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## The Poor in Spirit

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The Beatitudes are divine blessings pronounced on those of godly character. These attributes are required for those who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven. The first of these blessings is prescribed for the “poor in spirit”. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:3 NKJV) What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

Poor means to be lacking, beggarly, destitute. We are familiar with poverty in the physical realm. The lack of physical necessities demands a constant recognition of one’s state and of one’s needs. Poverty is easy to recognize in the flesh but perhaps not so easy to recognize when it comes to our soul. A look at how early Christians perceived the spiritual riches that came to them through the gospel can help us understand what Jesus meant.

Paul warned the Ephesian brethren to remember their previous state now that they have experienced the exceeding riches of God’s grace. Ephesians 2:11-13 (NKJV) 11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. The spiritual riches afforded the Corinthians were a gift and not of their own merit, leaving no room for arrogance.

1 Corinthians 4:6-8 (NKJV) 6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

The Laodiceans were ultimately rebuked because they believed themselves to be rich, equating their spiritual condition with their physical wealth. Revelation 3:17 (NKJV) 17 Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—. Physical blessings had lulled the Laodiceans into spiritual stagnation.

Jesus taught his disciples early in His ministry that it would be difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom. (Matt 19:23-25) Those who believe they are self-sufficient find it hard to submit to God. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NKJV) 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 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; 28 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, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

The Ephesians were to remember that they were gifted life, hope and a relationship with God by God’s exceedingly rich grace. The Corinthians were gifted their spiritual riches and status and needed to exercise humility. The Laodiceans were in dire need of repentance in order to regain the spiritual riches they had discarded while living in physical luxury. In hindsight, the “poor in spirit” are those who are acutely aware of their spiritual condition. That condition is abject spiritual poverty. We are without God or hope before obeying the gospel and indescribably rich thereafter. The “poor in

spirit” do not boast, recognizing that all we need and ultimately have comes from God. The “poor in spirit” do not grow complacent letting abundant blessings slip from our grasp.

God indeed blesses the humble and resists the proud. (Prov. 3:34; James 4:6) 1 Peter 5:6-7 (NKJV) 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

## Jesus is Lord

Willard M. Cox

What is meant by the truth that Jesus is Lord? It means that Jesus is the One in charge. Jesus has all authority (Matthew 28:18). He is the King of His kingdom (John 18:36). He is the Head of the body, the church (Colossians 1:18). Jesus is the “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15). In Peter’s sermon in Acts 2, he preached: “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ” (v. 36). When the people heard this truth that Jesus is Lord, they respected His authority and yielded to His will, and repented and were baptized when Peter, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, answered their question by telling them what to do (v. 38). Peter did not tell them to say the sinner’s prayer, nor did he tell them you do not have to do anything if you already believe in Jesus.

Many times Jesus is called “Lord” in the New Testament. In John 13:13, Jesus said, “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (vs. 14-17). Jesus is Lord, but he was not arrogant about it. Jesus, as Lord, was still humble enough to wash the disciples’ feet and gave us an example to be humble enough to do it, too. In Luke 6:46, Jesus asked: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” In order for Jesus to be our Savior, He must be our Lord first. A person must first be humble enough to submit to the authority of Jesus in order to obey His terms of salvation, so he can save him/her. The Holy Scriptures tell us of “...mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 1:4). “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also look for the Savior” (Philippians 3:20). Peter links “Lord” and “Savior” to Jesus a few times 2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:2,18).

Jesus is the “one Lord (Ephesians 4:5). He is the “only Potentate” (1 Timothy 6:15). Jesus is the only Savior. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come unto the Father but by Jesus (John 14:6). Paul wrote: “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11). Jesus is Lord and every person should submit in obedience to His teaching while the opportunity is given. On the judgment Day, everyone will admit to the fact that Jesus is Lord (Romans 14:11- 12). Please do not put it off till then.