



Impoverished in Spirit

I know something inherently _____ about every person. What is that truth? You desperately _____ the Lord Jesus in your life. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. How we think of _____ makes all the difference in the world. If we love Him and humble ourselves before God, God will _____ us richly; but if we fail to give Him our respect and our obedience, we'll find the blessed life disappear. The more we get away from God, the more the blessings of God get away from us. That's why we continually go to the Word of God, the Bible, to _____ the truth of God and the blessing of God. You won't find it anywhere else. God's way is the right way, the blessed way, and the true way.

Nebuchadnezzar was the most _____ man in the world in his day. God allowed him to have this power in order to _____ Israel for her sins. Three times Nebuchadnezzar's army entered Jerusalem, and the third time completely destroyed the city, including the _____. Nebuchadnezzar's home was the great city of Babylon, whose hanging _____ were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Chapter four of the book of Daniel tells how Nebuchadnezzar became _____ and said, "Is not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" Because he forgot God was the true _____ of the world, God humbled him by making him like a _____ of the field for seven periods of time. He ate grass like _____, and his hair and nails grew long. Afterwards Nebuchadnezzar praised and honored the Most High God. He learned his _____ for God the hard way.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew and contains the words of Jesus Himself as He begins His sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:1-6.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to _____ Jesus speak in person? In 2006 sweet Jackie and I visited the site near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus supposedly delivered the Sermon on the Mount. The crowds gathered to the mountain to hear Him _____. They hung on every word. The people knew about Jesus' power to _____, His godly teaching and kind ways. Matthew 4:23-25 says, "And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the _____ of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his _____ spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them all. And great crowds _____ him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan." They wanted to hear what the Master had to say—I hope you have that kind of _____ for the Word of God.

How would you begin your signature sermon? The beginning statement of a sermon is usually what catches people's _____. Jesus made a surprising and captivating comment about being _____ in spirit. He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the _____ of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). He started His sermon _____ about people who are "poor in spirit." He started there because He knew how vital being "poor in spirit" was to our _____ with Him and with the Father. If we're not "poor in spirit," we may never have _____ for God in our hearts. The blessed person not only has room for God; the blessed person cannot _____ without God!

What does it mean to be blessed? The word "blessed" means more than merely being "_____." Happiness is merely an _____, often dependent upon outward circumstances. To be blessed here refers to the ultimate well-being of a person who has lasting _____ joy arising from his relationship with

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God. The beatitudes are not _____ statements, they are exclamations! They are saying these are the kinds of people that God _____ as having the ultimate in well-being.

I'm reminded of Habakkuk, a prophet in the Old Testament, who lived at a very difficult time. Habakkuk 3:17-19 says, "Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, And there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will _____ in the God of my salvation. The Lord GOD is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me _____ on my high places." A relationship with God is a wonderful and fulfilling blessing, because it assures us of an _____ home, even when our world here falls apart.

The Lord Jesus, before His death, gave some assurance to the apostles. Jesus knew that He would be crucified and they of course sorrowed over that, but the Lord said, "Therefore you too now have _____; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your _____ away from you" (John 16:22). In Christ, no one can take away our joy or our _____. In Christ we have forgiveness, the right to pray, eternal life, and an inheritance in heaven. No one can take this away! We may have all kinds of _____ in this world, but nothing can take all the joys that Christ gives. If you're counting on this world to bless you, remember this world is fickle and temporal, but Christ is _____.

We don't see things the _____ that God sees them. The people we think are blessed aren't necessarily the ones God says are blessed. God said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the _____ are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The world _____ riches, honors, fame, intelligence, appearance, and strength. These beatitudes emphasize an _____ disposition, that is the attitudes of God, not the outward circumstances, but the inward. God has different _____ than we do. Jeremiah 10:23-24 says: "Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a _____ man boast of his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a _____ man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I _____ in these things,' declares the LORD." Men shouldn't boast over their _____ wisdom, power, or wealth. These things don't make a man blessed in God's eyes. If you wish to boast about something, boast that you _____ and understand the Lord God of heaven, who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth. Those things are truly valuable.

When God calls someone blessed, he is blessed indeed! God never _____ but calls things as they truly are! If anyone else blesses you, the blessing lasts for a time, but God's blessings last for a _____ and beyond. God's blessings are both physical and spiritual. He meets our _____ needs for food, water, clothing, and shelter; but He also meets our _____ needs. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with _____ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

In Christ we have every spiritual blessing that we could ever _____ for. We have _____ to the Father, peace, joy, assurance, and love. In Christ we have forgiveness. Romans 4:7-8 says, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been _____, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose _____ the Lord will not take into account." Forgiveness through the _____ of Christ opens the door to an eternal fellowship with God on earth and in heaven. That is a truly blessed state, a truly blessed condition!

The Lord said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the _____ of heaven." There are two words for poor in the New Testament. First, there are the poor who are _____ and must work from day to day to earn a living. They have food and clothes enough to _____ but very little if anything else. Second, there are the destitute beggars, living in _____ poverty—the person who has nothing at all and

is desperate. It's this second word that is used here in the poor in spirit; and that's what makes this so surprising! The blessed person is the one who "in spirit" has _____ at all. He has nothing and is utterly dependent upon God.

The poor in spirit are not the same as the "poor-spirited," who are dejected or self-pitying creatures who go about in _____ or in indifference. No, this is speaking of people who realize their spiritual poverty _____ God. They realize they have a _____ need and dependence upon God. Since they know their condition, they are humble and yearn for God's _____. They put their whole _____ in God. They realize that they _____ their existence and their salvation to God. They realize that on their own without God they're _____ in sin and have no hope. They know that they cannot _____ their salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "For by _____ you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the _____ of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good _____, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." A person poor in spirit will become wholly dependent upon God—and God means everything to him! We must realize that we need God's help and strength; and only God can _____ us eternal life. We must put our trust in Him.

A person that's poor in spirit doesn't invent his own _____ and doesn't invent his own way to be saved. A person poor in spirit is willing to _____ and do what God says and do it God's way. He doesn't try to correct God or _____ God's laws or God's morals. He doesn't propose his _____ solutions to the problems of sin or question God's wisdom and justice. He loves God and is willing to follow the Lord and _____ from Him.

Because a person "poor in spirit" realizes His need for Jesus to be His Savior, he also regards Jesus as His _____. He belongs to the Lord and takes what God _____ seriously. God said, "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My _____" (Isaiah 66:2). Does the Word of God make you tremble? It should. God's Word will one day determine your _____ destiny. God is the eternal authority, and one day you'll have to give an _____ for your life to Him.

False religions think they can make their own rules and decide their own morals, but God is the only One who can _____ moral laws. The Pharisees lived by their own _____ traditions and judged others for not keeping their rules. They would even judge _____ for not keeping their traditions! They were really just deceiving themselves. The Lord Jesus said, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be _____ up. Let them [that is, the Pharisees] alone; they are blind _____. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a _____" (Matthew 15:13-14).

A proud person doesn't think he needs God's _____ but imagines God should be honored just to have him around. You remember the Lord Jesus "told this parable to certain ones who _____ in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to _____, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus [some versions say prayed to himself, and he said]: "God, I thank you that I'm not _____ other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but he beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a _____!" I tell you, this man went down to his house _____, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted'" (Luke 18:9-14). God cannot use a man who's so full of himself, because such a man has no _____ for God!

The Bible also tells of an arrogant _____ that didn't know that it needed the Lord. The Lord Jesus sent this message to the church in Laodicea: "I know your _____: that you're neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will _____ you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I am rich, I've prospered, and I need nothing,' not realizing that you are

wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and _____. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone _____ my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation. 3:15-20).

These things matter because we all stand in _____ for God. Are you poor in spirit? Do you need God? Do you wish to enter the kingdom of God?

Blessed is the person who _____ he needs God and puts his trust in God, for only by lovingly denying himself can he take up a cross to follow the Lord. Obeying God is a demonstration of our faith and love. James said a man shows his _____ by his works. The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him _____ himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24). Humble yourself before God to enter the kingdom of heaven.

To become a Christian, we must die to ourselves, so we may live for Christ! Trust in the Lord with all your heart, remove the sin in repentance, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ by being immersed in water. Baptism is when our old man of sin dies and we’re born again to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Do you not know that all of us who’ve been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Start a new life in Christ today by trusting in Christ and obeying the Lord.

Get involved in the church. When you’re baptized, the Lord saves you and adds you to His church (Acts 2:41 and 47). Keep your connection with God and with His people by regularly worshiping at church. You need the Lord and His people to help you stay faithful and to reach heaven. You can do nothing more important today than getting right and staying right with the Lord Jesus.

So focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one.