

**Providence Reformed Baptist Church - Sunday, November 29, 2020**

**Sermon Series: The Gospel of the Kingdom – Matthew**

**Message 17. Poor in Spirit – Matthew 5:3**

**Pastor Phillip M Way**

- I. Defining the Terms – vs. 3
  - A. Blessed – a privileged recipient of Divine favor
  - B. Poor – beggar, one dependent upon others for support, destitute, powerless, having nothing to offer
  - C. Spirit – inner life, the inner man, not material poverty
  - D. Definition
    1. To know your own spiritual poverty before God.
    2. “The basis of Christian experience.” – CHS
    3. “The question in Heaven’s Kingdom is not, ‘Are you a peer?’, but ‘Are you poor in spirit?’” – CHS
- II. Our Complete Inability to Please God by Human Effort
  - A. Unqualified
    1. This sermon that defines the character and qualities of the citizen of God’s Kingdom begins by telling us that we cannot qualify ourselves, we cannot fulfill the standards by ourselves.
    2. “We are so entirely controlled by the power of sin, that the whole heart, the whole mind, and all our actions are under its influence.” – Calvin – Rom. 7:18; Titus 1:15; Jer. 17:9; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 3:10-18; John 15:5
    3. What is required to be pleasing to God? – Heb. 11:6; Rom. 14:23; Rom. 8:7-8
    4. Boice Quote #1
  - B. Empty to be Filled
    1. We must fall in order to get back up – Prov. 24:16
    2. We must repent to be converted – Mark 1:15
    3. We must put off in order to put on – Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:8-17
    4. We are nothing in the presence of God, and it is nothing then that we can produce – Isa. 40:15-17, 21-23; Eph. 2:8-10
  - C. The Natural Man vs. Believer
    1. The World
      - a. Self-confidence, self-reliance, believe in yourself, love yourself, forgive yourself
      - b. “The idea that by Acts of Parliament alone you can produce a perfect society.” – MLJ
      - c. The power of education to save men and transform them and make them into decent human beings
    2. The Church
      - a. Depending on personality and natural talents, performance based evaluation -we preach ourselves and not Christ crucified
      - b. Using carnal standards to determine success – selfie love
      - c. Yet the greatest virtue is humility – Isa. 57:15
        - 1) Paul ministered in weakness, fear, and trembling – 1 Cor. 2:1-5
        - 2) If you glory in your humility, are you really humble?
        - 3) Being of no account in your own eyes – Phil. 2:3
    3. MLJ Quote #2
- III. How Do I Become Poor in Spirit?
  - A. First, am I Poor in Spirit?
    1. How do I feel about myself in terms of God and in the presence of God?

2. As I live my life, what are the things I am saying, praying, and thinking in regard to myself?
  - B. Second, nothing but a direct confrontation with the holy, just, and loving God will produce poverty of spirit in me. – Isa. 6:5 (compared to others you will always find one worse)
  - C. MLJ Quote #3
  - D. Ravenhill Quote #4

Boice Quote #1 – “The one thing that the law cannot do is to make a man righteous before God. Rather it condemns him. Consequently, if we are ever to understand the teachings of Jesus Christ, we must recognize as a first great principle that we just cannot abide by them. And we must come in faith to the only One who did fulfill them and who alone can fulfill them in those who give their lives to Him.” – Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, pg. 22.

MLJ Quote #2 – “If we are truly Christian we shall not rely upon our natural birth. We shall not rely upon the fact that we belong to certain families; we shall not boast that we belong to certain nations or nationalities. We shall not build upon our natural temperament. We shall not believe in and rely upon our natural position in life, or any powers that may have been given to us. We shall not rely upon money or any wealth we may have. The thing about which we shall boast will not be the education we have received, or the particular school or college to which we may have been. No, all that is what Paul came to regard as dung, and a hindrance to this greater thing because it tended to master and control him. We shall not rely upon any gifts like natural personality or intelligence, or general or special ability. We shall not rely upon our own morality and conduct and good behavior. We shall not bank to the slightest extent on the life we have lived or are trying to live. No; we shall regard all that as Paul regarded it. That is ‘poverty of spirit.’ There must be complete deliverance from and absence of all that. I say again, it is to feel that we are nothing, and that we have nothing, and that we look to God in utter submission to Him and in utter dependence upon Him and His grace and mercy. It is to experience to some extent what Isaiah experienced when, having seen the vision, he said, ‘Woe is me! I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips.’ That is ‘poverty of spirit.’ – Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, pg. 41

MLJ quote #3 – “How does one therefore become ‘poor in spirit?’ The answer is that you do not look at yourself or begin by trying to do things to yourself. The more you do that the more conscious of yourself you will be, and the less ‘poor in spirit.’ The way to become poor in spirit is to look at God. Read this book about Him, read His law, look at what He expects from us, contemplate standing before Him. It is also to look at the Lord Jesus Christ and to view Him as we see Him in the gospels. The more we do that the more we shall understand the reaction of the Apostles when, looking at Him and something He had just done, they said, ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ Their faith, they felt, was nothing. Look at Him and then you will have nothing to do to yourself. It will be done. You cannot truly look at Him without feeling your absolute poverty and emptiness. The you say to Him, ‘Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.’ Empty, hopeless, naked, vile. But HE is the all sufficient One – “Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me Savior, or I die! Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” – Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, pg. 42

Ravenhill Quote #4 – Isaiah had a vision in three dimensions. It was an upward vision – he saw the Lord; an inward vision – he saw himself; and an outward vision – he saw the world. It was a vision of height – he saw the Lord high and lifted up. A vision of depth – he saw the recess of his own heart. And a vision of breadth – he saw the world. A vision of holiness. Oh, Beloved. How this generation of believers needs the vision of God in all His holiness! A vision of hellishness – ‘I am undone.’ And a vision of hopelessness – ‘who will go for us?’ In this hour – when the average church knows more about promotion than prayer, has forgotten consecration by fostering competition, and has substituted propaganda for propagation – this threefold vision is imperative. My need and Thy great fulness meet – and I have all in Thee.” – Why Revival Tarries, pgs. 14, 16

## **Cross References**

### **Romans 7:18**

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

### **Titus 1:15**

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

### **Jeremiah 17:9**

9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

### **Ephesians 4:18**

18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

### **Romans 3:10-18**

10 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” 13 “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; 14 “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known.” 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

### **John 15:5**

5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

### **Hebrews 11:6**

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

### **Romans 14:23**

23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

### **Romans 8:7-8**

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.  
8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

### **Proverbs 24:16**

16 For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

### **Mark 1:15**

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

### **Ephesians 4:20-24**

20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

### **Colossians 3:8-17**

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

### **Isaiah 40:15-17; 21-23**

15 Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. 17 All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. 23 He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless.

### **Ephesians 2:8-10**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

### **Isaiah 57:15**

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

### **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

### **Philippians 2:3**

3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

### **Isaiah 6:5**

5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."

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