

reformation beginning. I mean by this that here is a message that has life in it, it has fire in it, He had selected these 12 men and now He commences the organization of His movement. The 12 men were to shall in the burden of responsibility of the laborer. They must be thoroughly instructed in the principles of the kingdom and it was equally necessary that the larger body of the disciples also understand these fundamentals. It should also be pointed out that the multitude perhaps were mainly interested in relief physical, temperal and external woes. Even the better informed and more spiritually minded here were dimly recognizing the greater spiritual needs that they had. This message was not intended to be the complete doctrine of morals. It falls short of giving all the doctrines of the Bible. There is no word on ~~regeneration~~ regeneration or atonement, justification by faith, and we hear many times people say that if I live by the Sermon of the Mount that would do. But the sermon on the mount was not meant to be that kind of standard. The design is to be introductory and to give the setting of the force of the foundation of principles of the Messianic kingdom which is to be incarnal, spiritual, and practical. It is given in a form of a paradox. This is something that seems to be contradictory and yet is not. For instance, happy are the unhappy. Happy are the poor. Blessed are they that mourn. These things seem to be the opposite

and yet they have deeper meaning. So we have here the citizen of the kingdom, the Law of the kingdom, the life and practical conduct of the kingdom given. I. This does not mean First, a pauper, a poor man. We must get the distinction here between circumstances. That is, a man who does not speak of a man who does not have property. It does not say for a man to cast away all of his wealth and treasures of his life so that he will be poor. A man may strip himself of all that belongs to him and yet his heart will not be poor in spirit. It does not mean that life is shortened by the wants and necessities of physical existence and yet he may not have any of this and be a long way from the spirit of poverty. For a man may bring not the blood of the Lamb but the first fruits of the soil as Cain. You may bestow all your goods to feed the poor, give your body to be burned and yet not come within a thousand miles of the true spirit of poverty spoken of here. And on the other hand you may be rich in this world's goods and your heart may be full of wants and love for Jesus Christ. So we would not regard this as commending poverty but surely that must be entirely wrong. The Bible nowhere teaches that poverty as such is a good thing. The poor man is nearer to the kingdom of God than the rich man. There is no merit or advantage in being poor. Poverty does not guarantee

spirituality. So the passage cannot mean that. Our Lord was even speaking of poor as meaning as not being possessed by worldly spirit. Not poor in a sense of relying upon riches and many poor people rely upon riches exactly as many rich people do. They say, If only I had so and so and they are jealous of those who have it.

Right at this point the Roman Catholic commentaries are fond in their interpretation of this statement in that sense. They regard it as scriptural authority for the assumption of voluntary poverty. Their patron saints, Francis of Assisi, and they regard him and his type as those who alone can inform. They say that it refers to those who have deliberately made themselves poor, turned their backs from wealth. Poor does not signify one is in a condition of want but rather one who is aware of the condition and seeks relief. He is not speaking here of a pauper, a beggar, a poor man in that regard. A French leader once said that if the whole world had enough to eat, money to spend, and security from the cradle to the grave, they would ask for nothing more. That that would make people happy. And yet there are people who are rich and are miserable. There are people who have everything that money can buy and yet are confused, bewildered, and miserable, and yet how many times have we heard people say If only I had a little security I would be happy. If only I had a good home, a new automobile,

A Happy Poor Man

Matt. 5:3

INTRODUCTION: The preacher is Jesus and He is a powerful preacher. The pulpit was up in the mountains. The occasion was the instructing of His disciples that He originally called and some other followers. The sermon is the sermon on the mount listed here in Matthew.

He comes to talk about the kingdom man and to tell us of His nature, principles, of that kingdom, He is going to discuss the kingdom which rules in the hearts of men. He will take a subject, one in which this kingdom rules. He will take a kingdom man and give His nature, character, and the formative principles operating in the kingdom man. These will be specific concrete ideas. We forget this right at the beginning Jesus draws a portrait. He paints a picture of the kingdom man.

First, there would be the character of the kingdom man. Second, his influence, third, his conduct, and fourth, his destiny. These things are very logical. It is up in the mountains on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee, the audience consisted of the 12 disciples whom He had just appointed and a large number of other disciples who had been instructed some- what in the principles of the kingdom. It was a large group of people. Luke says the company of his disciples and a great multitude of people. It was such a large audience that they could not have been gathered in a house. Here we see a great

manifestation of the fulness. We cannot be filled until we are first emptied. You cannot fill the new wine in a vessel which has partly filled already with old wine until the old wine has been poured out. There are two sides to the gospel. There is a pulling down and a raising up. We know here if a revolutionary idea. This is a very searching test of every one of us. We must come face to face with the whole message. We see it once that it condemns every idea that you have ever had of yourself. That you and I can do this thing ourselves is false. Something that you and I can carry out it seems impossible. The first thing that you must realize as you look at this is that you cannot do it, that you are utterly incapable in and of yourself and that any attempt to do it in your own strength is proof positive that you have not understood its message. Who perhaps would be more aware of this than Sampson. When he was surrounded by the Phillistines, and he wished not that the Lord had departed from him. No man is so ignorant as he that knows nothing and knows not that he knows nothing. No man is so poor as he who is destitute and yet thinks he is rich.

The Pharisee was not so their hypocrisy as it was their utter lack of knowledge they actually were in ~~dark~~ the sight of God. Jesus told a story about a man who thought that he was

a cottage, this or that, then I would be content. However, Jesus made it plain here that happiness and contentment are not found that way.

12. It does not mean poor spirit. Such as the Pharisee and the Scribes had who had a poverty of spirit. 13. It does not mean self depreciation. That is many people say I am nothing and nobody. They insist on taking the back seat and declaring that they are not worth your notice and yet you feel that they are as proud and desirous of the first place and that they take the chief positions at the feast. In other words he does not mean that those who act humbly because they are proud of the reputation of humility. They take pleasure and have kind of a smile of a sardonic for the humility which does not count itself humble for we know that Moses' face was shining and he was not conscious of it. Now that is true poverty of spirit. And we know the same thing was true in reference to Jesus that He had no ambition of His own to push Himself forward, there was no desire on His part to get ahead. He did not try to divert the Father's plan for His life, but He went step by step in absolute poverty of spirit he received God's impulse day by day in the steps that he was to follow. What does the world think.

Now we have just concluded what some men think concerning this truth and as we pursue this further, we look to see what the world thinks and what the world emphasises. It emphasises self reliance, self confidence, self expression, as we look at literature, if you want to get an in what this world says it says believe in yourself. Now this idea is controlling the life of men at the present time. It is controlling the whole life of man. They say the essence of a good salesman is to give an impression of confidence and assurance. If you want to impress your customer, that is the way to do it. Succeed in a profession by giving the impression that you are a success. Do you suggest that you are more successful than you actually are and people say That is the man go go to. And that is the principle of this present life. Self confidence, assurance, self reliance, the belief that men think they can bring in the kingdom by inacting some law in parliament or in congress and that that will produce a perfect society. You remember this is what took place in Charles Wesley's hymn "Jesus Lover of my Soul" a few years ago, which goes somethin like this: Just and holy is thy name, I am all unrighteousness, Vile and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace. People ridiculed him and said what man desires to admit that he is vile and full of sin. And they did not understand

Christianity. It was a complete misunderstanding of it. And you see they were not looking at man face to face with God, they were confronting each other. And if one feels anything in the presence of God save an utter poverty of spirit then he has never faced God. There is nothing so unchristian in the church today as this foolish talk about personality and about the appearance of people and self confidence and self expression. The Bible names great virtues as humility but the world comes to discuss a candidate and they begin to talk about everything else except this matter of the spirit. The People advertise themselves, you read the records of some of the great evangelists and others. They it is a complete reversal of what the Bible says. He advertises with photographs and putting self in the foreground. You remember that Paul said that we preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ. He went with fear and much trembling. He said his appearance was weak and his speech was not all that it should be. The world is a world feels that this increases favor but there is no golden key which opens the kingdom of heaven. Christ gospel is for the poor. Matt. 11:11 because it is for all. III. The positive meaning of poverty of spirit. First, conscious of as a spiritual pauper. We come now to see the real meaning as emptying while the others are a

that in himself he can't get anything or create anything, he can't build up anything goodness, he is without goodness, and he can't obtain any and he is really a spiritual pauper. That he is willing to take God's grace and willing to take God's favor. If he realizes his spiritual poverty. This is the first condition of entrance into the kingdom. It is the only condition as a matter of fact, to recognize that a man has no merit of his own. You cannot earn your way into the kingdom. You cannot do anything to possess the kingdom.

Second, vacant of self. This is another meaning. The beginning of the Christian life is that we do away with the idea of self. These things are not our own but they come from Jesus and He is the source of supply. You must be willing to sell out your stock in yourself and do as Jesus said, Deny himself and take up his cross and follow Him.

This is a self confident generation and this kind of generation has produced more alcoholics, dope addicts, criminals, wars, broken homes, embezzlement, murder, than any other generation that ever lived. It is a time when from the intellectuals on down we need to take stock in our failure and our costly mistakes.

Third, we must place the riches of Christ above the riches of earth. You know many people today would hold that if a medicine could make a progress to the extent that one could give

rich and he talked to his soul about all the goods that he had laid up. It had never occurred to him that his soul could exist on the just goods that his heart could not be nourished by wine and food and God said, Thou fool. The Bible teaches us that we have an actual living soul and we must give attention to this as we do the appetites of the body or else we will be one sided. One may be a movie queen or a millionaire and yet not find peace and happiness. The soul actually demands attention and needs it. So the first step that he exposes here is a consciousness of your spiritual poverty. This is strange and yet this is God's economy of emptying yourself in the confession before there can come forgiveness. We come to the place where we express the idea into the world with nothing and it is certain that we will take nothing out when we go. Are we not born poor? Do we not die poor? And would we not be poor indeed without God's infinite mercy and love? We came out of nothing and if we are anything, it is because God is everything.

Had we continue to draw from this truth, we think about a poor man. He hasn't any goods, we say, blessed are the poor folks. You have got to go out and beg, you are happy. Now it is that so when you don't know hardly where the next meal is coming from, you do not have a coat to put on your back and when somebody comes along and says to you, Why you are happy, you are blessed. That doesn't make sense. No matter what

anybody else may say to you remember this, always remember the ~~scripture~~ scripture makes sense and if you look at it, in the senseless way, you could not say that the scripture is false. You are just blessed because you haven't got anything. You have to rake and scrap and your thoughts have to be concerned with what you're going to get. They are not blessed because they are poor. Happy you poor folks.

Now the word translated happy, that is not applied here because they are poor but that is applied here because they have the kingdom. It says, because, for, not because they are poor, Do you want to go back and put yourself in their place and see what they thought? Well, the first place, they thought a rich man was rich back there because he was under the favor of God. God had prospered him with riches and if someone did not have them, there must be something the matter that he was under God's disfavor. It all goes back when they connected the idea when the Jew was in disfavor, then God's favor was not upon him. Because he was not keeping God's law and when he prospered, God's favor was upon him because he was keeping God's law. And so their possessions showed their position with God. See when John the Baptist came preaching on repentance they said what have we got to repent for. We are standing in good because we are getting what is coming to us. It is impossible you see for the rich man with his psychology with what is ingrained into

him to really get into a position to realize this. That is the reason that Jesus said how hard it is for a fellow who is rich. But a poor man is not under that handicap. "He wasn't under that condition of mind. You are to be congratulated because you have been in a condition where you know what you are not worthy and that you haven't any merit with God and then the gospel can more easily come to you. That you are conscious of that poverty, that you cannot reach God. "He has no goodness and can't create any, he can't do anything that will get him any place. Matthew is here giving the foundation a consciousness of spiritual poverty. Happy, blessed, better you are to be congratulated, is what he means. The church wasn't made up entirely poor folks. In fact the only record we have of a really poor church was the one at Jerusalem and that was because of the famine. Was Barnabas poor? Was James poor? Was Mark family poor? Was Lazarus's family poor? Were those Jews at Antioch poor? Or at Galatia? You know so many people get the idea that in a certain amount of a famine that came that the people were poor. No, the idea was that most of the people thought that because that they had wealth that they were surrounded with God's favor. But what Matthew is trying to get across here in interpreting Jesus's message to us that a poor man certainly was freed of that sort of thing, wasn't he? You are ready to step into the kingdom, he said. A man realized

III. How do we become poor in spirit. We do not get this because we are born into a Christian family. We do not get this because we are born into a church. No, my friends, this is something that comes from the heart and we must be content to be a branch if the fruit hangs ripe and full magnify the properties of the root to which it must be attributed. We must know that we live by the Son of God. When we contrast ourselves with those below us we do ourselves injustice but when we contrast ourselves with God above and we compare His white robes with our stained garments if we would look to God and not to each other and look not at our neighbors but if we would consider ourselves in the hands of God it would be a blessing for us. Dear friends, earthly thrones are generally built with steps up to them. The remarkable thing about the throne of the eternal God is that the steps are always down to them. We must descend if we are to reign. We must stoop if we would rise. We must gird ourselves then wash the feet of the disciples if we would be just a common slave in His kingdom. We must turn our lives inside out and know that we are very vile, that we are every spot of low the heart needs to be spread out to the light. We must know that we are criminals set up on the squares in the olden days with a board hanging around our necks telling all the world what we were and what we have done and there would be no need

a shot in the arm and a man would immediately dissolved of hate and greed and sin and discontentment that would be the thing that we need. If those who have not could receive and that would cure us of all of our mistakes of the past and all of our sins, it would straighten out them. Lives that are tangled up. But we must esteem the riches of Christ above the riches of earth. We must know that sin has come between man and God and that man cannot be happy and be content apart from God and that God requires something of you, you must confess your spiritual poverty, renounce your sins and playe all your faith in the Christ. Isaiah 66:2, To this man will I look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word. Revelation 3:17. BEcause thou sayest I ~~am~~ am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Evidently the blessings is promised not to the poverty but to the sense of the poverty. Here is a consciousness of the need and the important thing is this distinction. The laodiceans there was actually poverty sphere of the spirit but there was no recognition of the poverty. On the contrary, they thought themselves to be rich and that they needed nothing and what they needed to do was to come and esteem the riches of Christ above the riches of earth. The Pharisee and the publican who went to the temple to

pray gives us this same idea. The Pharisee had a spirit that needed nothing. He needed something all right but he was not conscious of that need. Now the publican had the same need as the Pharisee and he deeply felt and he smote his heart as he said, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

The prodigal son illustrates this when he left his father's house he had external things. He was richly endowed. In his inner natural, in his spirit, he was actually poor, but he didn't recognize it. He thought that he was rich and it was not until the need of his soul broke in upon him that he said I have sinned, I will arise, I will go back to my father, I am not worthy to be called thy son, let me be a hired servant, I have sinned.

I need Thee Every Hour, Most Gracious Lord. O how sweet that hymn is, and how so few of the spiritual goods that we receive because we do not recognize the riches of Christ above the riches of the earth.

When we think about Dives at the banquet. Not a thing in the world. He doesn't have a thing but you think about the rich man, he could say I have a million dollar, I have the finest table in the country, and every time I walk out on the streets people look at me and say, there goes the millionaire, look at him. Why I do not need anything in this world. You never did see such eating as I have on my table. I'm rich.

Rich, purse proud, feeding on the external things of the world and starving the soul. We'll have to look a long way down into the depths of hell. Did he take his money with him? No a cent. Is he thirsty? Hear him as he says, Dip the tip of your finger in water and cool my tongue. See that chasm that separates him from God. So you see the poverty of the spirit is that of placing the riches of Christ above the riches of birth.

Four, a consciousness of your dependentness upon God. We must come to this great need and in this poverty of spirit we have nothing that will suffice our needs of our souls. Even as one of the disciples said, Silver and gold have I none. But there is one thing that we can do. We can pray for you. We can offer you God and He can meet every need which you have.

We must become like children when we enter the kingdom of heaven. Children are dependent upon their parents for protection and like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him and so we must take Him as His word, ~~that~~ take no thought as to what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or what we shall be clothed with, God is responsible for our welfare and He will care for us and I do not have to worry. I don't have to give it a thought. All I have to do is to leave it with Him. And acknowledge my dependence upon Him. For you know all our goodness is as filthy rags in the sight of God.

for abusive language or rotten eggs or those horrible licks
from a whip for every man must come out of the dungeon of his
own character, and he must cry unto God out of the depths that
will be able to make your soul a temple for God. Into the true
and full possession of Christ's salvation and that is through
the poverty of the spirit. It is a narrower door, it is like
a low opening in the wall which in ancient times was the way to
some wealth or some palace or stately structure. The narrow
opening and a man had to stoop down ~~xxx~~ in order to enter. If
you have never been down on your knees before God feeling that
what a wicked man or woman you have been I doubt if you have ever
or will ever stand with a radiant face before God and praise
Him throughout eternity. God invites us to come into this
wealth and into this cleansing. Grace is attractive. And
there needs to be that poverty of spirit because it has its
own reward.

What have you that you have received? Where did you get
it from? How did you get it? How long is it going to last?
Is it such a very big thing after all? You have written a
book, you are a clever operator, you are a successful student
you have made a pile of money, you have been prosperous in your
earthly career and can afford to look upon man that are failures
and beneath you in social position with a smile of pity of of
contempt as the case may be. If God were to withdraw His up-

Sept 76 p.m.
S. Prof. May 1, 60 AM.

~~power~~ holding power from any of us for one moment we would shrivel into nothingness like a piece of paper tossed into the fire.

Let us be assumed that there are worthy examples for us to follow. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. Gideon had the angels come and tell him the great things he was to do. And he said, No no, this is impossible. I belong to the lowest tribe and to the lowest family in the tribe. Moses felt this spirit when he said, that he was unworthy for the task that God wanted him to do. He was inadequate, he was insufficient.

David said, Lord, who am I that thou shouldst come to me. The thing was incredible to him. He was astonished by it.

Paul was a great man of many powers of natural ability, and he waged a fight until the end but that is why he always kept saying that he had nothing to boast of. Nothing to boast within himself. And he talked about that Damascan experience time and time again.

If we are truly Christians we shall not rely upon our natural birth. We shall not rely upon the fact that we belong to a certain family. We shall not boast of being a certain nation or nationality. We shall not built upon our natural temperaments. We shall not rely upon our money, our wealth, our education, or upon our personality or upon our conduct. We shall not depend upon going to a monastery or to keep away

from society or suffer hardships or abuse the body, but we shall look unto the Lord Jesus Christ in poverty. Nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling.

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