

The Poor in Spirit Երանիչ Հոգևոր Աղքատներու

Matthew 5:1-11

Last Sunday I started a new series from the Sermon on the Mount.

The beatitudes: *Makarios*, how fortunate and happy is the person. But you see it is very different how Jesus uses those words. Here is how one pastor describes:

Well, how can those make sense to 21st century person? Those values are in direct opposition to the values taught by Jesus.

Poor: Blessed are those who have lots of disposable income.

Those who mourn: Blessed are those who are assured of themselves and self-confident.

The Meek: Blessed are those who sit in powerful positions or know people in powerful positions.

The persecuted: Blessed are those give orders ¹

The beatitudes are not things you do so that you can become a “happy” person. They are not a checklist you accomplish. They are not teachings about behaving properly. No, these teachings are an **invitation to become members in the Kingdom of God**. They start from accepting how much one needs Jesus as Savior, King, Lord, guide, teacher, healer, comforter, the King of this new kingdom, the new creation. These are teachings **of seeking first His kingdom** and **His righteousness** and all things will come after that...all things.

As my pastor friend Shawn Reese described it, **“Living right-side up in an upside down world.”**²

We need to look at some general facts about the Beatitudes. Blessed in Greek is *Makarios*; it is translated as blessed, happy, fortunate, content, congratulations, in sync, right side up. It is a difficult word to translate. In Armenian “*yeraneli e.*” My translation is “How fortunate is that person.”

It all starts with the Kingdom of heaven and ends with it. One has to see that all the beatitudes are a result of **being in the kingdom of God**, the kingdom of Heaven. The kingdom of heaven is and not will be, (whereas in the rest of the beatitudes the future tense “will” is used). The kingdom is here with us. The kingdom is...

There is a continuity. It all starts with being poor in the spirit. The poor in spirit are the ones who have realized they are no one if they are not part of the Kingdom of Heaven. “I need God, I surrender”. Once you are there, you see your sins and the sins of the world around you and you mourn for them and ask for forgiveness; this leads you to be meek, who are the ones who are hungry to be fed by God, to have a right relationship with God and with others. That leads you to learn to be merciful, because Jesus is merciful. How can you be merciful if your heart is closed? Pure in heart leads you to see more than yourself in life. You become a peacemaker, which will lead you to be in trouble. In the end, people **will persecute you** for obeying God and becoming his child.

We cannot create those characteristics. They belong to Jesus. They are not a result of self-effort; they are gifts of grace, like the Fruit of the Spirit. You cannot buy them and earn them. Once you are a disciple of Christ, you will receive the beatitudes, because you received Jesus. The key is in the verse.

If this is Jesus’ work in our lives, so what is our role?

I ask you to always come to church hungry, empty, poor in spirit. Please come to Jesus in poor spirit every day. He has his part and we cannot be passive. Work out your salvation, Paul says. Yes, entering the kingdom is God’s gift of grace; no one can earn it. But once you are in it, God will help you and mold you. Christ will teach you to live right side up in upside down world.

When did things do wrong? (The upside-down world). In creation, God created Adam and Eve, and everything was living right-side up. Sin destroyed our relationship with God and each other. Everything went upside down. **In the OT writings**, we see the authors were looking forward to **the day that the Messiah** would come and things would turn back right-side up. It happened with the

coming of Christ. Because of him, our universe is saved. Because of him we have a chance to live right-side up in an upside down world.

Jesus is introducing a **new way of living, Be-attitudes, a new creation**. We have an invitation to become members of Kingdom of God. To enter the kingdom, one has to come in poor in spirit. Why? That is the only way one can enter. That is why the beatitude start with the poor in spirit.

Who did God choose to enter His Kingdom?

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (James 2:5)

Let me start with two ideas:

A. **Being materially poor is not fun.** I don't see anywhere in the Bible where it encourages us to be materially poor. In fact, God commands us to take care of the poor, the orphans and the widows. Christ commands us to a give a cup of water to the thirsty and hungry.

We read in Proverbs: **Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. (Prov. 30:7-9)**

B. **God is not asking us to be zero, no one.** He is not asking us to be a doormat. God made us in His image. God formed us, and we are the beloved children of God.

Why did God choose the poor?

1. The Poor in Spirit cannot bring anything to the Kingdom of God. We cannot come to God with an agenda. One has to be poor, give up and surrender.

We cannot enter the kingdom if we are not like children. Why?

They don't have status. They have no claim from heaven. They are dependent on the adults.

2. We find our new identity by Coming to God.

Please let me show you how some biblical characters came to God and what God did to them when they surrendered:

Abraham:

In his long journey, **Abraham** eventually learned who he was: **“Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.”** (Gen 18:27)

God made Abraham the father of all nations.

Jacob:

the deceiver, the man who thought he could do it on his own, the man who hid under a fake identity, said after wrestling with God: **“I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.”** (Gen 32:10)

God gave him a new name and a new identity.

David:

the man who sinned against the Lord, wrote in Psalm 51: **“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”** (Ps 51:17)

God gave him a new and clean heart.

The Centurion:

"When [Jesus] was not far off from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, 'Lord do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.' . . .

When Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude, 'I tell you, not ever in Israel have I found such faith'" (Luke 7:6-9)

The Lebanese Canaanite women:

She came to Jesus and Jesus challenged her.

She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly. (Matthew 15:27,28)

Peter:

In his fishing boat, where his self esteem is up (he is in the fish business), he comes to Jesus...

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8)

Christ gave him a new name and made him the Rock.

Paul:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; (2 Cor 4:7)

For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am,. (1 Cor 15:9-10a)

Paul wrote half of the New Testament.

So what is poor in Spirit?

- It is a sense of powerlessness in ourselves.
- It is a sense of spiritual bankruptcy and helplessness before God.
- It is a sense of moral uncleanness before God.
- It is a sense of personal unworthiness before God.

- It is a sense that if there is to be any life or joy or usefulness, it will have to be all of God and all of grace.³

Application:

We sang today Rock of Ages.

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.*

Come to Jesus today. If you never had prayed and asked his presence in your heart, today is the day.

If you gave your heart to Jesus but you need to reexamine your commitment. Ask yourself, am I coming daily to Jesus poor, asking him to fill me up with his spirit.

Am I taking these Beatitudes seriously, mourning on my sins, seeking him like hungry person, learning to be meek and humble from Jesus....

1. Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit **by Scott Carner**

2. I am thankful my friend pastor Shawn Reese and learn from his sermons on Sermon on the Mount

3. <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit-who-mourn> (John Piper)