

Week 2: Poor in Spirit

Jesus is not describing eight different persons but is describing eight different qualities of the same person.

– Darrell Johnson

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

Theme: Those who humbly realize they have nothing to offer God discover God is offering them his eternal kingdom.

INTRODUCTION:

Icebreaker: What ice cream flavor makes you the most happy?

Opening Prayer: Have a member of the group offer a prayer to start the meeting.

Example Prayer: *Heavenly Father, teach us what it means to be poor in spirit, so that we can lead others into your kingdom of heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.*

LESSON BEGINS

“We’re all hardwired to search for happiness, but at some point in our lives, we realize no matter how hard and how long we work, we’ll never achieve lasting happiness. The kind of happiness we long for isn’t about perpetually feeling good or good things consistently happening to us. The happiness we’re hardwired for can only be found in Jesus.” – Derwin Gray

- Why do we need to relearn how to be happy?
- How might our study through the beatitudes help us gain a deeper and richer understanding of our Happiness?

As you read the Beatitudes, remember these “blessed” statements are how Jesus is shifting our perception of happiness, to reflect God’s desire for our lives.

BEATITUDE MEDITATION

Read Matthew 5:1-12 as a group. Go around in a circle and each group member reads one paragraph.

When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Then he began to teach them, saying:

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

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

Blessed are the humble, 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 the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

- How do these beatitudes broaden your understanding of happiness and God’s desire for your life?

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

“The word Jesus uses for ‘poor’ does not refer to those who have the bare essentials, but to those who have absolutely nothing and know it. Jesus is saying, ‘blessed are the destitute in spirit, the beggars.’ Beggars come with empty hands and empty pockets; they have nothing to offer in return. The poor in spirit are those who know they have nothing to offer in which to get the kingdom of God. The poor and spirit are those who come totally at the mercy of the Kingdom Giver.” – Darrell Johnson

- According to Darrell Johnson, what does it mean to be poor?
- How is that different than your understanding of poor?
- Why does God consider the poor to be blessed?

Why are the poor congratulated? Because of their resilient attitude. The poor know they need help-the poor know they need God. Therefore, they live dependent on God. The poor have only one hope; their whole existence hangs on God and God alone. – Darrell Johnson

WEEK 2 SERMON DISCUSSION:

Sermon Discussion Questions:

This week the pastor discussed Matthew 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

- What did the pastor say it meant to be “poor in spirit?”
- What did the pastor say it meant that “the kingdom of heaven is theirs?”
- How did the message change or enhance your understanding of this beatitude?
- Did the pastor say anything that was particularly meaningful or encouraging?
- How were you encouraged to apply this beatitude in your daily life or spiritual journey?
- Were there any questions or concerns that you had from the message?

“Being poor in spirit means you see your spiritual bankruptcy so that you can make room for the treasures of Christ.” - Derwin Gray

THE GOOD LIFE VIDEO WEEK 2 (with Derwin Gray)

As you watch the video, ask yourself, “How has this week’s teaching changed your understanding on what it means to be ‘poor in spirit’?”

Watch The Good Life video 2:

Videos can be accessed at www.barmillscommunitychurch.org/goodlifevideos. This is a hidden page, please do not share it with others.

Discuss:

- Share a time when you first realized your spiritual poverty. How did that realization help you see life differently?
- Why is becoming poor in spirit unnatural for us?

“The problem with pride is that even our good actions are tainted by our self righteousness.” - Derwin Gray

- How does pride blind us to our need for grace?
- Share a time when your pride blinded you to God’s grace.
- What are some ways that God is extending his grace for you right now?

- How does reflecting upon that grace make you feel toward God?

“Being poor in spirit means we’re humble enough to receive the unsearchable riches of Christ. Being poor in spirit means you see and accept your spiritual bankruptcy so you can make room for Christ treasures. We can’t be poor in spirit when we’re seeking to rule ourselves. We can’t live the good life when we’re wrapped up in our sinfulness.” – Derwin Gray

- How does Derwin Gray define being poor in Spirit?
- How does our poverty make room for God’s riches?
- How does our sinfulness and selfishness get in the way of being truly blessed and happy?
- How has this week’s teaching change your understanding on what it means to be ‘poor in spirit’?

“We can look to Jesus as the ultimate example of happiness because happiness is found in becoming a person who projects character of Jesus into the world. The deeper we immerse ourselves in Jesus and His kingdom, the more He sculpts us into his image and the happier we become. True happiness comes from becoming more like Jesus.” – Derwin Gray

- What keeps us from being truly happy/blessed?
- How can we learn to be truly happy/blessed?
- How can the small group help each other become more like Jesus, thus truly happy/blessed?

“Every time we are ‘poor in spirit,’ Jesus says to us, ‘yours is the kingdom!’ Yours! All of it! The Kingdom! Everything God’s glorious New World Order entails is all yours: forgiveness of sin, deep cleansing, freedom, freshness, wisdom, power, truth, hope, light, holiness, community, fullness, gift of the spirit, creativity, all yours!” – Darrell Johnson

- What is the blessing that comes from being poor in spirit?
- What does it mean that ‘yours is the kingdom?’
- What are the blessings of having access to God’s kingdom?
- How does having access to God’s eternal kingdom blessings in your life encourage you to be poor in spirit.?

WEEK 2 WRAP UP:

Read Matthew 5:3-11 Out loud together as a group.

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

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

Blessed are the humble, 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 the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Closing Prayer: How can the group pray for you and others to have a “blessed” (*makarios*) week?

Have a group member close in prayer or provide an opportunity for all members to pray for each other.

For additional insight on being poor in spirit, read the following.

- Chapter 2, ‘Happy are the Beggars’ in *The Good Life*, by Derwin Gray
- Chapter 2, ‘Oh, You Fortunate Pauper’ in *The Beatitudes* by Darrell Johnson