own unworthiness and uselessness and look at me. I made the mouth. I will be with you. I will help you. I will teach you what to say. Look to me and live!"

The biblical answer to the paralysis of low **SELF-ESTEEM** is not **HIGH SELF-ESTEEM**; it is Divine esteem (Sovereign grace).

In other words, God's way of freeing and mobilizing people who see themselves as worms is not to tell them that they are beautiful butterflies but rather to say, "I will help you. I am your redeemer . . . Go to Egypt now, and I will be with you."

### **William Carey's <sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> William Carey did not have high self esteem. He castigated himself again and again for his sin. When the fire of 1812 destroyed dozens of his precious manuscripts, he didn't blame the devil. He said, "How unsearchable are the ways of God!" And then he accused himself of too much self-congratulation in his labors, and said, "The Lord has smitten us, he had a right to do so, and we deserve his corrections."

When he had outlived four of his comrades in mission, he wrote back to Andrew Fuller, "I know not why so fruitless a tree is preserved; but the Lord is too wise to err." When he died in 1834 in Serampore, a simple tablet was put on his grave with the words he requested. And when you hear these I want you to ask, What was William Carey's secret? How could he persevere for 40 years over all obstacles—as a homely man, suffering from recurrent

The Epitaph

**WILLIAM CAREY\_**

**Born August 17th, 1761\_**

**Died June 9th, 1834\_**

**A wretched, poor, and helpless worm,\_On Thy kind arms I fall.**

The secret for William Carey was not self esteem. He was poor in spirit to the very end. "A wretched, poor, and helpless worm," he calls himself, knowing very well his sin and failures.

His secret was in the last line of his epitaph: "On Thy kind arms I fall."

This was his secret in dying and this was his secret in living. He cast himself, poor, helpless, despicable on the kind arms of God. For he knew the promise of Jesus: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for to them belong the merciful and mighty arms of the King of kings.

**Bible Study Discussion:**

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|------------------|---|
| 1. <b>WHO?</b>   | Who are the characters (people) involved in this passage? <sup>12</sup> |
| 2. <b>WHERE?</b> | Where did this take place? <sup>13</sup>                                |
| 3. <b>WHEN?</b>  | When did this take place? <sup>14</sup>                                 |
| 4. <b>WHAT?</b>  | What does this teach us? <sup>15</sup>                                  |
| 5. <b>HOW?</b>   | How can we apply this today? <sup>16</sup>                              |

fever, limping for years from an injury in 1817, and yet putting the entire Bible into six languages and parts of it into 29 other languages—what was the secret of this man's usefulness and productivity for the kingdom?

<sup>12</sup> *Jesus (His Disciples and the Crowds), and indeed the World*

<sup>13</sup> *Outside Galilee (Northwest) on a gentle sloping hill*

<sup>14</sup> *AD 30*

<sup>15</sup> *We will consider the Beatitudes week by week*

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Reference: © Desiring God

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<sup>16</sup> Allow the rule of God in our lives and have all the benefits past, present and future