

The Poor in Spirit

August 21, 2016

Matthew 5:1-12 NASB

- 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.
- 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,
- 3 "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.
- 7 "Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who have been **persecuted** for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
- 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus describes:

1. *what a Christian is to be*
2. *how to be happy as a Christian*
3. *the root causes of all that is wrong with our culture, our society and the world*

Matthew 5:3 NASB

3 **BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

"POOR IN SPIRIT"

1. (ptōchos) *reduced to begging, helpless, powerless, destitute - from ptosso meaning to crouch, cower, hide oneself, cringe as a beggar*
2. convinced of one's utter deficiency
 - a. empty of all self-reliance and self-sufficiency
 - b. void of any self-importance, self-assertion and self-promotion
3. convinced of God's complete sufficiency

THE IDOLATRY OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN THE WORLD

"Believe in yourself."

"Confidence is something you create within yourself by believing in who you are."

"Self-confidence, the foundation of all great success and achievement."

"The history of the world is full of men who rose to leadership, by the sheer force of self-confidence, bravery and tenacity." -- Mahatma Gandhi

"Don't limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember, you can achieve." -- Mary Kay Ash

"A strong, positive self-image is the best possible preparation for success in life." -- Dr. Joyce Brothers

"Self-confidence is the most attractive quality a person can have. How can anyone see how great you are if you can't see it yourself?"

"I am the greatest. I said that even before I knew I was." -- Muhammad Ali

"Change your thoughts and you change your world." -- Norman Vincent Peale

"You've got to be sure of yourself before you can ever win a prize." — Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich

"Self-esteem isn't everything; it's just that there's nothing without it." — Gloria Steinem

"People become really quite remarkable when they start thinking that they can do things. When they believe in themselves they have the first secret of success." -- Norman Vincent Peale

"Stop trying to 'fix' yourself; you're NOT broken! You are perfectly imperfect and powerful beyond measure." — Steve Maraboli, Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience

THE HERESY OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN THE CHURCH

Books by Robert Schuller:

- "Self-Esteem: The New Reformation"
- "Self-Love: The Dynamic Force of Success"
- "Believe in the God Who Believes in You"
- "Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking"
- "If It's Going To Be, It's Up To Me"

"And what is 'hell'? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God -- the ultimate and unending source of our soul's sense of self-respect. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' was Christ's encounter with hell. In that 'hellish' death our Lord experienced the ultimate horror -- humiliation, shame, and loss of pride as a human being. A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem." -- Robert Schuller, "Self-Esteem: The New Reformation", pp. 14-15

"I believe that God has put gifts and talents and ability on the inside of every one of us. When you develop that and you believe in yourself and you believe that you're a person of influence and a person of purpose, I believe you can rise up out of any situation." -- Joel Osteen

"Don't ever criticize yourself. Don't go around all day long thinking, 'I'm unattractive, I'm slow, I'm not as smart as my brother.' God wasn't having a bad day when he made you... If you don't love yourself in the right way, you can't love your neighbour. You can't be as good as you are supposed to be." -- Joel Osteen

"Many Christians... find themselves defeated by the most psychological weapon that Satan uses against them. This weapon has the effectiveness of a deadly missile. Its name? Low self-esteem. Satan's greatest psychological weapon is a gut level feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, and low self-worth. This feeling shackles many Christians, in spite of wonderful spiritual experiences and knowledge of God's Word. Although they understand their position as sons and daughters of God, they are tied up in knots, bound by a terrible feeling inferiority, and chained to a deep sense of worthlessness." — David A. Seamands, Healing For Damaged Emotions

"Promoting self under the guise of promoting Christ is currently so common as to excite little notice." — A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

"Our self-trust is such a subtle thing that it still comes around whispering to us even after we are sure it is gone." — A.W. Tozer, I Talk Back to the Devil: Essays in Spiritual Perfection

Job 42:5-6 KJV

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but **NOW MINE EYE SEETH THEE**.

6 Wherefore **LABHOR** (*maac - become loathsome, reject*) **MYSELF, AND REPENT IN DUST AND ASHES**.

Isaiah 6:1-8 NASB

1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

5 Then I said, "**WOE IS ME, FOR I AM RUINED! BECAUSE I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAR LIPS, AND I LIVE AMONG A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAR LIPS; FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS.**"

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.

7 He touched my mouth with it and said, "**BEHOLD, THIS HAS TOUCHED YOUR LIPS; AND YOUR INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY AND YOUR SIN IS FORGIVEN.**"

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "**WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?**" THEN I SAID, "**HERE AM I. SEND ME!**"

Until we are completely undone and ruined before God's holiness:

1. *Our sins can't be purged*
2. *We cannot be used by God*

Galatians 5:24 NASB

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus **HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES**.

Matthew 16:24 NASB

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, **HE MUST DENY HIMSELF**, and **TAKE UP HIS CROSS** and follow Me.

What God says to deny, man continually seeks to deify.

What God says to repent of, man continually seeks to justify.

What God says to crucify, man continually tries to resurrect.

The flesh cannot be rehabilitated nor salvaged. It must be crucified.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for **THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**”

1. coming to the end of yourself, discovering how much you need God, is where you begin to find God
2. being poor in spirit brings you to the place of godly sorrow and repentance where you can receive the Kingdom of heaven
3. the stress of fulfilling expectations we can never fulfill, and the condemnation of failing those expectations, are the very things which prevent us from experiencing the grace, the love, the forgiveness and the all-sufficiency of our Heavenly Father and the Kingdom of Heaven
4. you will experience great freedom in Christ when you lose all hope in yourself and are relieved of expectations you can never satisfy

“Many’s very human habit of trusting in himself is generally the last great obstacle blocking his pathway to victory in Christian experience.” — A.W. Tozer, I Talk Back to the Devil: Essays in Spiritual Perfection

Philippians 3:2-10 NASB

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

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,**

9 **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,**

10 **THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH;**

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NASB

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, **TO KEEP ME FROM EXALTING MYSELF, THERE WAS GIVEN ME A THORN IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO TORMENT ME--TO KEEP ME FROM EXALTING MYSELF!**

8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

9 And He has said to me, **"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR POWER IS PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS."** MOST GLADLY, THEREFORE, I WILL **RATHER BOAST ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY DWELL IN ME.**

10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; **FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.**