



You're Not God

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:3 NIV)

This year, a dedicated team from the Windsor Road church family began a new ministry called *Celebrate Recovery*. It took more than a year of planning, praying, meeting, conferencing, and visiting other congregations who have *Celebrate Recovery* ministries. *Celebrate Recovery* is a community of believers who realize that freedom from hurts, habits, and hang-ups come solely through the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus gives freedom from the sinful decisions that we have made or that others have made. This freedom cannot come from within us. We need help.

In the Sermon the Mount, Jesus began with 8 beatitudes which characterize the life of one who has been rescued from the kingdom of destructive addictions and delivered into the kingdom of God. The Beatitudes describe the free life which Jesus' followers enjoy in His Kingdom. Jesus' followers are free because they are slaves to Him! Starting this week, we're going to look at each of these Beatitudes beginning with Matthew 5:3.

What does it mean to be *blessed*?

The word beatitude comes from the Latin "beatus" meaning happy or blessed! Biblically, blessedness or happiness isn't about one's euphoric level of well-being. The Bible defines happiness as a by-product of something else. Fundamentally, blessedness has to do with my relationship with God. Blessedness = "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live among them, and they shall be HIS PEOPLE, and God will be present with them, and be THEIR GOD'" (Revelation 21:3; Ezekiel 37:27).

Question: why is this so important? Answer: There is more than one voice in this world crying out for: "I will be your God and you will be my people." There are other voices; other imposters are lining up to say, "I want to be your god; I

want you to be my people. Then, you'll be blessed!" But only one voice tells the truth. The blessed ones are those who have come to the conclusion that there is a God and we're not Him! His name is Jesus.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

To be poor in spirit is to "admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable." (Baker 10, 2008) The Apostle Paul said, "*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.*" (Romans 7:15, 19 NIV) Read that again, slowly. Paul concludes, "*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*" (Romans 7:24 NIV) That is the confession of someone poor in spirit. Being poor in spirit has to do with the realization (a realization that taps me on an emotional level) that I am spiritually bankrupt before a holy God; that I am powerless; that I am impure; inadequate; helpless. I cannot save myself.

Too many people turn to Christianity like they do the self-help section of the bookstore. "I'm in trouble. I have addictions. I'll try Jesus." We don't "try" Jesus. He's the King! We bow to Him in submission. That's the only way. And note that there is the *realization* of powerlessness and the *realization* of bankruptcy and the *realization* of uncleanness and the *realization* of unworthiness. In truth, everybody is powerless and bankrupt and helpless and unclean and unworthy before God. But not everybody is "blessed" because not everybody realizes their condition. (Piper)

The prayer of someone spiritually impoverished is in Luke 18:13, "*But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'*"

Why do the poor in spirit possess the kingdom of God?

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. The poor in spirit possess the kingdom of God because God is generous! God is love! God is good! God is full of grace and mercy! Ask and if it's good, God will give it! "Jesus is our model because He humbled Himself (Philippians 2:5-8), became poor so that we might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9); He was crucified for our sins so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; now He strengthens us to find contentment even in the hard places of life (Philippians 4:13)." (K. Edward Copeland) Through Christ, we are heirs!

"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor; so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV)