

The First Beatitude

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

The meaning of the word "poor" in Greek means one who has nothing and is completely empty. Was Jesus saying the economically poor are blessed? No, for there is no spirituality in poverty. Poverty in itself is not blessed, because the poor can be as arrogant and as ungodly and as lost as the rich. So what does it mean to be poor in spirit? It means that the poor are those who don't put their complete faith and trust in Jesus.

The poor in spirit are those who are conscious of their sins and know in their hearts that they are completely unworthy of the grace that a most holy and loving God pours down upon them.

In Luke 15 we see how the prodigal son became poor in spirit. We will look again at this story on Ash Wednesday.

In his pride and arrogance he left his father's house, wasted his inheritance and fell into great need in some far away country. During a severe famine, this son had no job and nothing to eat. At that point, the text says, he came to himself. He went back to his father and said, "I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21). That is being poor in spirit.

Only the poor in spirit will enter into the kingdom of God. Why? Because the poor in spirit come to God recognising their sins. They are ready to say SORRY .

The Second Beatitude

**Blessed are they who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.**

The person that mourns is the one who recognizes that he is a sinner. We mourn over our various sins because we recognize our sins greatly hurt our heavenly Father. Jesus tells us such a person is blessed.

Do you recognise your sins? Do you say sorry and mean it?

So, the mourning of Christians referred to in this beatitude is not because of financial loss, sickness, death, loneliness or some rejection.

Using the prodigal son once again as an example, it tells us in Luke 15 of this young man who became very dissatisfied at home, and looked to the world for answers. This man left his father's house to go to a far country to experiment and find pleasure with sin, but soon the fun was over. He became famished, lonely, brokenhearted, and rejected by all. But by God's grace this young man came to himself, became sober and began to think clearly and Godly.

In verse 20 of Luke 15 we see this young man going back home. He was now a poor, wretched, miserable, naked specimen of humanity, but he was going home to his father. He mourned and wept as he walked, and when he reached his father, he said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son. Just make me a servant of yours at the lowest rank, for I need to be comforted. Save me, for I am lost."

How did the father react to his son? He cried out in joy and then comforted him. The father hugged and kissed him and gave him a fine garment to wear. He told the servants to put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. He ordered a great celebration with music and feasting. And when the other son questioned why the father was doing these things, the father said he had the greatest of all reasons: "**This son of mine was dead but is now alive**; he was lost but now is found" (Luke 15:24). What awesome comfort this son now had.

The Third Beatitude
Blessed are the meek,
for they shall possess the earth.

The Greek word for meek, *praus*, was used to refer to domesticated animals. The word does not refer to a wild, unruly animal; it refers to a strong and powerful horse or an ox that was trained and disciplined so that it could be controlled by a human. The word meek used in Matthew 5:5 refers to a strong person who is under control. A meek person is one whose strength is controlled by God.

A meek person is not a weak person. They are not timid. They are not someone who you can walk all over. A meek person is not passive and spineless. In fact the meek person is just the opposite because they put their faith and their trust in God.

What makes a person meek? **They see God. And they see God in everything.** A meek person is the one who proclaims, "Not my will but Thine will be done." As we say in the Our Father prayer. In Psalm 37:3 it says, ""Trust in the Lord and do good." Faith is trust. The meek person trusts the Lord

A meek person is patient. They have a long view of life, knowing in the end it is not the wicked who win, but the meek. The meek person knows that in the end God wins, and if God wins then the meek win. God himself tells us that the meek, not the wicked, will inherit the earth.

The Fourth Beatitude

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for Righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

To help us understand this beatitude we first have to ask ourselves, what is meant by righteousness? And righteousness means being in complete accordance with what is just, honorable, and Godly. **Righteousness are those things that are right, virtuous, noble, morally right, and ethical**, one that God approves of.

For us to be righteous, everything that we think about, every decision we make, will be done the same way that Jesus would have done them. We know immediately whether something is right or wrong, just or unjust

Jesus lives inside the righteous person and **is communicating constantly with the person's heart, conscience, soul, and spirit**. And while this is going on the Holy Spirit will be hard at work doing his guiding and his warning. This is why when a good person sins, it makes them even more sad.

Hunger and thirst are appetites that return all through the day and they need to be seen to. So, we must feed our lives with good, just as the living body calls for its daily food.

The Fifth Beatitude

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Mercy is love toward those that are miserable, and those that need some type of help or assistance.

The merciful are those that go out of their way and make the effort to help. Having compassion on those that are in any way hurting and then doing something about it, is the all important second part.

We as followers of Jesus must show mercy to everyone and we can do this by both sympathizing with them and by taking care and tending to their needs and always ready to give and to forgive. Our Lord asks us to show the same type of mercy to others that he shows to each of us.

Therefore, to be merciful as a Christian does not mean to perform isolated, occasional acts of charity.

This beatitude is also very concerned with mercy through the act of daily forgiveness.. Our Lord demands that we forgive one another just as he is constantly forgiving us.

God shows us mercy, not when we are good, but when we are miserable, helpless and naughty. He shows us mercy when we are disobedient, He forgives our sins, every single day.

The Sixth Beatitude
Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God.

Out of people's hearts come all kinds of nasty things. Everything from evil thoughts and greed, to jealousy and spite.

So, one of the most important questions that we can ask is how can we be truly pure in our hearts. How can we be good in our thoughts, in our words, in our decision making, and in things that we do?

The truth is we can't do any of this on our own.

So the first thing we must be aware of is this.

The path to a pure heart begins with the realization that we have impure hearts. The entire Bible revolves around the central theme that God looks at the heart of the person and not at their external appearance or their achievements.

And the second point we must be aware of is this.

God must clean us. We must put our entire faith and trust in him

" I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **And I will put My Spirit within you**".

The Seventh Beatitude

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God.**

The peacemakers are those children of God who not only have great love for God, but also have love for all of mankind and they attempt to do everything possible for the advancement of peace everywhere. The term "peacemakers" includes all who make peace between men, whether as individuals or as communities. It is to love, desire, and delight in peace.

The Eighth Beatitude

**Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

In this beatitude Christ pronounces a blessing on those who are being persecuted. But the persecution that they are suffering is not for things they have done wrong, their persecution is for doing the right thing.