

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

# Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

God in NOT far  
Stay in your Car

## Sermon on The Mount - 04 Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:17-49 Blessed Are The Poor in Spirit February 21, 2021 Annual Meeting

- 1 🎵 **Doxology** [DH 1981]
- 2 🎵 In My Heart There Rings A Melody 502
- 3 🎵 All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name 16
- 4 🎵 On Jordan's Stormy Banks 777
- 5 🎵 Rise up O Church of God 433
- 6 🎵 Revive Us Again 434
- 7 🎵 **Family of God** [DH 2357]

**Prelude**

**Prayer**

**Announcements**

- 1 🎵 **Doxology**

**Ben Grimm, Chris Ortiz, Chrisa Ortiz - Special Music**

- 2 🎵 In My Heart There Rings A Melody 502
- 3 🎵 All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name 16

**Take Time to Pray**

**Communion**

## **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (CEV)**

**23** I have already told you what the Lord Jesus did on the night he was betrayed. And it came from the Lord himself. He took some bread in his hands. **24** Then after he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this and remember me."

**25** After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine in his hands and said, "This is my blood, and with it God makes his new agreement with you. Drink this and remember me." **26** The Lord meant that when you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you tell about his death until he comes.

4.🎵 On Jordan's Stormy Banks 777

5.🎵 Rise up O Church of God 433

## **Homily**

6.🎵 Revive Us Again 434

**Drive-In Annual Meeting =**

*See your handouts*

## **Benediction**

**Numbers 6:24-26 (NASB)**

**24** The LORD bless you, and keep you; **25** The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; **26** The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.

7.🎵 Family of God

## **Postlude**

**Matthew 5:3 (NASB)**

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

**Matthew 5:3 (CEV)**

<sup>3</sup> God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

**Matthew 5:3 (GW)**

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are those who recognize they are spiritually helpless. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

**Matthew 5:3 (HCSB)**

<sup>3</sup> “The poor in spirit are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

**Matthew 5:3 (NCV)**

<sup>3</sup> “Those people who know they have great spiritual needs are happy, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

**Matthew 5:3 (TLB)**

<sup>3</sup> "Humble men are very fortunate! for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them.

**Matthew 5:3 (MSG)**

<sup>3</sup> "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

We come now to a consideration of the first of the Beatitudes, **Matthew 5:3 (GW)**

<sup>3</sup> **“Blessed are those who recognize they are spiritually helpless. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.**

It is not surprising that this is the first, because it is obviously the key to all that follows.

There is, beyond any question, a very definite order in these Beatitudes.

Our Lord does not place them in their respective positions haphazardly or accidentally.

There is a spiritually logical sequence to be found in the

Beatitudes.

## I. The Foundation of The Beatitudes

This, of necessity, is the one which must come at the beginning for the good reason that there is no entry into the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, apart from it.

There is no-one in the kingdom of God who is not *poor in spirit*. It is the fundamental characteristic of the Christian and of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and all the other characteristics are in a sense the result of this one.

We can see that it really means an emptying, while the others are a manifestation of a fullness.

We cannot be filled until we are first empty.

You cannot fill with new wine a vessel which is partly filled already with old wine, until the old wine has been poured out.

**Mark 2:22 (NASB)**

**22 "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins *as well*; but *one puts* new wine into fresh wineskins."**

This, then, is one of those statements which remind us that there has to be a kind of emptying before there can be a filling.

There are always these two sides to the gospel; there is a pulling down and a raising up.

You remember

**Luke 2:27-29 (CEV)**

**27 When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to do what the Law of Moses says should be done for a new baby, the Spirit told Simeon to go into the temple.**

**28 Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God, 29 "Lord, I am your servant, and now I can die in peace, because you have kept your promise to me.**

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**29 "Lord, I am your servant, and now I can die in peace, because you have kept your promise to me.**

The fall comes before the rising again.

Those who follow the Twelve Step programs, like AA, or NA have the principal that an addict will not change until he or she hits bottom.

It is an essential part of the gospel that conviction must always precede conversion; the gospel of Christ condemns before it releases.

Now that is obviously something which is fundamental.

There is no more perfect statement of the doctrine of justification by faith only than this Beatitude: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs (and theirs only) is the kingdom of heaven.'

This, then, is the foundation of everything else.

But not only that.

It is ...

## **II. The Interrogation of our Character**

It is obviously, therefore, a very searching test for every

one of us, not only as we face ourselves, but especially as we come to face the whole message of the Sermon on the Mount.

There are still those like Martin Luther maintain it is impossible for any one to keep the SOM.

There are still those who read the Sermon on the Mount and come to the conclusion this is something that you and I can do ourselves, something that you and I can carry out.

And there are those who hold the dangerous view that the SOM is a new version of the law.

They think of the Sermon as something that can be applied.

You have to preach it and then men and women immediately put it into practice.

But this view is not only dangerous, it is an utter denial of the Sermon itself, which starts with this fundamental proposition about being 'poor in spirit'.

Jesus in the SOM comes to us and says, 'There is the mountain that you have to scale, the heights you have to climb; and the first thing you must realize, as you look at that mountain which you are told you must ascend, is that you cannot do it, that you are utterly incapable in and of yourself, and that any attempt to do it in your own strength is proof positive that you have not understood it.'

The SOM condemns at the very outset the view which regards it as a program for mankind to put into operation immediately.

### **A Very False View of the SOM**

There is one matter concerning the rendering of this verse which has to be considered.

There are those who tell us that it should read **Blessed in spirit are the poor.**

They find justification of this false view from the parallel passage in

**Luke 6:20 (NASB)**

**20** And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He *began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

Those who think of it this way regard it as a commendation of poverty.

But surely that must be entirely wrong.

The Bible nowhere teaches that poverty as such is a good thing.

The poor person is no nearer to the kingdom of heaven than the rich man, speaking of them as natural men and women.

There is no merit or advantage in being poor.

Poverty does not guarantee spirituality.

Clearly, therefore, the passage cannot mean that.

You have to take the whole section of Luke 6:20-39 in context.

When you do, you will see that our Lord was speaking of 'poor' as poor in the sense that you do not rely upon riches.

That is the thing that is condemned, this reliance on riches as such.

And obviously there are many poor people who long for riches exactly as many rich people do.

This is the motivation for such a profound misunderstanding of the Gospel that is promogated by the health and wealth preachers

These poor people who long for riches say, 'If only I had so-and-so', and they are jealous of those who have it.

Now if they are in that condition they are not blessed.

So it cannot be poverty as such.

I have had to emphasize this point because most of the Roman Catholic commentators and their imitators in Anglicanism are very fond of interpreting this statement in that sense.

They regard it as scriptural authority for the assumption of voluntary poverty.

Their patron saint is Francis of Assisi and they regard him and his type as those who alone conform to the statement of this Beatitude.

They say that it refers to those who have deliberately made themselves poor, and turned their backs upon wealth.

Where does this idea come from that God celebrates people being poor financially?

It is the characteristic 'Catholic' interpretation of this particular statement.

What our Lord is concerned about here is the spirit; it is poverty *of spirit*, it is not about not having money in the bank!

It is ultimately a person's attitude towards him or her self.

That is the thing that matters, not whether they are wealthy or poor.

Now here we have a perfect illustration of one of those general principles that these Beatitudes indicate more clearly than anything else in Scripture the utter and essential difference between the natural person of the world and the Christian.

### III. The Kingdom of this World had become the Kingdom of God

We know that there is a clear-cut division between these two kingdoms — the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world, the Christian and the worldly — a complete, absolute distinction and division.

And there is perhaps no statement that underlines and emphasizes that difference more than this ‘**Blessed are the poor in spirit.**’

This teaching of Jesus is something which is not admired by the world; it is despised by it.

You will never find a greater antithesis to the worldly spirit and outlook than that which you find in this verse.

What emphasis the world places on its belief in self-reliance, self-confidence and self-expression!

Look at what is being printed in magazines, and books.

If you want to get ahead in this world, it says, believe in yourself.

That idea is absolutely controlling the life of men and women at the present time.

Indeed I would say it is controlling the whole of life outside the Christian message.

What, for instance, is the essence of good salesmanship according to modern ideas?

It is giving the impression of confidence and assurance.

If you want to impress your customer that is the way you must do it.

The same idea is put into practice in every realm.

If you want to succeed in a profession, the great thing is to give the impression that you are a success, so you suggest that you are more successful than you actually are.

And people say, ‘That is the person to go to.’

That is the whole principle on which life is run at the present time—express yourself, believe in yourself, realize the powers that are innate in yourself and let the whole world see and know them.

Self-confidence, assurance, self-reliance.

And it is in terms of that fundamental belief that men and women think they can bring in the kingdom; it is the whole basis of the fatal assumption that by Acts of Congress alone you can produce a perfect society.

Everywhere we see displayed this tragic confidence in the power of education and knowledge as such to save men and women, to transform them and make them into decent human beings.

Now in this verse we are confronted by something which is in utter and absolute contrast to that, and it is tragic to see how people view this kind of statement.

Even those whom you might think to be deeply committed Christians have an aversion to this scripture.

They rebel at the hymns of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

Just one example will suffice.

Charles Wesley wrote a well know hymn that those who abhor the idea of poor in spirit heavily criticize.

It just doesn't match their ideas of success.

Wesley says:

Just and holy is Thy name,  
I am all unrighteousness;  
Vile and full of sin I am,  
Thou are full of truth and grace.

The modern world cries out and asks: ‘What person desiring a job would dream of going to an employer and

saying to him, “Vile and full of sin I am”? Ridiculous!’

You see what a complete misunderstanding of this first Beatitude that reveals.

We are not looking at men and women confronting one another, but we are looking at men and women face to face with God.

And if one feels anything in the presence of God save an utter poverty of spirit, it ultimately means that you have never faced Him.

That is the meaning of this Beatitude.

The Kingdom of this world seriously fails to appreciate what is regarded by the Bible as the greatest virtue of all, namely, **humility**.

There is a tendency to exalt a aggressiveness and self-assurance, and to justify a person’s puffing themselves up and magnifying their personality.

When Paul went to Corinth, he tells us,  
**1 Corinthians 2:3-4 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup> I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom,**

Paul may have been **in much trembling**, but his concern was the message of salvation he wanted to preach.

**1 Corinthians 1:22-23 (NASB)**

**<sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,**

He did not step onto the platform with confidence and assurance and ease, and give the impression of a great personality.

Rather, the people said of him, 'His appearance is weak and his speech contemptible.'

How far we tend to wander from the truth and the pattern of the Scriptures.

It's sad how the Church is allowing the world and its methods to influence and control its outlook and life.

To be 'poor in spirit' is not popular even in the Church. Christian people must rethink these matters.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

To be 'poor in spirit', does not mean that you are born like that.

I admit I am bothered by preachers who think they have to appear poor, and dress with blue jeans they have torn into shreds.

Being poor in spirit does not mean the preacher has to emulate the worldly who, even though they may be millionaires who dress like they don't have a dime.

Then again, to be 'poor in spirit' is not a matter of the suppression of personality.

There are those who would agree with all we have been saying but who would then interpret being 'poor in spirit' as urging the necessity for a person to repress their true personality.

Just take one example.

You will find that there is always this subtle temptation to think that the only person who is truly 'poor in spirit' is the person who makes a great sacrifice, or like the monks, retire out of life and its difficulties and responsibilities.

But that is not the biblical way.  
What, I ask again, is being poor in spirit.

I think the best way to answer that question is to put it in terms of Scripture.

Listen to what Isaiah says

**Isaiah 57:15 (NASB)**

**15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *on* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.**

That is the quality of being poor in spirit, and Scriptures give us a number of illustrations.

Think about Gideon, for instance, who, when the Lord sent an angel to him to tell him the great thing he was to do, said, ‘No, no, this is impossible; I belong to the lowest tribe and to the lowest family in the tribe.’

It was the spirit of Moses, who felt deeply unworthy of the task that was laid upon him and was conscious of his insufficiency and inadequacy.

You find it in David, when he said,

**2 Samuel 7:18 (NASB)**

**18 Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?**

You see it in the apostle Peter who was naturally aggressive, self-assertive, and self-confident like the typical modern man of the world, brim full of this confidence and believing in himself.

But look at him when he truly sees the Lord.

He says,

**Luke 5:7-8 (NASB)**

**7** so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. **8** But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

But observe that he never ceases to be a bold man; he does not become anxious and shy.

The essential personality remains; and yet he is 'poor in spirit' at the same time.

You see it in the apostle Paul.

Here was a man, again with great powers, and obviously, as a natural man, fully aware of them.

**Philippians 3:2-11 (NASB)**

**2** Beware of the evil workers ... **3** for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, **4** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: **5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. **7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss

of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,<sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,<sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;<sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

But in reading his Epistles you will find that the fight he had to wage to the end of his life was the fight against pride.

That is why he kept on using the word ‘boasting’.

Any person gifted with powers is generally aware of them; he knows he can do things, and Paul knew this.

But having once seen the risen Lord on the road to Damascus all, that became **loss**, as he says in Philipians.

It is clear that Paul felt insufficient because he was ‘poor in spirit’.

And, of course, the perfect example of being poor in spirit is our Lord Jesus Christ.

He became a weak human being, and He took upon Himself ‘the likeness of sinful flesh’.

Though He was equal with God He did not clutch at the prerogatives of His Godhead.

He decided that while He was here on earth He would live as a man, though He was still God.

And this was the result.

He said, ‘I can do nothing of myself.’

It is the God-Man speaking. ‘I can do nothing of myself.’

He said also,

**John 14:10 (NASB)**

**10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.**

Jesus is saying "I can do nothing, I am utterly dependent upon Him."

Then look at His prayer life.

It is as you watch Him praying, and realize the hours He spent in prayer, that you see His poverty of spirit and His reliance upon God.

That, then, is what is meant by being 'poor in spirit'.

It means a complete absence of pride, a complete absence of self-assurance and of self-reliance.

It means a consciousness that we are nothing in the presence of God.

It is nothing that we can produce.

It is nothing that we can do in ourselves.

It is just this tremendous awareness of our utter nothingness as we come face to face with God.

That is to be 'poor in spirit'.

If we are truly aware of our relationship to the Heavenly Father, and are seeing our Lord Jesus as a model, we realize as a Christian we don't have anything of which to boast.

We shall not believe in and rely upon our natural position in life, or any powers that may have been given to us.

We shall not rely upon money or any wealth we may have.

The thing about which we shall boast will not be the education we have received, or the particular school or

college to which we may have been.

No, all that is what Paul came to regard as ‘garbage’,  
**Philippians 3:7-8 (CEV)**

**7 But Christ has shown me that what I once thought was valuable is worthless. 8 Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage. All I want is Christ**

Paul came to see that his once exalted background was a hindrance to this greater thing because it tended to master and control him.

All the good works we have accomplished will be worth anything in the eyes of the Sovereign of the Universe.

We shall regard all that as Paul regarded it.

Garbage!

That is being poor in spirit.

When we come face to face with the risen Christ, as did the Apostle John on Patmos, our response will be the same  
**Revelation 1:17 (NASB)**

**17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man.**

I would like to sum up what we have just discussed in the very words of the Apostle Paul.

**Ephesians 3:14-19 (NASB)**

**14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be**

**able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

Now, let's ask ourselves a few questions:

Am I poor in spirit?

How do I really feel about myself as I think of myself in terms of God, and in the presence of God?

And as I live my life, what are the things I am saying, what are the things I am praying about, what are the things I like to think of with regard to myself?

What am I focusing on in my relationship to our Lord Jesus?

Louis Lavater wrote nearly a thousand hymns, and he puts it perfectly in the hymn **O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me**

1 O Jesus, Saviour, grow in me,  
and all things else recede:  
to you my heart would nearer be,  
from sin be daily freed.

2 Each day embrace my weakness, Lord,  
with your supporting might;  
and let my death be lost in life,  
my darkness in your light.

How does one therefore become 'poor in spirit'?

The way to become poor in spirit is to look at God.

And He gives us something of a autobiography in the book we call the Bible.

Read this Book about Him, read what He expects from us, contemplate standing before Him.

Look at Him; and the more we look at Him, the more

hopeless shall we feel about our own competence and the more shall we become 'poor in spirit'.

Look at Him, keep looking at Him.

Then you say to Him,

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to thee for dress,  
Helpless, look to thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.  
When I draw this fleeting breath,  
When mine eyelids close in death,  
When I soar to worlds unknown,  
See thee on thy judgment throne,  
Let me hide myself in thee.

## Prayer and Invitation

6.🎵 Revive Us Again 434

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