

Sitting at Jesus Feet

The Poor in Spirit, Those who Mourn, The Meek

Matthew 5:1-5 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto 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. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

These people were used to religious teachers. They had an eventful history in the mountains. Many years before, a man named Moses had gone up into a particular mountain, it was a great and terrible scene. God came down upon Mount Horeb in lightning and fire and the people trembled. Eventually, Moses would bring down the tablets of stone that the ten commandments were written upon and this nation would spend the next 1600 years proving man's inability to live by them. Yes, it was quite a scene the day the law was given by Moses but what a difference it was on this day: for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

For all the similarities; the people, the mountain, the lawgiver, notice the differences.

- This mountain was not off limits
- There was room for all, and all were welcome
- In place of thunder and fire, the gentle words of a loving Savior full of peace and life.

They had heard many religious teachers before but none spoke as this man did, He spoke with authority. The words which Moses brought down from Sinai brought death but the words of Jesus Christ were full of life.

I. The Poor in Spirit

A. What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

To be emptied of self, in order to be filled with Christ

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

B. The correlation between natural and spiritual poverty

Matthew 19:21-22 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

- Possessions can create unhealthy attachments which lead to covetousness

- To be wealthy in this world does not secure spiritual prosperity and may hinder the pursuit of it. Poverty does not preclude one from being spiritually rich and may serve to help them in their pursuit of God.

Matthew 19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

- To be "poor" in spirit is to be emptied of prideful ambition in the inner man. The poor in spirit, having laid aside their proud pursuits, become vessels, ready to be filled, fit for the Master's use.
- To be "poor" in spirit implies that this individual, being devoid of earthly ambition, is in pursuit of the calling of God in their lives. No longer hindered by earthly attachments, they are ready to be filled with the fullness of God.

C. Christ Emptied Himself

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 rich.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

D. The Blessing-Their is the Kingdom of Heaven (Both now and forever)

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

- They had been waiting a long time for this kingdom, and now it had come and was here to stay.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

- In Christ's Kingdom the poor have their rags replaced with a white robe

II. Those Who Mourn

A. What does it mean to mourn?

- To express grief or sorrow; to grieve; to be sorrowful. Mourning may be expressed by weeping or audible sounds, or by sobs, sighs or inward silent grief.
- We generally think of the loss of a loved one, we mourn their passing even as Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus. In these times, God comforts us.
- However, on this occasion I think He had something more than this in mind.

Genesis 6:5-6 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

- The perpetual sin of mankind strikes grief into the heart of God
- Those who mourn are those grieved in their hearts over sin and suffering

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

- Godly sorrow produces repentance.
- Worldly sorrow produces death. We saw worldly sorrow earlier in the account of the rich young ruler, “he went away sorrowful”
- We first mourn over our own sin, then our families, our nations and the worlds.
- While you can’t be poor in spirit or meek on behalf of someone else, we can mourn on behalf of others as well as ourselves.

B. How do we mourn?

James 4:8-10 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

- To mourn as we should, we must approach our Maker, sins in hand, and be driven to our knees under the weight of sin.
- As one unworthy publican once said “God be merciful to me a sinner!”

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

- Beware, our adversary knows well our weakness for distraction and offers the house of feasting as an alternative to the house of mourning?
- The House of feasting represents the many distractions that prevent people from ever going to the house of mourning.

C. Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

- Never was there a man so acquainted with sorrow as was Jesus Christ
- He knew what it meant to feel the anguish of sin, yet not His own

Luke 22:41-44 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

D. The Blessing- They Shall be Comforted

Psalms 30:5 ...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

- Mourning is temporary

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

- The blessing that is reserved for those who mourn is meant to be shared

III. The Meek

1 Peter 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

A. What is meekness?

An attitude of quiet, reverent, and humble submission to the will and purpose of God
Meekness is closely connected to gentleness. It is the opposite of a "proud or arrogant spirit"
(Vines Expository Dictionary)

B. Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- We are not all gifted in the same proportion. Some seem to have been blessed with meekness more than others
- However, like most of these attributes, meekness is not static. There is room for growth.

C. Christ as the Superior Example

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; **4** He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. **5** After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

John 13:12-16 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? **13** Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. **14** If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. **16** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

- As I said in the beginning, some of these characteristics need examples to be best understood. If you ask me what meekness is, I would simply direct you here.
- Christ, God manifest in the flesh, assumes the role of servant and washes the feet of the disciples.

D. The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth

Psalms 37:29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

- This verse is a good example of what I believe was common in the everyday thinking of the Israelite.
- Since Abraham they had been hearing about a land that they would inherit.
- Canaan was just an earthly figure.
- Christ confirms that promise to this people with a familiar phrase
- The greek word used for "earth" is also translated many times as "land"
- This land of which Christ speaks is heaven: the true promised land. The enemies of God cannot approach the gates of that city. The King of that place rules without opposition and with perfect equity.

IV. The Cross

Christ was truly the embodiment of each of these Christian characteristics and all were clearly displayed through his trial and crucifixion.

1. Poor in Spirit

Philippians 2:7-8 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Those who Mourn

2. Mourning

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

3. Meekness

1 Peter 2:21-23 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: **22** Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: **23** Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

The sermon on the mount was designed to give Jesus' followers some instructions for how they should behave in this newly founded church kingdom and what they should anticipate in the days ahead. The sermon provided the standard and his life provided the example. Jesus was the perfect embodiment of each characteristic. Striving for this standard and following His example should be the goal of each Christian. It is a very high standard to meet, and in reality we will never quite get there but it is the pursuit of this high calling that refines us and brings us closer to Him until the day we get our turn to sit at His feet.