

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE

Poor and Happy?

TEXT: Mt. 5:1-12

INTRODUCTION: I loved reading through the Bible together as a congregation, and I found it to be both challenging and rewarding to preach from some portion of the text we read during the week each Sunday morning for the past year. However, I have to admit that I often felt a little bit like I was trying to get a drink from a fire hydrant, and you probably felt that way also as I pointed the rushing stream of water your direction by way of my sermon.

So, for a while at least, we are going to slow down; and I am going to try to lead us to sip rather than gulp. This next series that I am going to preach to you comes from only 12 verses in the Gospel of Matthew, twelve verses that have collectively been called "The Beatitudes."

However, let me warn you. To say we will sip rather than gulp does not mean there is less here for us to bring into our souls than when we are dealing with broad passages of Scripture. It just means that we will partake of the nourishment offered in smaller bites so that we can chew it more thoroughly and savor it more completely.

The water that flows in this portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and particularly this portion of it flows exceedingly deep. It will require our longest ropes to reach it, and pulling it to the surface may at times test our strength of mind and heart. But having already drunk from this deep running stream, I can tell you, "This water is good! It is refreshing beyond description. If you will labor with me to bring it to the place where you can drink it in, even in small sips, you will find it to be a holy elixir that will invigorate you at the depths of your spirit and can lead you into a different kind of life."

Stand with me as we taste our first sip from this deep well by the reading of these profound words of our Lord.

Mt. 5:1-12 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then 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 those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.

- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Nine times concerning eight pronouncements, **Jesus says, "Blessed are ..."**

This is no mere poetic convention.

The Greek word is *Marikoi* – basic meaning is happiness.

But its usage in the Greek world was not of common, ordinary, temporary kind of happiness.

Some happiness is exceedingly temporary:

As the patient awoke from anesthesia, he found his surgeon standing by his bedside. "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we did not need to amputate your right arm after all. The trouble giving you the pain in your back was in your left arm."

The patient groggily responded, "Well that is good news. Being right handed, I can certainly function better without my left arm than without my right one."
The surgeon responded, "The bad news is that we did not discover that the left arm was the source of the problem until we had already removed your right one."

Well much happiness is like that:

Happy at the office one day, not the next.

Happy at home one hour, not the next.

Happy on the golf course one moment, not the next.

But that is not the kind of happiness described by the word here.

- This word was used by the heathen to describe the happiness of the gods.
- Later used to describe the happiness of people who had gone to heaven.
- It describes a happiness that penetrates to the inside that is deeper, stronger, more permanent, than happiness generated by favorable circumstances.

- Jesus was describing what it is like when you get to the abundant life, when the Lord is showing Himself strong regularly in your life.

Folks, These words of Jesus constitute a marvelous promise of God, that we can have that kind of transcendent happiness now, in this life. These beatitudes tell us 8 ways to get it.

This morning we look at the first.

We could entitle these beatitudes several ways.

- **The 8 characteristics of the abundant life**
- **The 8 qualities of Jesus' character**
- **The 8 ingredients of abiding happiness**

Now let us consider the first: **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Let us think about **3 questions:**

I. WHAT IS THE SPIRIT?

A. Not

1. Holy Spirit
2. Spiritual life

We certainly do not want to be poor in these.

B. The spirit is one of the 3 parts of man.

Man is triune – Body, Soul, Spirit Paul said,

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ... may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Body – physical
2. Soul – mind, will, emotions
3. Spirit – the deepest part of man. The part that is aware of God. The part that is sensitive to God.

C. It is “in the spirit” that transcendent happiness begins. (It has physical and mental effects, but it must begin in the spirit.)

The reason we often meet defeat in living the Christian life is that we battle with body and mind rather than with the spirit.

Jesus tells us here that **having the right condition of the spirit in a person is an essential ingredient to having pervading happiness.**

II. WHO ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT?

- A. Poor – **PTOKOS** – used extensively of the financially impoverished but root means – “**to bow down timidly**” It describes a poverty “which forces one to seek the undeserved help of others”

One who is “poor” has “nothing of his own to offer.”

- B. Poor in spirit
1. Does not mean one without a spirit, but one whose spirit bows down timidly. One whose spirit has nothing of its own but seeks the aid of another.
 2. Does this bring another word we hear about and sing about often to mind? “grace”
 - a. Unmerited, undeserved favor
 - b. Freely given desire and power to do God’s will
 3. Put those together

One who is poor in spirit

- **has in his spirit the attitude and condition to receive God’s grace.**
- **realizes his own destitution and humbly bows before the Lord to receive His unmerited favor in the form of the desire and power to do God’s will.**

What key word describes this quality?

Read and listen to each of these verses.

2 Chr. 7:14 if My people who are called by My name will **humble** themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Prov. 15:33, 22:4 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom, And before honor *is* **humility**. By **humility** and the fear of the LORD Are riches and honor and life.

1 Pet. 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with **humility**, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the **humble**.”

What is the key word that describes being poor in spirit?

III. WHAT IS THE PROMISE?

The Kingdom of Heaven

- A. One must do this to enter the Kingdom of Heaven in the future.
- Mt. 18:3-4 ³ and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.
⁴ Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Being convicted of our sin, we become aware of our insufficiency.
Being convicted of the righteousness of Christ, we believe in His sufficiency and trust Him.

- B.** The Kingdom of Heaven is also now. The Rule of the Lord is in hearts and lives.
Jesus can only be on the throne where self is off the throne.

The beginning of abiding happiness, the road to abundant life, the character of Jesus **is to be poor in spirit, a spirit bowed down before the Lord Jesus Christ.**

CONCLUSION: Some of you are thinking right now, "You know, Bro. Mike, that sounds real good. And I would love to have an abiding, pervading happiness in my life that sticks around even when things are really bad, but I don't really believe that's going to happen with me.

- See, I'm not super Christian.
- I don't ever experience the miracle kind of stuff.
- I don't doubt that God is real and He does what you're talking about, but
- I do doubt that God is going to do that with me.

Friend, if that is even close to what you are thinking, you need to listen carefully to the word God sent to King Asa.

King Asa

- Was a good king. Loved the Lord.
- Had at one time even experienced a miracle in his life. God had given Asa's 300,000 man army victory over an army with a million soldiers and 300 iron chariots. Asa's army was out numbered more than 3 to 1 and seriously under equipped.
- Asa cried out to God
2 Chronicles 14:11 And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!"
- God struck the Ethiopians and gave Asa victory.
- But many years past. The memory dimmed.
- Another crisis came and instead of calling upon the Lord, Asa struck a treaty with another nation that was an enemy of God. Now, the treaty worked, and Asa got out of the scrape he was in.
- But then through the prophet, God sent him a message.
- The prophet said, Asa, if you had humbly called on God like you did years ago, God would have solved the problem and delivered this other nation into your hands as well.
- So, Asa, you gave up God's best.

- And then he gave the explanation, and this is what I want you to hear. Because this word is not just for Asa, but it is for me, and it is for you!
- It is for everyone of you that sometimes thinks, “Well these neat, outstanding, things the Lord does just never happen in my life!”

Listen!

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those whose heart is loyal to Him. ...*”

Listen friend, God does not search out the great to make them greater or the strong to make them stronger.

God searches for an Abraham who cannot have children but whom God can make the father of a people whose numbers are like the stars of the heaven, if his heart will be loyal to the Lord.

The eyes of the Lord seek out a scardy-cat Gideon who will believe Him and trust Him and then delivers a whole Midianite army into his hand with clay pots, torches, and trumpets.

God is ever looking for a David that’s just a kid doing the job nobody else in the family is willing to do while his brothers are the bold, good looking, noble soldiers of the king, because David has a heart that is after God’s own heart.

You think God won’t do this kind of stuff like Jesus is talking about in your life? I’m telling you that you are just what God is looking for.

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.*”

Some need to bow the spirit to Christ the first time.
Some have one time bowed the spirit but need to bow again.