

The Beatitudes (Lesson 3)

Introduction:

1. Jesus began His Sermon on the Mount by giving "the Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:3-12).
2. In the Beatitudes,:
 - a. Jesus explained how people who possess certain characteristics are "blessed" [spiritually happy, well off, fortunate]
 - b. Jesus revealed the special blessings that God gives to those who possess these characteristics.
3. In this lesson we are beginning a 2-part study of the first Beatitude in Matthew 5:3:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".
4. As we study this Beatitude, we are:
 - a. showing what it means to be "poor in spirit"
 - b. examining a number of Scriptures that relate to being "poor in spirit."

Discussion:

I. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "POOR IN SPIRIT"

- A. James Tolle defined poverty in spirit as "that spirit of deep humility that causes a person to recognize his frailties and weaknesses as a fallible human being, that makes him aware of his spiritual needs and thus of his utter dependence on God."
- B. People who are "poor in spirit":
 1. are aware of their spiritual needs (Romans 3:23)
 2. recognize their spiritual condition (Romans 6:23a)
 3. depend upon God for salvation (Psalm 51:1-2).
- C. Bible characters who possessed this Beatitude:
 1. David (Psalm 51:17)
 2. Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8)
 3. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 10:23-24)
 4. the woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7:36-50).
- D. The opposite of being "poor in spirit" is *pride*.
 1. Pride is addressed in Proverbs 28:26a; 8:13.
 2. Bible characters who had problems with pride:
 - a. the disciples (Matthew 18:1-4)
 - b. the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:5-7, 25-28)
 - c. the church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-18).
- E. In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14), which one was "poor in spirit?"

II. SCRIPTURES THAT RELATE TO BEING "POOR IN SPIRIT"

- A. 2 Chronicles 7:14
- B. Proverbs 29:23
- C. Isaiah 57:15
- D. James 4:6, 10
- E. 1 Peter 5:5-6

Conclusion:

1. The Scriptures help us to understand what it means to be "poor in spirit."
2. Those who possess this characteristic will receive a great blessing: "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"
3. In our next lesson we will continue our study of this Beatitude by looking at some additional Bible characters.