

MATTHEW 5:1-3 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE RICHES OF SPIRITUAL POVERTY - ([SERMON MP3](#))

Many people describe the opening verses of Matthew 5 as the “Beatitudes.” The word “Beatitude” comes from the Latin *beatus* meaning “Blessed.” Blessedness is not simply the condition of being happy. Instead, it describes the approval or favor of God. Happiness is a subjective condition, a feeling. Jesus however is making an objective statement about what God thinks of Kingdom citizens. They are blessed and favored. True kingdom citizens have the approval of God.

- ☀ *How would this truth help someone who struggles with the fear of man (someone who longs for the affirmation and approval of people)?*

- ☀ *Who’s approval or favor do you live for? Do you really want God’s approval more than anything else?*

- ☀ *How could seeking man’s approval over God’s approval be a form of idolatry?*

Name	Prayer Need

Beatitudes are not limited to Matthew 5, actually they would have been familiar to the Jews who listened in on Jesus sermon the first time because they are found in the OT. Some other beatitudes can be found in (Deut. 33:26-29; Ps 1:1; 32:1-2; 65:4; 119:1; 146:5; Is. 30:18). Look up these “blessing” statements and describe privileged status in each.

- ☀ *Are all these beatitudes true of you? Yes/No (Circle one)*

- ☀ *Which were convicting? Why?*

- ☀ *Which were encouraging? Why?*

Poverty in ancient times was not like American poverty today. Here you can qualify for poverty level and still have a car and cable TV. Back then, those who were poor crouched in the dirt like wretched beggars. It was a poverty so deep that the person’s life was fully dependent on the giving of others. He could not survive without help from outside himself. Those who are poor in spirit according to Matthew 5:3 then, are those who are so spiritually bankrupt that they will not survive without help from outside themselves.

- ☀ *What implications does a proper understanding of spiritual poverty have in connection with salvation and sanctification? What texts support your view?*

☀ Read (Luke 4:18) and describe the importance of Jesus Isaiah 61:1 quote. Also look at (Ps. 34:18) for help answering this question.

☀ Kent Hughes once wrote, “The more spiritually mature we become, the more profound will be our sense of poverty.” Do you agree or disagree with that statement and why?

D.A. Carson wrote, “Poverty of spirit is not a man’s confession that his is ontologically insignificant, or personally without value, for such would be untrue; it is, rather, a confession that he is sinful and rebellious and utterly without moral virtues adequate to commend him to God. From within such a framework, poverty of spirit becomes a general confession of a man’s need for God, a humble admission of impotence without him.” What reflections do you have after reading that? Does that describe your heart before the Lord?

☀ How are self-righteousness, moral self-esteem, and personal vainglory enemies of being poor in spirit? Where are such things seen in cultural trends today or even in your own life?

☀ Poverty of spirit may end in a Gideon vanquishing the enemy hosts; but it begins with a Gideon who first affirms he is incapable of the task and who insists that if the Lord does not go with him he would much rather to stay home and thresh grain. Poverty of Spirit is exemplified by the guilty publican in the corner of the Temple crying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” Can you think of any other verses or examples of spiritual poverty?

Those who come to Christ poor in spirit, never leave the same way. What are some practical ways you can cultivate a spirit of poverty in your own life? After each suggestion, read the associated text and write down a personal application statement.

☀ Get lost in the wonder of Christ. Behold your Savior and long to be like him (2Cor. 3:18)

☀ Get weaned from yourself. Glorify God while crucifying self (Gal. 2:20)

☀ Spend time in prayer practicing the art of begging – cry out longer and louder (Mark 10:46-52)

☀ Cast off self-sufficiency and give praise and thanks to God (Psalm 100:3-4).