

Beatitudes Week 1 Notes

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

-Matthew 5:3

Who are the poor? The poor are those who lack material possessions, earthly wealth, comforts and luxuries of this world. They live without the security of giant savings accounts and investment portfolios, without large homes full of giant rooms and expensive toys, without fancy cars that build pride or ego, without extensive vacations.

What’s the result? The poor don’t stake their lives down to this world and this life. They don’t turn their heads and eyes down (away from heaven) and put all of their attention, focus, desire and hope on the temporary comforts and pleasures of this world and life. In fact, they don’t want to because they have an infinitely greater pleasure and comfort in God Himself, in their King Jesus, and in their anticipation of heaven’s JOY! They would sacrifice such wonderful, fulfilling pleasure and comfort for anything this world can offer.

Woe to the rich, however, for they seek and find all the pleasure and comfort they could want in these temporary things that will burn, and they leave no room in their hearts to hope, to depend, or to delight in God Himself, for they have gorged themselves on stuff, on things, and on the idols they have made out of the generous gifts of God.

The Poor in Spirit are those who lack any sense of self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, spiritual independence, and arrogant focus on their own spiritual merit. Whether they have built a large bank account filled with good deeds and righteous works in the eyes of men, or whether they have struggled to live faithfully by God’s law of love, the poor in spirit do not set much value or credit in their fleshly, natural works as though they can present any wealth of worth to Him based on their own abilities and means.

The spiritually poor, on the other hand, do have a pure, genuine, child-like trust and dependence upon God, their Father, and they understand that any and all spiritual strength, power and merit in their lives originate from Him. And so they daily seek Him out and humbly ask Him for grace to walk with Him, serve Him, and to live through them by the Holy Spirit. They joyfully and rightfully credit all natural goodness, love, holiness and power to God, while still acknowledging their personal responsibility to Him. As a result, they walk with a great humility and confidence before God and the world because they understand how weak they are yet how powerful He is, and so they can live boldly, sacrificially, and authentically in a broken and hurting world.

Questions

**What does God say about who He favors in Isaiah 57:15 and 66:1-2?
How does He bless them?**

Can you think of individuals in Scripture who demonstrated this quality of character—being poor in spirit? How about individuals who demonstrated the opposite? Read Luke 18:9-17 for a clear contrast.

Do you possess the quality of being poor in spirit? Do you understand what this means and looks like? Why or why not?

Can our possessions and wealth ever truly enhance who we are as people? Why or why not? Read Luke 12:13-34 (esp v.15) for perspective

“For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”—This bookends the 8 beatitudes in explaining the reward of truly righteous character and behavior. Perhaps this indicates a general reward of having each of these aspects of righteous character? It may mean that we get to enjoy the fulfilling experience of Jesus’ present Kingdom rule in our hearts. It is the immediate enjoyment of our Kingdom inheritance, which we can enjoy in part now, and which we will enjoy fully when Jesus invites us into His glorious physical Kingdom of Heaven when we die or He returns (Matthew 25:34)

Journal your thoughts about being poor in spirit and the promise of inheriting God’s Kingdom.