

Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit

Matthew 5:1-12 [NIV] *“Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying: **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**”*

The opening verses of **Matthew 5** contain some of the most beautiful words in the whole of the Christian Bible.

They are the introduction to the ‘*Sermon on the Mount*’. A passage of Scripture so challenging in its directness, so clear in its teaching and setting such high standards that it leaves many Christians feeling defeated and unworthy.

Yet that was **not** the intention of Jesus.

The key to the whole sermon is found in the first Beatitude ‘*Blessed are the poor in spirit*’.

A lifestyle described in the Beatitudes can only be achieved in the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is why Jesus places this Beatitude right at the beginning of His sermon.

Unfortunately, much modern teaching places the emphasis on **our** efforts to try and live like this.

We can’t!

God alone must receive the glory.

For only He can give us the power to reform.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The first step towards this reforming of our very nature is a total surrender to our Creator God.

The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*sōma*” referring to the complete instrument of life, the physical body, the mind or brain and the human spirit.

Why should we do this?

- a) Out of pure gratitude for what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, His great mercy.
- b) Once we have accepted God’s mercy, that is Christ’s spilt life blood as a substitute for our deserved death, we belong to Christ.

Acts 20:28 [NIV] *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the **church of God, which he bought with his own blood.**”*

We were purchased, as a slave is, by the blood of Christ. He owns us totally; body, mind and human spirit.

For this *“living sacrifice”* to be acceptable to God it has to be Holy.

How do we become Holy?

a) **1 John 1:8-9** [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confess we are sinners; do this in as much detail as we can.

b) Accept the promised purification by the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We then become a sacrifice without blemish and acceptable, pleasing to God but still **not** Holy.

One other transaction to take place; faith has to be involved, faith in what God has done for us through Christ’s sacrifice.

Such faith is then rewarded by God.

Romans 4:20-24 [NIV] *“Yet he [Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why ‘it was credited to him as righteousness.’ The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, **but also for us**, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

Just as Abraham’s faith in God’s promises caused some of God’s righteousness being credited to him, so our faith in Christ can bring the gift of some of Christ’s righteousness to us.

Only this credited righteousness can make us Holy, as it makes us an acceptable body where the Holy Spirit may dwell.

1 Corinthians 3:16 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and the God’s Spirit lives in you?”*

This refers to the Church as a whole and each individual member.

We all need a mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit in these last days.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“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. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ 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.”*

How then does the Holy Spirit renew our minds?

Just as we, when children, as a result of spending many hours each day with our parents, take for ourselves many of their characteristics. So we, if we spend time each day in the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, we will find we are taking on His characteristics, the fruits of His life.

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Philippians 4:13 [NIV] *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

Mountainous tasks are accomplished when a person and God confront the mountain together.