



We are a congregation of the Lord's people looking for you. We desire to love our community and neighbors as our Lord has taught us to do. Please allow us to be an encouragement to you as you are an encouragement to us by visiting with us today.

If you have any questions about anything you see or hear today, please stop someone and ask questions. We are seeking to be New Testament Christians, and as such we desire to share what we have been given. We want to be ready to give you an answer for what we do and say (1 Peter 3:15)

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Thank you for being our Guest today!

Blessed are the Poor In Spirit V.P. Black

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Most of us have some idea as to what it means to be poor in material things, or to be poor in health. But there are things about being poor that we may have overlooked. Poverty does not consist altogether in having few possessions. A man does not feel poor until he realizes his need, or even his desire for the things that he cannot have. And this man is not really poor, until he feels his poverty.

The Indian, who roamed the country in the long ago, had very little, and yet he was not poor. He had all he wanted or needed.

To be really poor in spirit is to be destitute of the things the spirit needs and to realize that need. The unsaved man is destitute of every spiritual blessing because he is out of Christ, and all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3, II Tim. 2:10, II Cor. 5:17, Rom. 8:1).

The unsaved man must recognize the fact that he needs God; he needs the Saviour; he needs faith; he needs cleansing from sin; he needs righteousness, he needs hope; and without these things, he is destitute.

When Jesus said, ***"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners,"*** he did not mean that some were so righteous that they did not need him. Every accountable person has sinned (Rom. 3:23, I Kings 8:46, I John 1:7-9). He was talking about the self-righteous Pharisees who felt superior to Jesus and said they did not need him. Jesus Christ did not call them, nor does he call such today. He calls those who are poor in spirit (Matt. 11:28-30).

As long as a person delights in his sin, he does not feel it a burden and will not get rid of it. He will not seek the Saviour, as he does not feel the need of him.

For thus saith the high and loft One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15).

Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all these things have mine hand made, and all these things have been said the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isa. 66:1-2).

(Continued on next page)

TODAY IS MINE

I've shut the door
on yesterday
Its sorrows and
mistakes;
I've locked within its
gloomy walls
Past failures and
heartaches;
And now I throw
the key away
To seek another
room,
And furnish it with
hopes and smiles
And every spring
time bloom.
No thought shall
enter this abode
That has a hint of
pain,
And every malice
and distrust
Shall never therein
reign;
I've shut the door
on yesterday
And thrown the key
away;
Tomorrow holds no
doubt for me,
Since I have found
today.

-Selected

WHY, GOD?

Jared Green

If you have ever questioned the motives or works of God, you are not alone. The Book of Habakkuk shows a meaningful dialogue between God and His prophet, Habakkuk. Looking at the historical setting, Judah (God's covenant people) was caught up in sin. In the 620s B.C., under the reign of King Josiah, Judah had experienced spiritual reform and, in many ways, had turned back to God. Habakkuk's dialogue came after the death of Josiah and following Judah's return to its sinful ways. Habakkuk questioned God twice. First, he perceived that God was inactive in the face of wickedness, and he questioned how He could allow such egregious sin to go unpunished. Second, Habakkuk questioned how God could use a more wicked people (Babylon) as a means by which to punish a less wicked people (Judah). As we look at two things that God says in response to Habakkuk, it is my hope that we can keep them in our hearts when we find ourselves asking, "Why?"

First, **we serve a God who never ceases His works.** In response to Habakkuk's first complaint, God said **"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told"** (1:5). In our mortal minds, it is impossible to see the complex ways in which God is working in this world. In the ensuing verses, God explained to Habakkuk that He had not turned a blind eye to sin and injustice. In the same way today, God is not turning a blind eye to the things of this world. Our God is very much at work, in ways we could never understand.

Second, **faithfulness to God is paramount**, even in the face of tribulation and lack of understanding. After Habakkuk's second complaint, God told him, **"The righteous shall live by his faith"** (2:4). There are two things we need to understand about this statement. First, **faithful living brings God's spiritual blessing.** God's message to Habakkuk was that those who are faithful to Him through hard times will live. Those faithful to God will be blessed by God. Second, **faithfulness is not a singular action, but a way of life.** As one writer said, "The true believer, declared righteous by God, will persevere in faith as the pattern of his life."

In the face of uncertainty, we, as followers of God, can persevere. We do so in living by faith and understanding that God, even when we do not understand, never ceases His work on this earth. That brings me joy and hope, and I pray it does the same for you. God loves you.

Seven days without prayer makes one weak.

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick (Luke 5:31).

The poor in spirit have no resources of their own that will enable them to make a plan by which they can save themselves, nor can they generate light by which to walk.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his step (Jer. 10:23).

We are all desperately poor, and when we realize this, we will depend upon God. If a man is a condemned sinner and does not know, or knowing it, does not care, he is in a pitiable condition, for nothing can be done for him. But if a man is lost and mourns over his condition, he can be helped, and that is a blessed condition.

The Lord is not suggesting that material poverty is a good thing. Although the Bible is explicit in its warnings against riches, it never teaches that poverty is virtuous. It is not good for people to live in slums, or to be without food and medical attention. These things are more likely to produce materialism than spirituality; more likely to produce sinful lives than righteous lives.

These beatitudes are regarded by many as maxims, mottoes, or some kind of social document to govern or regulate social affairs. But the sermon on the mount is a doctrinal declaration.

To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of oneself; to be aware of the fact that we are sinners and have no righteousness of our own. To be poor in spirit is to be willing to be where God places us; to bear what he lays upon us; to go where he bids us; and to do what he commands us.

We could say without doing harm to this beatitude, **“Blessed are the poor on the inside.”** He is begging on the inside, no necessarily on the outside.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psa. 51:17).

It is not material poverty that Jesus commends in the first beatitude, but rather the complete poverty of spirit necessary for the possession and enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven. In fact, nowhere does the Lord teach there is inherent merit in material poverty, anymore than he teaches there is inherent merit in material prosperity.

It is possibly true that materially poor are more likely than the rich to seek the true happiness that comes from God and not depend upon material things for their well-being. In this way only can poverty be accepted as a more blessed state than prosperity.

It is possible for poverty to be anything but praise-worthy. It is also possible for prosperity to be anything but blame-worthy. It is possible for one to be poor in spirit, while, at the same time, to be prosperous in material things. These people possess their wealth instead of their wealth possessing them. Such people are willing to give it up at any moment, if it is God's will. These people can say, as did Job, **“Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah”** (Job 1:21).

The scriptures plainly affirm that the righteous God can only bless those who are humble, who sincerely empty themselves that God may fill them with his goodness through prayer and study of his word.

Poverty of spirit is not a fruit of nature. By nature we are well-pleased with ourselves, and foolish enough to believe that we deserve something good at the hands of God. Poverty of spirit is not to be found in the average religious person. How seldom do we read of one who is spiritually emptied, emptied of self-confidence, self-importance, and self-righteousness? That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God many times.

What is poverty of spirit? It is opposite of that haughty, self-assertive, and self-sufficient disposition which the world so much admires and praises. It is the very reverse of that independent and defiant attitude which refuses to bow to God, that is determined to brave things out, which says, as did Pharaoh, **“Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?”**

The poor in spirit are those who empty the heart of self that Christ may fill it with a sense of need and destitution. The first beatitude is foundational, describing a fundamental trait which is found in every regenerated soul.

The philosophers and wise of the world have never put the poor in spirit among their moral virtues, but Christ puts it first in the beatitudes.

Why did Christ put it first? He is teaching about a new kind of living, a new standard, and a new way of life. Becoming poor is the first things that must happen in the life of anyone who would enter the kingdom. The door is very low, and only those who knee down can enter through this door.

Worry does things to you. Prayer does things for you.

Kelli's Korner

One of the things that I personally have been trying to strengthen in my life is my relationship with God through prayer. It is so easy to have the desire to pray when everything in my life is going just the way I want it to and I'm thanking God for all that he has blessed me with. The difficult time comes for me when things are not going the way I want them to. I tend to start asking all kinds of questions like: Why is this happening to me? Why am I having to go through this? Why does this have to be so hard? And of course, my all-time favorite statement...THIS JUST ISN'T FAIR! I've noticed that as all these questions and statements make their appearance, my prayer life starts to disappear. Yes, we are commanded to thank God for our blessings, I Thessalonians 5:18 says, ***"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*** But how often do we thank God for the struggles we go through that make us stronger on the other side? How often do we actually believe Philippians 4:13, ***"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."***? Those two words, "all things" cover a lot! They cover all the struggles that we may have to face even though we are Christians. Being a Christian doesn't make us bulletproof from Satan. I must remind myself every single day to totally, 100% surrender my life to God and fully trust him. You see, I am sometimes guilty of thinking I can handle everything on my own without any help. Funny thing is, that always causes me more turmoil in the end. When and only when I realize that I have been leaving God out of the equation and go to him in prayer, first asking for his forgiveness for trying to do this alone, and second asking for his strength, courage, and wisdom in whatever I am dealing with, do I truly start to feel relief. I am not saying my problem disappears, a lot of times it does not. I am saying when I keep God where he is supposed to be, one way or another...EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY! Please, don't shut God out of your life. Sometimes, we don't even realize we are doing it. But as soon as we put our wisdom before his, we are shutting him out. Matthew 6:30 says, ***"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"*** God has promised us that he will take care of our every need. He will take care of us in his own way. I Peter 5:7 says, ***"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*** We must surrender our lives to him. Don't try to outsmart God, you will lose every time!

Prayerless pews make powerless pulpits.

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Mail me to
someone
who might
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