

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the blessing of recognizing our spiritual poverty and dependence on God for true happiness and fulfillment.

Scripture: Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 5:3, John 16:24, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 2 Corinthians 12:10, Ephesians 2:8, James 4:2, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Spiritual Poverty", "Gods Grace"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches on the concept of being 'poor in spirit' as a state of recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy and desperate need for God's help and blessings. He emphasizes that true blessedness comes from choosing eternal treasures over worldly pleasures and acknowledging our need for God's grace and strength. The sermon highlights the importance of humbly seeking God's help, as only the spiritually poor are willing to approach the throne of grace for blessings. Those who recognize their spiritual poverty are blessed with the Kingdom of Heaven and the privilege of dwelling with God in His high and holy place.

Transcript

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

How can it be blessed to be poor in spirit? Surely poverty and blessing are opposites? That is how the unbeliever and the carnal believer thinks because their concept of being blessed is associated with possessing things or with worldly forms of pleasure and happiness. Even some, who think they are spiritual, find it hard to make the connection between spiritual poverty and blessedness.

This verse does not deal with material poverty, but rather, spiritual poverty. And this is not a statement about God loving poor people but rather that those who are spiritually poor are blessed. But how can spiritual poverty be blessed - surely we are blessed when we are spiritually rich?

The answer to this dilemma lies in the truth that we cannot hold onto what the world offers, or what we have in the flesh, and to what the Lord offers at the same time. If you want the world's happiness and blessings then you cannot have God's happiness and blessedness. We have to choose what we want. Do we want temporal happiness or eternal happiness? Do we want the riches of this world or the eternal treasures that are stored up in heaven? Do we want the happiness that God alone can give or the fleeting emotional highs that we get from some kind of sensory pleasure and that soon comes crashing down

again?

Only those who are spiritually poor are willing to look to the Lord for blessing while those who think they have it all worked out have no need for the blessedness God offers because they think they can manufacture their own blessings and happiness. The truth is that it is impossible to manufacture or achieve blessedness or happiness apart from the Lord. All blessings flow from Him and from Him alone, and man cannot be happy until he finds himself in the perfect will of God and until God fills that void within man that God alone can fill.

But there is a problem with this verse. It should really say: "blessed are those who recognize that they are poor in spirit". You see, all of mankind is spiritually bankrupt - no one has anything to boast of and every human being is in desperate need of God's help and blessings. But very few recognize their poverty and that's the problem. Many Christians do not recognize their bankruptcy before God and think that they can still achieve blessedness on their own merits or through their own effort.

The church of Laodicea was one such church. They said "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing" but Jesus said: "[you] do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). These statements were made about both their financial and spiritual status. The church in Smyrna, on the other hand, recognized their poverty and Jesus declared "but you are rich" (Revelation 2:9).

Those who recognize their spiritual poverty sufficiently to approach the throne of grace for help are the ones upon whom the Lord pours His grace and blessing. James says "you do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2). And Jesus said "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). It's as simple as that. As long as we feel we do not have a need, we do not ask and when we don't ask, we don't receive. But when we recognize our desperate need of the Lord, and we begin to ask, seek and knock then He is able to pour all His goodness, grace, peace and joy into our lives.

I have never understood why so few of us are able to recognize our need and why we all seem to feel we can go it on our own until the Lord sends some calamity our way before we cry out for help. I suppose the answer lies in our overestimation of our ability at controlling our own destiny and our ignorance of our own weakness. I once heard about a blind girl who was convinced that she was not blind but that the world was always dark! It's amazing how the problem always lies outside of ourselves!

Paul discovered this truth when the truth dawned on him that the Lord's "strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2Corinthians 12:10). Thus the spiritually poor are blessed because they have discovered that the Lord's strength is far more powerful than their own frailty and that it is much more blessed to have Him work through them, than their own puny efforts.

The second reason the poor in spirit are blessed is because "theirs is the kingdom of heaven". The Kingdom does not belong to the proud, self-sufficient and arrogant. Such are not part of, and will not enter, the Kingdom as the only way into the Kingdom is by faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8). Those who do not recognize their poverty do not put their faith in Christ as their faith is in themselves and their own abilities. Only the spiritually poor and needy have any use for the wonderful grace of God and find the need to call upon Him.

The Lord does not hear the prayer of the self-sufficient even if they should call upon the Lord. "on this one will I look, on him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). The Kingdom does not belong to the righteous, religious, self-made, and self-sufficient - it only belongs to the poor in spirit.

Thirdly the poor in spirit are blessed because God walks with such "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15). What a wonderful privilege to dwell with God in His high and holy place. Once again the special seats in His presence are not reserved for the mighty, noble and wise but for the poor in spirit. What wonderful grace!

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1Corinthians 1:26-29).

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