

# Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

by Tim Conway

---

*This sermon delves into the importance of being poor in spirit as the foundational step towards experiencing God's kingdom. It emphasizes the need to recognize our spiritual poverty, destitution, and desperate need for God's mercy and grace. The sermon highlights the paradox of being poor in spirit yet owners of everything in God's kingdom, contrasting worldly values with spiritual truths.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3, Romans 3:23, Isaiah 57:15, James 4:10, Psalm 51:17

**Topics:** "Spiritual Poverty", "Kingdom of God"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of being poor in spirit as the foundational step towards experiencing God's kingdom. It emphasizes the need to recognize our spiritual poverty, destitution, and desperate need for God's mercy and grace. The sermon highlights the paradox of being poor in spirit yet owners of everything in God's kingdom, contrasting worldly values with spiritual truths.

---

## Transcript

You can open your Bibles, whatever version you might have, to Matthew chapter 5 as my desire is to once again look at the Sermon on the Mount. This is only the second message. We had somewhat of an introduction last week.

Today, I simply want to look at the first of what is known as the Beatitudes. I might speak more about where that name even comes from. Today, blessed are the poor in spirit, verse 3, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Let's pray. Father, here we go with our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. The first words that He spoke, that came out of His mouth.

He opened His mouth and taught them saying, and here are the words of really what Matthew counts to be the first and a very long treatment of just truth coming from the Messiah's lips as He enters into His teaching ministry. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and I pray Lord, please make this time profitable for us. Make this rich, make it helpful, even redeeming if there are those that need redemption.

I ask in Christ's name, Amen. Okay, the first thing that I really want to deal with is maybe a definition of blessed. We see it.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. We see the word used over and over and over. That is a term that is not unfamiliar in the Christian realm.

Blessed, but what's the meaning? Now, listen. If you look at some very popular preachers, men who I love and respect, they basically equate blessed to happiness. Now, even as a young Christian, when I heard these preachers do this, one especially is in California and another one especially had a long time ministry in London.

When I hear that they equate blessed to happiness, even as a young Christian, I kind of, I was puzzled that they did that. Because I knew my Bible enough at that time to recognize that, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. And I thought, blessed there does not equal happy.

And as I was cracking some books open on that very definition of the word, John Stott and D.A. Carson both hit that. And they both emphasize that they think that that is a poor way to define the word, which in the original is makarios. Blessed.

Now, listen. Happiness is subjective. That means happiness has to do with you and the frame you're in.

Jesus is not speaking subjectively here. He is speaking objectively. He is declaring.

People who are poor in spirit are blessed. You know the reality is that you can take people that are blessed of God and depending on where they're at in their life, they may or may not be happy at the moment. I just think, I would agree.

I think that it's misleading to simply equate this Greek word with the word happy. What does blessed mean? The real issue is blessed means to be favored. It means to be an object of God's special grace.

It's the recipient of divine favor. It means to be privileged. It's one upon whom God smiles.

Listen, that is enough right there. If you just simply define blessed as that is an individual that God smiles upon, that pretty much captures it. You see, we only have two types of people in the world.

You are either in the category of blessed when it comes to how God sees you, how God deals with you. You're either in the category of blessed or you're in the category of cursed. Now listen, if you're in the category of cursed, you fall into that group of people that are known as the children of wrath, the sons of disobedience.

And even though kindness may be shown to you to lead you to repentance, that is not an indication that you're blessed. It may be an indication that you're a recipient of kindness, but the reality is not too long you continue in that same path, you're going to find that being an object of wrath, you're going to be drinking that wrath of which you're the object. It hangs over your head now.

So anyway, the reality is, Jesus is not declaring so much what the Christian feels. He is declaring a reality about the state of a person who is poor in spirit. He is saying, they are blessed and theirs is the kingdom.

It's a very objective statement that he's making here. So, blessedness. You don't want to just ever simply reduce it to happiness.

Being blessed comes down to that very reality. It means you are in the favor of God and you are under the smile of God. And listen, if you're under the smile of God, how will He not also give you every good thing?

Do you recognize what it is to be an object? There in Ephesians 2.7, that throughout the coming ages, He shows forth the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Through all the coming ages, He's showing the riches of His grace. Do you recognize what it is to be a Christian? I'm telling you, we don't hardly recognize in this world the glories. It's an eternal weight of glory.

To be in the category of blessed is to have it all. Now, the question often comes up, is this present or is this future? These beatitudes, like the promises, there's, is. I think all you have to do is look at the verb forms in English to recognize that you don't want to just say it's now or future.

It's both. There's is the kingdom of heaven. But we know that there's aspects of the kingdom that are not fully realized here.

You can enter it here. You can inherit aspects of it here. But we know that the inheritance that is now ours in heaven, we actually haven't taken possession of it.

So, we enjoy many privileges being in the kingdom, being already converted in this place. And yet it's not fully realized. I mean, when you go through these, look at this.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. But the reality is, as much as we shall be comforted and every tear wiped away, the reality is the Christian experiences a great deal of comfort even in this life. Right? I mean, the sense of pardon of sin, that is very comforting.

You just talk to somebody that struggles with assurance, who is not necessarily feeling that, and you can recognize what a massive comfort it is just in this world, just to have a sense of assurance. Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. I mean, even right there.

Even though we're going to inherit the earth in the future, what does the Apostle Paul say to the Corinthians? Doesn't he say, all things are yours, even now? Like, Apollos is yours, and Peter is yours, and I am yours. Isn't that how he speaks? He basically says that all of it is ours. Things present, things to come.

He says, you're Christ. Christ is God. I mean, you have Him, you have God.

God is yours. I mean, the reality is that even mercy, blessed are the merciful, they're going to receive mercy. But haven't we already received tremendous amount of mercy here? But is more going to be shown us? Yes.

It's that grace and kindness through all the coming ages. So, don't get so caught up in this. I mean, look, the reality is that we get foretaste here.

We get the fullness there. So we don't really have to wrestle too much. Now, as I mentioned last week, there's no imperatives here.

Not in the Beatitudes. Christ is not commanding anything. Christ is giving us indicative verbs.

He's indicating what's true. You don't want to, as I said last week, we have such an aptitude, we have such a bent naturally to want to do something. It's very interesting that Jesus just sits down, He begins to speak to His disciples.

And He doesn't tell them to do anything. He simply says, Gentlemen, I want to give you some facts. But if you find an individual that's poor in spirit, let me tell you what 100% of the time is also true.

That individual, the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Remember we looked last week at Mark 9, and we saw that possessing the kingdom is the same as possessing eternal life. They're synonymous.

You find somebody that's poor in spirit. You see, this is a fact. It's not a commandment.

He is basically saying, every single person that enters heaven will be somebody poor in spirit. You remember how He divides them? Right and left. He says, I was hungry and you fed me.

I was hungry and you didn't feed me. But you know what's also true? You are poor in spirit, and you are not. That's the reality that we're being faced with here.

He's not telling us to do anything. He's just basically saying how it is. He's describing who's saved, who's not saved, and He just simply says it.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. It's a matter of fact. That's it.

Every person on the planet who is described by this terminology, the kingdom's theirs. There's no exceptions. You recognize that.

If you are poor in spirit, if you fit the meaning, the kingdom's yours. That's what He says. There's no exceptions here.

There's only blessed and cursed in the world. And if you want to know which one, I mean here it is. Poor in spirit.

Jesus isn't here to debate. He's not here to argue. He's simply stating a fact with no imperatives.

I'll tell you this. Each one of us has to face the Sermon on the Mount. I mean we can try to ignore it.

We can try to run away with it. But the reality is, this is the one who is coming again. King of kings and Lord of lords.

This is the one who is going to judge all men. This is the one, the judgment seat of Christ. This is Him.

We can try to ignore it, but you can only ignore it for so long. Because He's coming again. And listen, these are the words He spoke.

They're not His words. They're the words of the Father. The Father sent Him into the world to basically convey a message to us.

And here it is. And each one of us have to come face to face. I do.

I mean as I sit down and I study this, before I bring it to you, this isn't just, this isn't an academic thing. I'm confronted by realities just like you are. We all have to face this.

If you argue, if as we go through the Sermon on the Mount, if you find yourself arguing, you know what it does? It's a reflection on you. Not on Jesus or His words. It's a reflection on you.

It says tremendous amount about you. Something's wrong. Do you recognize our reaction to the Sermon on the Mount? It's kind of like it has been said before.

You know you get somebody and they begin to critique Rembrandt paintings. But you see what your opinion of that painting is, says a whole lot more about you than it says about the painting. Because the painting's already been declared to be a work of art.

Now whether it is or not, I mean maybe that says something about me. Maybe I'm just knowing. Some of that Rembrandt stuff is kind of peculiar.

But listen, with this, there's no peculiar. I mean Jesus was peculiar. But never in a wrong way.

Very singular. So pour in spirit. That's what's on the table here.

Of course the question is this. What is it? Well I'll tell you this. It's not what the Jews expected.

You know what the Jews expected. You can tell what the Jews expected by the way John the Baptist starts his ministry. And you remember the Jews came out and he said, don't say to yourselves, what? What did he say? Yes.

Don't say, well we're children of Abraham. Because you see that was where their confidence was. Abraham.

Abraham's our father. We're in the lineage. We've got the proper family.

We've got the proper heritage here. And right from the beginning he said, no you don't want to say that. Jesus does not.

See, what the average Jew would have expected, and listen, even his disciples. His disciples were just as deceived about this as anybody. You can tell by the expectation.

They kept asking, is the kingdom now? Is the kingdom now? You know they didn't understand either. What the Jews would have expected is for Christ to sit down and begin teaching and say, blessed are those who are descendants of Abraham. Blessed are you who are of the house of Israel.

Blessed are you who can identify with David and with Abraham and Isaac. Jacob. Blessed are you if you've got the proper lineage and the blood flows through your veins that also flowed through their veins.

And I've come, just like David of old, I've come to subdue the enemies of God. I'm going to take up the sword and we're going to put down the Romans just like the Amalekites were put down by David. We're going to put down the enemies of God.

See, that's what they expected. And you know, this is the true David. And you know, if they're thinking they recognize, well in David's day, David and Joab, the commander of their army in the military, they went out.

See, they imagined this whole thing was going to be political. It was going to be military. And you can understand why they would have thought that.

They thought somebody was going to come in and basically free up the kingdom again just like it was in the David days, Davidic days, Solomon's days, that basically we were going to be the empire upon the face of the earth that was once again going to have preeminence. And we were going to have one sit on

the throne and there were all these glorious promises. See, that's what... Can you imagine? See, you'd have to put it in the context to sit down and it's like, okay, this guy's saying he's the Messiah.

Let's hear what he's got to say. And the very first thing out of his mouth, as far as Matthew's account, I mean aside from, you know, interaction with the devil. But when he goes to teaching, first words, blessed are the poor in spirit.

I mean, we know it because we've heard it and we've read it so we're not overly rolled over, bowled over, shocked by it. But this is just not what they expected. I mean, you basically had this nationalistic Jewish expectation about the kingdom.

The Jews had a very materialistic, outward focus on what all this meant. And Jesus just comes along and he dashes the whole thing to pieces. Listen to what this is.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. See, the Jews were looking at Rome. They were looking at these enemies.

And Jesus said, take your eyeballs and look at yourself. See, this is a self-attitude. That's basically what this is.

How do you see yourself? This is where it all begins. Poor in spirit. Now, here's the thing.

Recognize what's happening here. Do you recognize that somebody that is poor in spirit? They have come to recognize a fact about themselves. Do you see that? Poor in spirit.

It's a realization. They have come to this consciousness. It has to do with the thinking.

It always does. Because that's where repentance takes place. And repentance is a change of mind.

This is the deepest possible change of mind that happens in a man or a woman. Suddenly there's a consciousness that in the sight of God, I'm nothing. It's this person that comes face-to-face with God and becomes aware of his utter nothingness.

It's looking in the mirror. You've got the mirror there. And you look in it.

And suddenly... You see, there was always this perception that there was at least some beauty there. There was something attractive. There was something that God might find acceptable.

But suddenly there's this realization. You look. I'm covered with sores from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet.

I have nothing my own but sin. And what a person in that position recognizes, it's kind of like the lame in the days of Jesus walked the earth. I mean, you can almost imagine this.

When Ruby and I stayed in London four years ago, we stayed right there at Cripple Gate. And I began to think about the Cripple Gate in the day. It was just like in Jesus' day.

They brought all the cripples and they laid them there like by the pool of Bethesda. Can you imagine? You're laying there. You're impotent.

You're covered with sores. And this is the person that recognizes that's exactly where I am. And they recognize that there's a door between them and God.

But you know what that door is? Suddenly all it is is mercy. You see, it puts a person in a position where they recognize they just want to cry mercy because they recognize that you know what they recognize? They recognize they deserve hell. They recognize they deserve damnation.

They recognize that they are filthy rags. It's the person that comes to the place where they just recognize all the excellence I thought there. It's spent.

My riches. All that I had to offer. All that I had to pay with.

It's utterly gone. They look up and they say, famine is upon me. They recognize the bank account's empty.

It's not only empty, it's in the red. And deeply so. I owe ten billion pounds and I don't have anything to pay with.

I don't even have a penny to start with. I mean, this is the reality. It's a reality that mankind just does not grasp.

He does not see. He does not recognize. Do you recognize among almost the eight billion people upon the face of the earth that in and of themselves as they are by nature, as they are in Adam, they don't have a single penny among the lot of them to be able to pay God with.

Not a penny of worth or merit in any of us. And do you recognize in all the masses of mankind, you have a few that become aware of this fact. That's the issue.

The world doesn't know it. Yet, the fact is that this truth does. See, Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit.

There are some. Among all the masses of mankind, you have a few that suddenly their own self-assessment lines up with truth. And you know what it is.

When that fact breaks in upon a person's brain, it strips us. It's painful. It's humiliating.

It's the deepest form of repentance, as I've said before. Why? Because it changes a man's mind about everything. It changes a woman's mind about everything.

Because basically the way mankind walks through this life is he views death. You see, God's eternity is written upon our hearts. Man has to suppress what is known in his own soul about God.

Romans 1 says there's no true atheist. And the reality is that when mankind basically thinks about standing before God, I've actually talked to some people before on the streets that said, well, when I die, I'm going to tell God. You see, that's how man is.

Because even if you're not so bold and brash to say it like that, even when you talk to the person who says, well, I've never killed anybody, see, they're saying the same thing. Well, I've got at least that in my life. You see, poor in spirit, there's no compartment where I can say, well, at least I'm okay there.

The poor in spirit have come to recognize nothing in my hands I bring. We sang it. Simply to thy cross I cling.

There's nothing there. Wretched mankind that we are. We don't have anything to pay with.

But mankind isn't disturbed by that because mankind doesn't see it. Because in his pride, mankind is blind to it. So he doesn't recognize it.

You do recognize what's happening here. Poor in spirit is different from the fact that we are poor in spirit. You see, all the world is in a spiritual poverty.

Being poor in spirit means you've come to recognize it. And I'll tell you this, obviously, it's something that only God can open our eyes to. And here's the reality, because the moment your eyes have been opened to it, Jesus comes along and says, no matter how wretched you may now feel about yourself, Jesus says yours is the kingdom.

No exceptions. I mean, that's the reality. This is a person that is going to recognize and confess their sinfulness.

And you remember the difference. You remember how it was with the Pharisee and the tax collector. See, the tax collector obviously was poor in spirit.

Why? Because he stood far off. He did not dare raise his eyes to heaven. He stood with his head down.

God be merciful to me, the sinner. See, he saw it all. And he was appealing to mercy.

Because that's what happens when your eyes get opened to the true condition that you're in. You recognize, I don't have any claims on God except mercy. That's it.

Is there mercy for me? Is there mercy for me? Because you see yourself. You're vile. You're this thing.

You deserve to be cast away. There's nothing in you that can be offered. And you recognize that those sores and that ugliness, it's not just that I'm in this condition.

It's my fault. I'm blameworthy. I'm guilty.

I did this. I'm the rebel. This disgrace is mine.

I brought myself to dishonor. Mankind is unaware. Now see, you have to come back to this.

This is such the critical matter of thinking about this. It is a person who has come face to face with a fact. The blessed one of our text has discovered a fact that is but little known.

The masses of mankind are just utterly ignorant. And all you have to do is look around. Last time we were here, we were involved with the evangelism at this church.

Go out on the streets, either city center or Middleton. I cannot tell you how many times we offered tracts to people. It happened all the time.

What did the people respond with? I'm good. I'm okay. Do you know something? If it broke in upon them what they truly were in the sight of God, they would not have slept that night.

They would have taken the tract. They would have been stopped in their tracts, or even more, they would have fallen on their face on the ground. Because that's exactly what's going to happen on judgment day.

Because I'll tell you what happens on judgment day. Suddenly it's all peeled away. Men are naked in the sight of God, and they suddenly see what they are by seeing who He is.

Because that's what always happens. You remember what happened to Isaiah when he stood in the presence of God there in Isaiah 6. Suddenly he was aware of who he was. On judgment day, that is going to be the terror of it.

Men suddenly who had very boastful mouths here are suddenly going to be silent. They are going to see themselves for who they are before this infinitely holy Christ who sits on this throne. In light of judgment day, that's what happens in this world when suddenly it breaks in upon the sinner who and what they are.

The world out there, so far from realizing, they're destitute. You know what the world's like. High esteem.

They're like the Pharisee. What did the Pharisee do? Thank God that they weren't like other people. And you know, that's how people in this world are.

They can always find somebody that they believe that they're better than. Somebody, you know, well I'm not as bad as so and so. We were having some conversation about, well, I can tell you that this happens in various times in various families.

I was the black sheep of my family. But you know what? When God saved me, the family wasn't happy. The family seemed disgusted.

Do you know what happens when the black sheep in a family gets saved? It suddenly causes everybody else to have to look at themselves. And see, when that person was the black sheep, guess what? Everybody else was always better. And that makes people feel good.

That builds confidence. You know, look, I'm better than him. And as soon as we can say that, we think, certainly we're okay.

Certainly, I've never done anything that would demand hell. But you see, when that person gets saved, suddenly people don't like it. I've found people like me better as a black sheep than like me as a Christian.

And suddenly it opens their eyes to some reality. They begin to recognize, wow, that's never happened to me. Or wow, now all of a sudden they don't measure up and they don't like that.

The reality is that we're always trying to produce this affirmation within us. Have you ever noticed? This is not by accident. Have you ever noticed, like Disney movies? Have you ever noticed this message? You just trust yourself.

You trust your own heart. That message is prominent today. That is right out of the pit.

Because Jesus Christ, as He wants to tell us about His kingdom, He starts right at this place. Blessed are the poor in spirit. And the message, it's subtle, not so subtle.

It's coming to our children. Self-esteem. You know, they're always trying to, even this occult, even the magic aspect.

Look for some power within you. Look for some ability within you. They're always looking inside, trying to find that good, trying to find that power, trying to find something.

Self-esteem and self-exaltation, it's self-attainment. It's always there. Believe in yourself.

That idea just controls the world. Just express yourself. Believe in yourself! You ever heard that? I mean, that's how the world talks.

That just controls everything. But wherever the truth as to our true condition is known, be certain of this, God did that in the same way. In the same way that Jesus could say, Simon Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal that to you.

Simon, son of Jonah. My Father revealed that to you. So it's the same way.

You know that the God who created out of nothing. Same God who has to show us we're nothing. Nobody comes to this perception of themselves, this attitude about self, naturally.

It has to be produced by the Almighty. That same God, it's altogether true He gives life, but you know what? Supernaturally, He's got to slay us. We've often heard, you've got to get people lost before you'll ever get them saved.

That is altogether true. Jesus said, who needs a doctor? It's only the sick man. But you know what? We are way too healthy.

In Adam, Adam has a very healthy race. The biggest problem in getting people saved is not their sin, it's their good. Brethren, there's no question about that.

I see it in my own family. I can talk to them. They can acknowledge to some degree they're not perfect.

They've done sin in their life. But they will not come to Christ. You see, people don't really see the value of the doctor until they see all the sores and they see the disease.

Pride is so blinding. It shuts a man's eyes. What we need is, we need omnipotence to lay bare in our own brains what we truly are.

And I'll tell you, a vision of who we really are, like I say, it can be very painful, but there's nothing that's so healthy. Our imaginary goodness, it is so hard to conquer. No thank you, I'm good! That's a lie! You see what happens? Jesus says, I came to bear witness to the truth.

Let that sink in. Do you recognize this? What happens when a sinner sees they are nothing? They don't have a penny to pay with and they deserve hell. Do you know what just happened? As horrible as... I mean, it lays the person open.

It's bitter water to drink. I mean, you drink a cup of this is going to cause me to see who I really am. My true condition before God.

I drink it. I look in the mirror and I'm this hideous, deformed, diseased, full of sores, covered with dung. And you say, that's horrible! That's bitter water to drink! But do you realize what just happened? Suddenly, for the first time, the person is dealing with truth.

You see, it's the first truth which will lead us to many others. But that's the first truth. And that's exactly what Jesus said.

You've got to be sick before you come to the doctor. You see, you may be sick, but you don't go to the doctor until you realize you're sick. Then you go to the doctor.

You see, that truth will open the door for all the other truths to follow. It's a hard truth. But you know what? If that's all the further you are, I'm wretched.

But Jesus says, yours is the kingdom. It's a phenomenal thing. Blessed is that poor, cast down one who knows his condition, feels desperate, destitution in all of it.

I mean, you look at the world. Oh, how healthy they all are. I'm good.

Don't need that. Yeah, I'm going to die not too long, but probably not going to be today. I don't need that.

I'll tell you this, he who loves his own soul is never going to despise knowing the worst about yourself. That is the absolute healthiest place you can be in, coming to a true self-assessment, a true self-knowledge. Bitter water? Bitter water.

But oh, how healthy it is for you to know the worst of your situation. God, help us to know the worst of our situation. Staying blind, staying in our pride, that's to be in the category of the cursed.

And you know one of the things that I do find interesting is think about what the law is meant to do. Have you ever read, like in Romans 3, Romans 5, Romans 7, there's various places, Galatians, it tells us why the law was given. 1 Timothy 1. Why is the law given? Who's it for? Exactly.

What's it meant to do? To show the sinfulness of sin? Romans 7. To show them the sinful. Do you see the first gospel blessing picks up right where the law leaves us when it's done its best. That's what the law is for.

It's supposed to bring us right here. As we look at the law, you know what man does with it? He approaches the law with health. I mean, he was a little kid.

Mom, what do I have to do to get to heaven? I remember asking my mom that. She was in there at the ironing board in my bedroom. I said, Mom, what do you have to do? She said, keep the Ten Commandments.

That's a good Catholic answer, right? So, you know, off to the Bible I went. Found the Ten Commandments. Must have been in the index because I don't know how else I would have found it.

There it is, Exodus 20. I read through them. Had I kept any of them? I mean, as I went through, for one, well, I thought I kept those.

Maybe I broke these. And what was my attitude? Well, I just have to do better. I have to work.

Oh, how healthy we are, right? Well, I can do this. I just have to work on this. Now, listen.

Think about this beatitude. Blessed are the poor in spirit. It's the first of the beatitudes.

It's the first in the matter of Christian experience. Honestly. Now, listen.

You recognize, this is where truth starts. This is where the Christian experience starts. As I said before, we all have to face the Sermon on the Mount.

Because this is the starting point. This is where Christianity starts. And see, everything flows from here.

All the other beatitudes follow this. Because it's in this soil. Listen.

Blessed are they who mourn. But who's going to mourn until they see what they truly are? Blessed are the meek. But I'll tell you what, nobody is meek towards other men until they once have been reduced to nothing and see what they really are.

You'll be meek towards other men when you recognize you're nothing. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. But you know what? As long as you think you've got your own righteousness, you don't hunger and thirst.

You see, it's the soil from which all the others grow. And oh, by the way, I am going to remind you of this first beatitude until you probably say, why does he keep saying that? I'm going to keep saying it all the way through the Sermon on the Mount because it is essential. Do you realize when God says that unless you forgive others, you will not be forgiven? That's in the Sermon on the Mount.

When He says unless you tear out that eyeball of lust, you'll be thrown into hell. When He says judge not lest you be judged. When He says if you hate others, you're in danger of hell.

He says be perfect as your Father is perfect. You see why we don't make this into a method of salvation? Because you always have to go back to the first beatitude. You see, the Sermon on the Mount flows out of this.

Not just the other beatitudes, the whole sermon. Do you recognize what Jesus has just done? He said, blessed are those who recognize their nothing. I want you to be perfect.

I want you to be pure. I want you to put away lust and put away hate and put away all this. You can kind of feel what Jesus is doing in all of this is He's basically describing the very kind of person who is capable of attaining to these things.

Why? Because you know what happens when a person recognizes they're empty? They look to the Lord to fill them. That's what happens when people are broken and destitute and bankrupt. When they see that they are miserable and wretched and blind and naked and poor.

What does a beggar do? He opens his mouth and he begs. It's like Jesus sets up a standard in the Sermon on the Mount that's a standard for beggars. Because what the beggar does is he goes to the Lord as a pauper and he says, Lord, I'm empty.

I can't do this. I'm a failure. I'm miserable.

Lord, You know in myself I'm going to fall flat on my face. And You're telling me to live a life that just seems way beyond what I've ever been capable of. Lord, I don't have the ability to do this.

And see, this person it says gets filled. This person gets help. This person is shown mercy.

This person is endowed with grace. You see, when a person's in this position they're constantly looking to Christ. They're not the people who I'm going to pull myself up by my own bootstraps.

Okay, Jesus says, lop the head off this sin. Yeah, boy, I've got my act together. I'm going to go do it.

No. You see, what happens is we've got to go back to the first beatitude every single time. Because if you go back there, what you recognize is I'm bankrupt.

And so where are the eyes of the bankrupt? They're constantly on Christ. They open their mouth to Him. They're like blind Bartimaeus.

Blind Bartimaeus, he recognized I'm blind. I can't make myself see. And he cried out and he cried out and he cried out and he gave Jesus no rest until he got his sight.

Well, it's going to be the same as we go through the sermon. As we find ourselves moving through this sermon on the mount, what's going to happen is if we have a true recognition of who we are and our own spiritual poverty before God, then what happens is we're crying out for mercy all the time. We're crying out for grace.

We're crying out for ability. We're crying out that the Lord would change us and make us what we need to be. The first blessing, blessed are the poor in spirit.

The first one, it's really unlike the others. You see, it's an absence rather than a presence of some praiseworthy quality. As you move down, well, blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the merciful. But you know where it starts is this first one, this man or this woman is distinguished not for some virtue that they have. It's rather just the opposite.

The chief characteristic is this person is aware of his own sad deficiencies. That's where we start. It's intentional.

Undoubtedly, the Lord put this one first absolutely on purpose in order that the grace that he manifests will all the more be seen as grace. You just have to come back. Can you imagine the Jew? I mean, they're coming in here, and they're thinking, yeah, the Davidic kingdom is going to be set up in Rome.

Yeah, they're going to be shown a thing or two. And you come in there, and this guy is claiming to be the Messiah, and oh boy, the kingdom is at hand. And you sit down and you're listening.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus doesn't first put purity. He first puts poverty.

He doesn't first put blessed are the merciful. He first puts blessed are those who recognize they need mercy. And that's where it is.

Brethren, I cannot emphasize to you enough, we all have to come face to face with this. Every one of us. This is life and death.

This is the kingdom or not the kingdom. This is in. This is out.

Poor in spirit. It doesn't say poor in money. It's a spiritual reality.

This teaches us that we need a mind above every other thing, spiritual realities. It's a matter that concerns us at the inside. We cannot be satisfied with external religion.

None of that. Christianity is no just mere form of godliness. Merely just the letter of truth.

It's not that. Brethren, we require the secret meaning of all of it. What I mean is this.

We require the Spirit of God to do something in here where it's not seen to others. Where there's some kind of revelation. We need that reality.

It doesn't work to come and play church. It doesn't work to come and sing hymns and not have the reality on the spiritual level. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

This doesn't have to do with material possessions. It doesn't have to do with plain religion, plain Christianity. It has to do with something that's happened on the inside.

God has done something omnipotent, supernatural. We need God to bring this truth into our innermost soul. He's got to teach us.

This is where truth starts. Everything short of this blessing is to come short. I mean, it's just to come short.

If you don't start here, you come short altogether. And if the only perception up till now, if the only perception that you've been given is simply this one, this painful discovery that you're just a putrefying mass of sores, but still, Jesus pronounces His blessing upon you. And blessed you are and blessed you will be.

It's a good place to be. It's a paradox, is it not? I mean, they're the ones that get heaven. Really? This massive mess? These people? I mean, when everybody else has it together and everybody else is so good and everybody else is so prominent, stuck on their self-esteem and high in this world, this poor, pathetic group of people, these people that have this attitude about themselves that are devastated.

And listen, but I'll tell you this, theirs is the kingdom and you can't find a greater promise given to Abraham or Isaac or Jacob or David or any of them, any of the prophets, any of the martyrs, any of the apostles. I mean, if you're that poor little one that's seen yourself, it doesn't matter how obscure you are, how backwards, where you've come from, Jesus says, you can be sure of this, you are partaker of the greatest, imaginable promise ever given to men. Yeah, wow.

The poor in spirit. They're the ones lifted from the dunghill and where are they put? I mean, you think about the world. Who do they like? Who are the heroes in the movies? You know who they are.

They're the ones that got their act together. They're the ones that get revenge. I mean, we know.

The self-esteem. They're the athletes in the world. They're the political ones.

You know, who are the ones that are worshipped? Who are the ones that... I mean, you're in the land of kings and queens. Prime ministers. We've got our presidents.

You know, people... And yet, you know what the reality is? You know who the true kings and queens are in this world? This motley crew that we're talking about. And the day is going to come when the Googles and the Facebooks and all of this is going to be burned up. And you know who's going to rise up out of the ashes and show to be the true kings and queens and to sit on the throne? It's this group.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. That's it. These are the folks.

The world, they worship the ambitious. The sports heroes. We know how it is.

The real kings and queens in this world are one day going to be recognized. And they don't come from Washington. They don't come from London.

They come out of groups like this. And this is one of the reasons that so many of us, we keep going because we know. It's kind of like... I mean, brethren, I trust that there are any number of you in here, you basically can say what Peter said.

Jesus said, do you want to go away too? Do you want to go away? Do you want to go away? There's the door. You know, Jesus did speak like that. It's kind of like... Can you imagine being the disciples? These guys are walking out over here and he turns to them and he says, they're not going anywhere! He says, you guys want to go too? It's like, well, what are you picking on us for? They're the ones leaving.

But that's how Jesus was. You guys want to go too? And there's impetuous Peter again. But did he not speak the truth? Lord, where are we going to go? You see, if you've been once brought to this place, Bunyan very artfully wrote this into Pilgrim's Progress.

You remember when Christian was quizzed about what happened to Pliable? Where'd he go? And Christian said, if he would have had this load on his back like I had, he wouldn't have gone back. You see, this is where we're at. Lord, where are we going to go? I mean, you've shown us.

Lord, we're nothing without you, and we deserve hell. Lord, you've shown us we're bankrupt. We're wretched.

We're poor. We're pitiable. We're blind.

We're naked. But we don't have anything. Where are we going to go? You have the words of eternal life.

God help me, I'm not going anywhere. Because I know what I am in and of myself. I desperately need Him.

That's what happens. And I'll tell you this, only the poor in spirit have any evidence in their life that they are possessors of heaven. None others.

Poor in spirit. Those words sound like they describe people that are owners of nothing, and yet they're owners of everything. This is the great paradox.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. It's like we wear the rags of poverty, but when you pull those rags back, there's gold underneath. That's the reality.

So, I'm just going to end with this. Even though Jesus does not go here, I know that if I'm preaching this, somebody sits there and says, what you just described, I have not felt. I mean, I can know theoretically.

I can know academically. I know in theory the truth that you're saying. I can read it off the page of my Bible too.

But if I'm going to be honest, I guess I've never been brought to feel that I'm empty. I've never been brought to feel my need. I've never been brought to feel my sickness like you're talking about.

I can imagine somebody, whether it's in this room or wherever my voice may go through the technology, somebody's going to wonder, so if Jesus is just basically saying what's true, I haven't experienced this,

what? I'm just on the outside and that's it? Is that all there is? I might as well eat and drink for tomorrow I die? That person I want to address. How does somebody become poor in spirit? Well, obviously, the last thing you would ever do is try to make yourself poor in spirit because that's just absolutely... to undo what being poor in spirit is, it's absolutely the opposite. For you to think that you could make yourself that way is to be the opposite of that.

The person that's poor in spirit recognizes they're destitute and they can't do anything to help themselves. So the last thing you want to do is try to make yourself poor in spirit like some machinations of your own. So here he is stating this fact.

Where do we go? Is it all just hopeless? How does somebody become poor in spirit if they're not? Well, the first thing is this. Don't look at yourself. I mean, yeah, you can look at yourself to see the sores, but don't look to yourself to make this happen.

Listen, what you want to do is this. Think. And you want your thinking to be controlled by Scripture.

So if you have any hope that you who are not poor in spirit would become poor in spirit, you can't think that you'll ever arrive there without washing your minds in Scripture. What you want to see is this. You want to look at God.

Look at His holiness. Look at how He kills sinners. Look at how He killed everybody but eight souls.

Look at how even righteous men tremble before Him and they fall as putty at His feet. Look at that. Look at who the God of Scripture is.

Look at His greatness. Read Job. Look at His magnificence.

Spend time there. Go there. Asking the Lord to show you who He is.

But listen, it's kind of like... I mean, I know this is only an illustration. It's a bad one at that. But you recognize what I'm saying here.

You all like your football here. You all like your Manchester teams. I see a lot of kids.

I'm living across from a school. I see those little guys. They can really kick that ball hard.

But you know, one of you men, if you got around like Paris boys and you start kicking the ball, well, you could probably feel like I can kick farther than they can. I can kick harder than they can. I can maybe even kick more accurately than they can.

Well, yeah, when you're around little boys, if you're older, you can feel pretty good about yourself. You can feel pretty superior. Yeah, but go out on the field, one of your Manchester teams, and try to dribble the ball around out there.

Try to kick there. Compare. You see, now all of a sudden, you feel pretty little.

You feel pretty small. That's what going to Scripture and finding God's requirements, finding God's law. You see, that's what it's meant to do.

It's supposed to strip us. It's for sinners. Why? Because it causes us to see I'm a failure.

It causes us to see the sinfulness of sin. It causes us to see that we fall short. And look at Christ.

Because I'll tell you, what you find in Christ is you find perfection the way you've got to be if you're ever going to stand before God. Because the wage of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Jesus is the only one that perfectly walked that. You just look at His life. You look at how He, even as we talked about on Friday, look at how He interacted with women.

Men, that ought to devastate you on the spot. Ladies, seriously, you compare yourself to Christ, to the love that He had, the purity that He had, the holiness that He had, and we fail. We miserably fail.

But I'll tell you this, the Spirit of God is in the business of working on sinners in a way that glorifies Christ, not glorifies you. You see, what you want is all your boasting to come to an end where you can't even say, well, at least there's this one place in my life. No.

No. What we want is we want to see into Scripture. I'll tell you this, think on judgment day.

You just think on what the God of Scripture really requires when you stand there on judgment day. See, think on Christ. Think on God.

Think on their holiness. Think on the cross. Why do you think God had to pour out His wrath on His Son on that cross? Because man's good? What does that tell you about your sin? What does it tell you about sin at all? That God would crush His own Son, pour His soul out like water upon that gibbet, upon the tree, as Scripture calls it.

Why? My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? You see, you want to think there. And if you say, no, I won't do that, then the kingdom is not yours and it never will be and you will perish. But I know this, that if there's anything to make us nothing, it's to look into the holiness of God.

If there's anything to make us feel like Isaiah did, that I'm a man of unclaimed, it's just to gaze at the God of Scripture. And you have to be thinking, are you pure like He is? This is just a mechanical reading of Scripture. Do you remember what happened to Peter? Remember when he fell down? And he said, Lord, depart from me.

Why? I'm a sinful man. Where did that come from? I'll tell you where it came from. It came from just being in the presence of Christ and watching Him and seeing Him, hearing Him, beholding what He did, beholding who He was, and suddenly Peter is struck by who He is.

Just like with Isaiah. You want to be struck with who you are? Get in the presence of God. Go where He is.

And I'll tell you where God works. He works in the midst of His Scripture. If you're not poor in spirit, that's where you want to go and you want to look.

Jesus expected this. Jesus reproved those who saw His mighty works and didn't repent. And the repentance He's looking for is people to change their mind about their own goodness and about their desperate need of Him.

And see, how did it come? It came in the face of His miracles. He said you ought to look at His miracles and something ought to resonate within you. I need this Christ.

I need Him. Don't get obsessed with how much you feel your poverty. That's not it.

No one gets obsessed with how much they thirst before they drink. I mean, people won't get obsessed with that. If you have any desire, drink.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, let Him who hears come. Let Him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let Him take the water of life freely.

How much do you have to desire? Just enough to take the glass of water. It doesn't matter if it's great or small. How much do you need to see your desperate condition? It doesn't say it doesn't matter.

As long as you see your need of Christ and you go to Him, that's sufficient. Nothing in my hands I bring simply to Thy cross I cling. So this is the starting point.

The first beatitude. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Father, I pray that You would add Your blessing to that which was said today.

In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/53e0wNbGx9g.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**