

## **Beatitude 02- Poor in Spirit**

**Matthew 5:3**, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew chapter 5 the most profound and at the same time paradoxical teaching on true happiness.

It is foundational to all His teaching, and entrance into His kingdom. God wants us happy.

**Psalm 144:15**, *Happy are the people who are in such a state; Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!*

God wants our lives filled with joy.

God wants to bless us.

God wants us to experience bliss, a deep inner happiness, not produced and not affected by emotion or by changing circumstance.

The character of a believer must be blessedness, happiness, and joy. This is what His kingdom promises us!

Jesus was talking primarily to His disciples. Apart from His disciples the multitude could hear what He was saying.

The Beatitudes indicate to us that it really is opposite what the world would assume.

- Blessed are the poor; the world would say blessed are the rich.
- Blessed are those who mourn; the world would say blessed are those who laugh.
- Blessed are the gentle or the meek; the world would say blessed are the proud and the confident.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst; the world would say blessed are those who do not hunger and do not thirst because they have everything.

We get shaped by the world, even those of us who are in the kingdom, and our attitudes become shaped by the world.

The world's media (newspapers, books, magazines, television, radio, music, movies, you name it) literally, relentlessly sells us the world's perspective and in the end corrupts our otherwise pure thinking.

There were people in Israel, including the disciples, who sought to truly understand God and the kingdom, but their thinking was also corrupted by the reigning philosophy of their day, which was perpetrated by religious leaders.

Jesus had to clear away all the lies and all the error and get right back to the core of true happiness.

True happiness is found only by entrance into His kingdom.

So, we have here not only teaching about how to be happy but teaching about how to enter the kingdom because they are one and the same.

Entering the kingdom is where happiness is found.

Outside the kingdom, there is no lasting happiness.

The word Blessing in Greek is **makarios**. Blessedness is a word pronounced on people as recipients of all the goodness of God, which produces a condition of happiness.

The word “blessing” has an opposite; cursedness in Greek **ouai**, which is “woe” in English.

Woe is a truth pronounced on people.

The kingdom is a place for God to pour out blessing.

**Ephesians 1:3**, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

When we came into the kingdom, we began to be blessed. In Ephesians chapter 2, blessing will go on forever. God will show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

He started blessing us the day we entered the kingdom.

He started providing all the things to make us truly happy.

Happiness will go on forever in this life and to eternity.

God offers us salvation to bring to us true happiness, contentment, bliss, joy, gladness. The path or the pattern to receive that blessing and to enter the kingdom is outlined for us in these incredible Beatitudes.

It starts with being poor in spirit, mourning, and being meek and hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

It manifests itself in an attitude of mercy, purity, and peace-making, and it causes the world to react to us with reviling and persecution and false accusation. But in the end, it transforms us (in verse 13) into salt and (verse 14 through 16) into light. This is the flow of the Beatitudes.

- The first step in entering the kingdom and to happiness, is being poor in spirit, realizing your spiritual poverty.
- The second one is mourning over it.
- The third one is humbly falling down before the glory of God in your condition.
- The fourth one is then pleading for a righteousness which you do not have and hunger for.
- That begins then to manifest itself in an attitude of mercy toward others.
- It leads you to pursuit of purity.
- You become the peace-making in your own life.
- This creates hostility in the world.
- That is the flow of the Beatitudes.

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

### **1. Why does Christ begin with this?**

This is the first recorded sermon of Jesus. This is how He inaugurates His unfolding teaching throughout the New Testament.

It is the fundamental characteristic of the Christian.

It is the fundamental characteristic of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

All other characteristics flow from this one.

This is where happiness begins. This is where entrance into the kingdom begins.

Jesus begins by saying there is a mountain you must climb up.

But the first thing you must realize is that you are outside the kingdom of God and you cannot get there on your own.

The mountain is too high, the heights are too great, you cannot do it.

You must start with that realization. You cannot enter His kingdom, you cannot be happy until you realize your bankruptcy, your poverty.

Jews who are very proud about their,

- circumcision,
- identification with the covenant people Israel,
- religious achievements,
- ceremonial accomplishments,
- the sacrifices they had offered to God,
- their zeal for the law,

- self-righteousness.

They were self-confident.

Jesus tells them that if you want to enter the kingdom and find true happiness then you must recognize that you have absolutely nothing, you are bankrupt.

That is where it all begins.

Poverty of spirit is the foundation of all other graces.

Poverty of spirit is where everything starts.

If a person is not poor in spirit, that person is not capable of happiness and that person cannot enter the kingdom.

As long as you are holding on to your own self-righteousness, accomplishments, and own morality.

Happiness is only for those who are unworthy.

**Isaiah 61:1**, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

Everything begins with broken heartedness.

Until someone is poor in spirit, Christ is never seen for what He really is. He is never precious. Before you can see how bankrupt you are, you cannot understand how valuable Christ is.

You can never see His matchless worth until you understand the full extent of your own worthlessness.

He who sees himself clothed in filthy rags can appreciate the robe of righteousness that Christ brings.

- Until you are poor, you cannot be rich.
- Until you are a fool, you cannot become wise.
- Until you lose your life, you cannot save it.

Jesus often said such paradoxical things.

Inevitably what prevents people from entering into the kingdom is pride.

From the very start, pride must be broken.

**Proverbs 16:5**, *Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished.*

Pride does not necessarily mean that you parade your money.

Pride does not necessarily mean you parade your goods and your possessions, et cetera.

Pride means you put confidence in your personal achievement, personal morality, personal religion, and personal goodness.

You are unwilling to acknowledge the fact that the best that you can do is filthy rags. Then the only way to come into God's kingdom is to confess your own unworthiness. Your own utter inability to please God and incapacity to meet God's standard.

Apostle Paul is a fine example for us to understand this.

**Philippians 3:4-9**, *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup>circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

*<sup>7</sup>But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup>Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;*

At first glance Paul looked like a paragon of religious virtue.

Paul says it was all manure!

The church at Laodicea was deceived.

**Revelation 3:17**, *Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

So, Jesus begins here because everything begins here. You will never enter the kingdom. You will never experience true happiness until there is a deep recognition of spiritual bankruptcy.

**Isaiah 64:6**, *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

Philippians 3 - "is manure."

Your morality is worthless. It all begins there.

This is where Jesus begins!

The only people who experience God's blessing are people who come to a point of recognition of utter spiritual bankruptcy.

## 2. What kind of poverty?

Jesus is not talking about material poverty.

There are a lot of people who want to sort of make the Sermon on the Mount into a nice little warm and fuzzy ethical standard and they want to quote it, "Blessed are the poor."

There are plenty of people who think that poverty, the absence of material possessions and absence of money - is somehow in itself a virtue.

That is not what our Lord is talking about. If it was, then it would be unchristian to relieve somebody's burden, wouldn't it?

It would be unchristian to give money to the poor.

The Bible repeatedly tells us to give money to the poor and meet the needs of those who are without. If somehow poverty was a virtue, we would be taking them from virtue to vice.

We would be better off to leave the starving people starving and let the war-ravaged refugees continue in their abject distress, leave the orphans alone, shut all the hospitals, end all the mission efforts, if spiritual blessedness somehow were associated with material poverty but it is not.

Today the sort of new gospel is that spiritual blessing is associated with wealth. The wealthier you are today, the more evidence (supposedly) you give of having entered into the prosperity of the gospel.

We are not talking about material things at all here. Being poor or being rich has nothing to do with it. There were many poor people and still are who come into the kingdom.

There are a few rich, not many but a few. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were wealthy men, and Philemon.

**David in Psalm 37** testified that in all his years, he had never seen the righteous forsaken, had never seen them begging for bread.

In Paul's life, there were times of hunger, thirst, and enough. He knew how to be abased and how to abound, he told the Philippians.

There was never any begging, neither was there with the Lord. Some people think Jesus was the poorest of the poor. He was not. Jesus grew up in a middle-class home, maybe even better than a middle-class home. His father had his own business. He was a carpenter.

Jesus grew up learning a trade. The only reason that Jesus did not earn a living was because He became an itinerant minister, an itinerant preacher, and traveling around was supported by the

donations of those who believed in His ministry. But they had money. They had enough money to give away some.

Judas was holding the bag and it was kept not only for the needs of the disciples as they travelled but also a little extra to give to the poor, as necessary. The Lord never begged, the twelve never begged, Paul never begged.

They were accused of being ignorant. They were accused of being mad. They were accused of turning the world upside down. But nobody ever accused them of begging. They were not somehow virtuous because they were living in a state of poverty.

### **What is this poor in spirit?**

It is the Greek term *ptōchos*.

***Ptōchos*** means to cower and cringe like a beggar.

A real cowering, cringing, shrinking person, ashamed to have to beg but having no choice.

A beggar, somebody with no wealth, no influence, no position, no honour, no respect, in some cases possessing nothing but the ragged clothes they wear, a real beggar here.

There is another word translated “poor” in the New Testament, *penēs*.

**2 Corinthians 9:9**, *As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.”*

That is a different kind of poverty.

That is the poverty that demands diligent daily labour to earn a living. Somebody who does not have a savings account, must work every day just to eat every day. ***Penēs*** is being so poor you must work hard every day to sustain your life.

***Ptōchos*** is being so poor and so destitute and so unskilled, your poverty is so deep, and you are so unable that all you can do is beg. You do not have the capability to work. You do not have the skill to work. So, you are totally dependent on the gifts of others. Everything comes to you from an outside source.

You have no resource, no talent, no skill, no craft, no trade, nothing. Typically, in the ancient world, it would so humiliate a man to be a beggar that he would crouch, cover his face with a garment, holding out his hand, ashamed to let even the giver know his identity. That is the word Jesus used.

### **Do you want to enter His kingdom?**

The true diagnosis of man when you recognize it that you become a candidate for entrance into God's kingdom of happiness.

When you see yourself as empty, poor, helpless, bankrupt, you cannot contribute one single thing to your salvation, you cannot give God anything that in any way qualifies you for any blessing from Him.

**You are ptōchos, not penēs.**

You need mercy.

You need grace from an outside source, from God Himself, because you can bring nothing.

You are destitute, beggarly, helplessly dependent.

- Happy are the destitute,
- Happy are the beggarly,
- Happy are the hopelessly dependent,
- Happy are the people who have nothing and can earn nothing.

Now, this poverty is further defined as poverty in spirit.

It is not poverty regarding money or material things.

It is not poverty regarding something external, it is poverty regarding what is internal with reference to the spirit.

Look inside and realize their state of spiritual bankruptcy. This is the first message Jesus wanted to give to sinners.

Recognize your condition of spiritual bankruptcy.

Jesus preaches this message to the people who thought they were spiritually rich who thought they had attained salvation by their own self-righteousness.

**Isaiah 66:2**, *For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.*

Somebody who recognizes his spiritual poverty and who shakes at the contemplation of the judgment of God and realizes his spiritual bankruptcy, realizes there is nothing to commend himself to God, hopelessly under the wrath of God.

**Psalm 34:18**, *The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

**Who does God save?**

Those who know they are nothing. Those who are broken. Those who are devastated on the inside because they have come to grips with their condition in sin and depravity, their empty, poor, helpless, hopeless condition.

**Psalm 51:17**, *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.*

It is that spiritual brokenness, that sense of spiritual bankruptcy and emptiness that draws the grace of God.

**Isaiah 57:15**, *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

God is talking about people who understand their spiritual bankruptcy, in contrast to the Pharisees who were so proud about what they supposed was their own righteousness.

Paul say that the Israelites wanted to establish their own righteousness.

**Romans 10:3**, *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

The poor in spirit is the opposite.

He is the one who has had all the sense of self-sufficiency removed, it is all gone. It is a heart of desperation, finds himself on his knees.

### **Illustration:**

**Luke 18:9-10**, *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

Tax collectors were the most despised, despicable, and hated of all people in Israel because they bought their tax franchises from the oppressive invaders, the Romans. Who were not only the enemy of Israel but were even more so distasteful because they were Gentiles.

To be a tax gatherer in Israel, you had to buy a franchise from Rome, so you literally lined up with Rome to betray your own people, and they became literally the hated.

They became the most despised in that culture. In the temple a Pharisee and a tax gatherer come.

**Luke 18:11-13**, *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <sup>13</sup>And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'*

That is the attitude of a beggar, he would not even lift his face, eyes, cowers, crouches, cringes, beats his chest.

**Luke 18:14**, *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

So, Jesus is saying, "Blessed are the beggars in spirit.

Blessed are the spiritually bankrupt.

Blessed are the spiritually destitute.

Blessed are the spiritual beggars.

Blessed are those who cringe and cower because they have nothing to offer. Blessed are those who, before the high and exalted and holy God, realize their state of bankruptcy.

We have a lot of emphasis on celebrities, superstars, rich, and famous, and a lot of the talk about the prosperity gospel. But the key to real happiness is sadness.

Isaiah was used wonderfully by God but never until his spirit was broken. It was not until he had the vision in the temple in Isaiah 6. He went into the temple because King Uzziah had been dead after reigning for 52 years. King Uzziah represented the success of the nation, the success of the theocracy of Israel, and they had been at peace with all their neighbours. There was a strong position in the cold war. The military strength of Israel was formidable, and their enemies left them alone.

There was flourishing economy in Israel. The crops were doing well. They were doing fine on the world economic stage. All was well and there was a façade of religion and they all meandered down to the temple at the appropriate time and paid their external homage to God and went through the motions.

But there were terrible seeds of destruction in the nation, and God through the prophet in Isaiah chapter 5 pronounced a death sentence on Israel, death sentence came.

The prophet Isaiah was stunned by this death sentence that comes in a series of six woes in chapter 5, and so he went to the temple to check with God.

God is supposed to protect this people do not judge and punish this people. He did not understand, and he went to have a vision of God.

In the vision of God, he was broken, he was absolutely shattered. He says in chapter 6, "Woe is me," and he repeats the word "woe" which was used six times in chapter 5 to pronounce curses on Israel, and he literally took the same word and cursed himself.

The Lord said, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"

"I need a preacher to go to this people that are under judgment. I need a preacher to go call them to repentance. Who will go?"

There is only one person there and Isaiah knows he is supposed to answer the question. He says, "Here am I, Lord send me".

Isaiah had his head down, probably toward the ground, he would not even lift his eyes, and he held both hands over his head and said, "Here am I, send me," expecting God to crush him. God said, "You are the man I want. Get up and go."

Gideon, that mighty man of God, was used mightily by God because he was so aware of his inadequacy.

**Judges 6:15-16**, *So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." <sup>16</sup>And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."*

Gideon was probably thinking He was talking to somebody behind him.

The key to blessing and the key to happiness is always unworthiness.

**Moses** who felt deeply unworthy for the task.

God told him to lead the people and Moses said, "I can't lead the people, I stutter." God says to him, "Who made your mouth?"

God was so conscious of his inadequacy and insufficiency.

**David** also when he said, "Lord, who am I that you should send? Do you understand who you have here?"

In the New Testament, we see it in Peter. Aggressive, self-assertive, confident by nature, but devastated in the presence of the Lord and saying to Him, "*Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.*"

The apostle Paul knew in his flesh was no good thing. He was the chief of sinners. He was a blasphemer. He was a persecutor. Everything he ever was and everything he had ever achieved was dung, manure. He counted it all loss, he had no confidence in the flesh. He was not sufficient for anything. His strength was only found in his weakness.

That is where entrance into the kingdom begins. That is where it all starts. By the way, it does not end after that.

Living in the kingdom requires a constant and continual admission that in yourself, you are nothing, and your only strength comes in the midst of your own admission of weakness.

This is the hardest thing for the hardened sinner to do because if he does not worship the true God, he worships the god that he himself has invented. He has been bowing to the shrine that he himself has erected. He is the god who occupies the primary place in that shrine. The hardest thing the hardened sinner must do is admit his utter bankruptcy and unworthiness.

Jesus is saying to the Jews who were thinking that they were in the kingdom God. You cannot enter the Kingdom according to your terms but in t God's terms.

**John 7:34**, *You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."*

### **Why?**

Because you are not in My kingdom."

So that's where salvation begins, blessing begins, happiness begins, with this admission.

The absence of

- all pride,
- all self-confidence,
- self-righteousness,
- self-assurance, and
- self-reliance.

The knowledge that we are nothing before God in ourselves at all. There must be this emptying before there can ever be a filling.

St. Augustine before his conversion, he was so proud of his intellect. He was a great mind, so proud of his knowledge, but he himself confesses that it was only after he emptied himself of pride that he found God's true wisdom.

Martin Luther entered a monastery in his youth and the reason he entered the monastery was in order to earn salvation. His objective was to go to the monastery and earn his salvation through piety and good works.

Martin Luther had an acute sense of failure when he was in the monastery. He was hammered by guilt. Began to recognize his own inability to please God, began to empty himself of all efforts to earn his salvation, and only then did God save him by grace through faith.

The first principle of entrance into the kingdom is to recognize that you cannot enter, and you are not capable.

In yourself, you cannot please God. You cannot do it. Even if you can keep some of the laws, you cannot keep all of them.

If you break any of them, you have violated the whole law of God.

**Matthew 5:48**, *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

It must be as perfect as God is perfect.

You must be as perfectly righteous as God, as perfectly holy as God, before on your own you can enter the kingdom. Nobody qualifies.

At the beginning of the New Testament, the beginning of Jesus' teaching, the fact is established that God's standards cannot be achieved, that entrance into the kingdom is not the result of any kind of human effort.

There were others who rejected this message and eventually executed Jesus because it was such an offensive message.

There are people today who want to bank their eternity on their own achievements, who want to hold to their own accomplishments, religiously and morally.

Depravity means is everyone is unable to attain salvation. It means by the deeds of the law, the works of the flesh, nobody is going to be justified before God,

**Romans 3:19-20**, *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

That is what He means when He says poor in spirit, crying out of poverty and one's realization that there is nothing of value in one's life that could cause God to grant salvation.

### **3. What is the result of this attitude?**

**V 3**, *"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

What a great theme!

“Theirs” is in the Greek in the sense of theirs alone, nobody else’s, barring all others who approach God, except those with a beggar’s heart.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

This is not a future millennial reality, there is a future millennial kingdom, this is not limited to heaven, the eternal new heaven and new earth. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven now.

Heaven is really the same as God. You have interchangeably the phrase “the kingdom of heaven,” “the kingdom of God” used in the New Testament. The kingdom of heaven is just another way of referring to God and to refer to the rule of Christ. Christ is the King over God’s kingdom.

It means you come into the kingdom and you inherit all its blessings as you come under the rule of God mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Yes, it has an earthly millennial aspect, and you will be there in the glorious thousand-year millennial kingdom that **Revelation 20** talks about.
- Of course, it has an eternal aspect in the new heavens and the new earth laid out for us so magnificently in **Revelation 21 and 22**.
- It also has a present aspect. You enter the kingdom. It is yours now, and we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus now.

**Revelation 1** tells us, **Revelation 5** repeats it, we have now become a kingdom, priests to God. We are the overcomers by whose faith we overcome.

- We have kingdom blessing now.
- We have kingdom grace,
- We have kingdom mercy,
- We have kingdom peace,
- We have kingdom joy,
- We have kingdom wisdom.

### Why?

Because we are subjects of the King. We have kingdom sovereignty. The sovereign King takes care of His subjects.

We have kingdom comfort for the times of sorrow.

We have kingdom wisdom dispensed to us through the manual of the kingdom, which is the Word of the living God.

All spiritual blessings are ours - love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

All the fruit of the Spirit constitute blessings of the kingdom, the promise of glorification, the promise of sanctification until we reach glorification, the promise that everything is going to work together for good because we are subjects of the King. Everything that is ours in Christ constitutes kingdom blessing.

## **Conclusion:**

Now it has been preached that people must have poverty of spirit and mourning and all that kind of thing. In the age of grace, we do not need to do that, all you need to do is believe in Jesus and everything is fine. You do not need to get too overwrought with your own spiritual condition.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Certainly, we came into the kingdom today and we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings and the kingdom of God, Jesus said, is within you, it is right here!

Now because you are the recipients of all kingdom blessings in Christ. That is why you are happy. That is why He can say happy are the poor in spirit.

## **Why?**

Because they just got into the kingdom and they just inherited everything.

You may tamper with my superficial happiness, but you cannot touch my deep-down contentment because everything that matters eternally is settled.

- ✓ I am in the kingdom.
- ✓ I have kingdom peace.
- ✓ I have kingdom grace.
- ✓ I have kingdom mercy.
- ✓ I have kingdom power.
- ✓ I have kingdom truth.
- ✓ I have it all!

Everything that really matters is unassailable, untouchable because I am in the kingdom and the King takes care of me.

I am not just the subject of the King; I am the King's child!  
Son of the King.

Out of the vast treasure of the King's resources, He takes care of me and He takes care of you because we are in His kingdom, but nobody came in until they recognized their spiritual bankruptcy.

The **Rich Young Ruler** came to Jesus, he says, "What do I do to get eternal life?"

That is a good and the right question.

**Matthew 19**, he was a ruler. Probably the ruler of a synagogue, which meant that he had been the elected leader of his synagogue, which meant that he was basically appraised as the most religious man in the place.

Jesus said, Keep the law. That is one way to get in. Nobody can do it, but it is one way, hypothetically. He gives him six illustrations of the ten commandments.

He says, "I have kept all those."

Jesus does say to him, "There is another standard that I had like you to comply with. Sell everything you have, take all the money and give it to the poor." The guy turned around and split, and he went away lost and condemned.

### **Why?**

Not because he did not ask the right question. But there were two things he would not do.

1. Acknowledging his spiritual bankruptcy and that he had systematically, continuously and unendingly violated the law of God.
2. He was not willing to follow Christ. Christ gave him a simple command. Rich man refused it.

This indicates that there was no sense of allegiance and submission to Jesus as Lord, nor was there any recognition of sin.

He is outside the kingdom and he cannot get in because he will not become poor in spirit. He went away as lost as when he showed up.

Jesus really should never have lost that guy, all He had to say to him was pray a prayer, raise your hand, walk an aisle, whatever.

But not Jesus. Jesus wanted to get to the real issue. You do not get into my kingdom without realizing your sinful, helpless, hopeless condition. And when he would not admit it, there was nothing more to say.

### **How does one become poor in spirit?**

1. **Compare yourself to God.**

Stop comparing yourself to other people.

### **Are you as holy as God?**

If you are not, you are wretched.

**1 Peter 1:16**, *“Be ye holy as I am holy.”*

**Matthew 5:48**, *“Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

### **Are you perfect?**

If you do not know the answer to that, then start reading about God. Read the Word of God. Face His person on its pages.

Look at God, and if you want to really see God clearly, look at God incarnate, look at Jesus Christ. The more you see God, the more you know the character of God, the more you know the attributes of God, the more you know the perfect holiness of God, the more you see it visibly in Jesus Christ, the more you will recognize your true condition by contrast.

### **2. Pray.**

Beggars must ask!

When you have recognized your beggarly condition, it is time to ask.

### **What should you ask for?**

How about this, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” That is how people were saved throughout the whole Old Testament.

Luke 18 prayer!