

April 25, 2021
Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
Pastor Marvin Singh
Blessedness: The Beatitudes
1 – The Poor in Spirit



Created by P. Thanga Vignesh
from Noun Project

Today we begin a study on Blessedness. “Beati” is Latin for “blessed.” The Beatitudes are part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, upon seeing the crowds following him, sat down to teach them. Jesus tells the crowds, and us today, who is truly blessed.

Matthew 5:1-3, 13-16

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them saying:
³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

...

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit,
For Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Poor in Spirit: What does this mean? It is an expression of one’s heart. What is in the heart is displayed through our faces, words and actions.

When the heart is agitated, especially when going through some difficult times, we are uncertain of what to do. A troubled heart can be seen or read by others.

When the heart is filled with arrogance, one can see it in the eyes. God does not like arrogance and pride.

When the heart is filled with darkness, puzzled, full of uncertainties, anxieties, we do not realize what we are saying.

In my initial years of ministry, I had the privilege to serve in the organization called Operation Mobilization which was founded by George Verwer. There was a small booklet the organization distributed which included a story, the Gospel of John and a few tracts regarding the life of Christ and his work on the Cross. Originally it was a story of a Korean boy called Pak, then translated into Hindi, our native tongue. The new name of the book was “Premlal ka dil” (The Heart of Premlal). This booklet has three sections.

The first section described the different kinds of animals residing in the heart of Premlal. Their characteristics and traits were seen in his life.

Peacock – proud and arrogant.

Frog – boasts about himself, easily puffed up.

Snake – wise but filled with poisonous venom and with a crooked walk.

Goat – has horns which are always ready to spear others, aggressive.

Pig – enjoys living in the dirt, away from purity or cleanliness.

Lion – ready to pounce with his strength and tear others apart; a roaring lion threatening his prey.

The second section described his invitation to Christ. When Christ enters his heart, these animals run away.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Now the Spirit of Christ has driven out the spirit of Satan. So life in Spirit changes and transform one’s character.

Galatians 5:16-17 – “So, I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.”

Now, the Lord is sitting at the throne of Premlal’s heart. Now he has peace, joy, mercy, compassion, and love. Now he helps others, speaks his words sweetly. Now he does not find faults in others, but helps them in their weakness.

The third section shows the struggle in the heart of Premlal. Sometimes he would like to sit on the throne of his heart instead letting Christ sit there to rule. Then there is a struggle over which one should take the throne and control the heart. It creates confusion in his life. The apostle Paul himself went through this struggle and suggests to us how to overcome it.

Romans 7:15-25, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate, I do ... I have the desire to what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do; no the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing ... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Romans 8:1-2, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life sets me free from the law of sin and death.”

Romans 8:5, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”

As Paul further describes his life in Christ, we see that we need to get rid of self-centeredness.

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

I also need to acknowledge that I have not accomplished or achieved the victories in my life based on my own effort. We have worked hard and pursued our goals. But remember the sacrifices of your parents, colleagues, teachers, friends and even society. Do not forget this. How much we need the fellowship of godly people and counsel!

Paul also reminds us – Who are you? and Whose are you?

1 Corinthians 3:16, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” It is not only that our life should be acceptable to God, but it also should be a blessing to others. Now we live for others. The needs of others become our needs. God has blessed us so much that he has promised us the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven is a lifestyle. A life which is pleasing to God and approved of God. We live humbly, recognizing that we are poor in Spirit. We should never look down on others. Honor the Word of God and always follow the word of Truth. This is how to spread the kingdom of heaven on this earth.

How do we live for the Lord on this earth by becoming the Salt of the earth and the Light to the world?

Salt: Jesus has asked his followers to be the salt of the earth.

So through our lives we should preserve the society, live for the truth, and impact people through our witness and testimony. We may be in the minority, but our impact can be great. Like salt, we may not even be seen, and yet our impact can be great.

Light: The purpose of light is to shine, to show the path, to guide people so they do not stumble. Without light, they may fall into ditches which can trap them. But if we help, they may come to safety by following the footsteps of the people of light.

Paul was commissioned by the Lord, (Acts 26:16-18). Jesus introduced himself to him and then said, “Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Ephesians 5:8-10 “For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.”

So the person who is poor in Spirit is used by God to become a great witness for Christ and a blessing to others. This spreads the kingdom of heaven, which is the kingdom of God on this earth.