

“Our culture says that pride and selfishness lead to happiness. But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that happiness is a result of humility.

I. Happy Are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven

- A. Those Who Are Poor in Spirit Will Recognize That They Are Out of Step with the World
- B. Those Who Are Poor in Spirit Will Realize Their Emptiness Apart from God
- C. Those Who Are Poor in Spirit Will Reach Out to Others with a Spirit of Love and Cooperation
- D. Those Who Are Poor in Spirit Will Respond to Life with a Spirit of Gratitude
- E. Those Who Are Poor in Spirit Will Reach Their Highest Joy in Serving”¹

Blessed = happy ie internal joy – not based on circumstances – blessed unaffected by the circumstances in the world

William Barclay = The world can win its joys, and the world can equally well lose its joys. A change in fortune, a collapse in health, the failure of a plan, the disappointment of an ambition, even a change in the weather, can take away the fickle joy the world can give. But the Christian has the serene and untouchable joy which comes from walking forever in the company and in the presence of Jesus Christ. The greatness of the beatitudes is that they are not wistful glimpses of some future beauty; they are not even golden promises of some glory; they are triumphant shouts of bliss for a permanent joy that nothing in the world can ever take away.

Blessedness – cannot be compared to the modern idea of happiness.

Happy as defined in early-nineteenth century edition of Webster’s Dictionary = The pleasurable sensations derived from the gratification of sensual appetites render a person temporarily happy; but he only can be esteemed really and permanently happy, who enjoys peace of mind in the favor of God.

Blessing = from God, not human efforts; a life lived under God’s approval. Blessing isn’t earned but bestowed.

¹Jeremiah, D. (1996). *How to be happy according to Jesus : Study guide* (Page 21). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Poverty of Spirit is not giving away all wealth and treasure of this life – you can strip yourself of all belongings, give everything to the poor, sacrifice yourself for others, and still be far from true poverty of spirit. It's not about what you have or don't have materially or what you do or don't do for others. It's not about acting humble. We can be proud of our humility.

Poverty of Spirit = the basis for every beatitude that follows

Poor in Spirit – fundamental characteristic of a Christian (can't be filled unless we are empty) -- In essence, empty yourself of self. Humble.

Complete and total dependence on God's gracious and powerful love is the source of all human empowerment.

“When He speaks of the “poor in spirit,” Jesus is not talking about material poverty but about spiritual pride. He is speaking of the inward attitude of the heart. With nowhere else to turn, the desperate may turn to Jesus, the only One who can offer the deliverance they seek. The poor in spirit have the advantage of being able to cry out to God for help.

A person who is poor in spirit goes begging on the inside. His heart is destitute, and he is begging for God to get to the bottom of his problem. When a person comes to this sense of emptiness, he is on the threshold of happiness through the kingdom of God. Psalm 34:18 says, “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” David noted that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). God identifies with those who beg on the inside.”²

Empty, poor, helpless

Humble and contrite spirit

²Jeremiah, D. (1996). *How to be happy according to Jesus : Study guide* (Page 23). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

“In our culture, we have a tendency to think that when we finally have enough money to do anything we want, we’ll be happy. But that’s not where happiness is found. J.B. Phillips has said that our modern world has created its own beatitudes:

Happy are the pushers, for they get on in the world.
Happy are the hard-boiled, for they never let life hurt them.
Happy are they who complain, for they get their own way in the end.
Happy are the slave-drivers, for they get results.
Happy are the knowledgeable, for they know their way around.
Happy are the troublemakers, for they make people take notice of them.

The person who is poor in spirit is simply out of touch with the ways of the world. There is a tension between walking Christ’s way and walking in the way of the world.³

Is God really, effectively, Lord of my life? In this place, at this moment? In this job or this relationship?

Absolute dependence upon the Savior --- sense of need – humble and contrite heart

The poor are those who know their need before God.

Contrary to self-reliance

Today’s message: You can achieve all your goals. You can be whoever you want to be.

Drive this car because it’s what successful people drive. Wear these shoes because it’s

what basketball stars wear. The Little Engine that Could (I think I can, I think I can).

Nike (Just do it). Think positively, depend on ourselves, make our own way, take charge

of our own destinies. You can do it!

The gospel of Jesus – No you can’t. Only God can.

Phil 2:67 --- divine poverty, humility, emptied, servant

Willing surrender of our will to God’s will

³Jeremiah, D. (1996). *How to be happy according to Jesus : Study guide* (Page 24). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Coming to God, offering my weakness in hope and trust, asking for strength and grace needed for each day

Embrace our essential dependence on God

Spiritual poverty = discovering that you cannot do what God wants simply by depending on your own intelligence, skill, energy or self-control

God transforms our poverty into rich experiences of grace

God's fullness flowing through our emptiness

In our weakness, God's power is revealed

Recognize everything we have is from God; consider others better than yourself; consider self a trustee of God for others

Result = Kingdom of Heaven = the rule of Christ in your life here and now. Grace in your life now. Fulfillment of every need of our heart.