

Lesson 1—The Beatitudes (Part 1)

Introduction

The Sermon on the Mount opens with a radical redefinition of what it means to be truly blessed. Jesus begins not by addressing rulers or scholars, but by speaking directly to the humble, the hurting, and the hungry. In this first section—commonly called the “Beatitudes”—Jesus reveals the heart of those who truly belong to His kingdom.

These statements are not surface-level sayings or simple moral advice. They are declarations that turn the world’s values upside down. In a world that celebrates power, success, and self-promotion, Jesus calls His followers to poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, mercy, purity, and peacemaking.

This lesson will explore the first two beatitudes:

- **Blessed are the poor in spirit**, and
- **Blessed are those who mourn**.

Each one invites us to examine our hearts—not just our behavior—and to consider what it really means to walk in the way of the King. True righteousness, as we will see, begins with humility and brokenness before God.

As you study, reflect, and respond to these teachings, remember: this is where the Kingdom life begins.

The Poor in Spirit, 5:3

A. Observation

1. What does it mean to be “fortunate/blessed”? Read these examples and look at what kinds of people are called “blessed”:
 - a. Matthew 11:4-6
 - b. Matthew 13:11-17
 - c. Matthew 16:15-20
 - d. Matthew 24:46-47

2. What does “poor in spirit” (5:3) mean?
 - a. Matthew 23:5-12, How does Jesus describe the attitude of the Pharisees?
 - b. Matthew 6:1-4, How does Jesus instruct us to be poor in spirit in matters of charity and giving?
 - c. Matthew 6:5-15, How does Jesus instruct us to be poor in spirit in matters of prayer? (cf. Matthew 23:14)
 - d. Matthew 6:16-18, How does Jesus instruct us to be poor in spirit in matters of fasting?
 - e. Matthew 8:5-13, How was the centurion poor in spirit?
 - f. Read Matthew 11:29, In what ways was Jesus poor in spirit?
 - g. Read Matthew 18:4, How are little children poor in spirit?
 - h. How does being “poor in Spirit” differ from being “poor in flesh”?
3. What does Jesus mean by “kingdom of the Heavens”?
 - a. Matthew 3:16-17
 - b. Matthew 5:19-20
 - c. Matthew 6:9-10

d. Matthew 6:20

e. Matthew 7:21

f. For more uses of this phrase, examine: Matthew 5:12, 16, 34, 45, 48; 6:1, 6:14, 26, 32; 7:11 (It also occurs throughout Matthew's Gospel and is a keyword of the book as a whole)

4. Based on the previous verses, what is found in the Kingdom of Heaven?

5. Based on what is required to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, what can we add to our understanding of being poor in spirit?

B. Interpretation

1. What kind of blessing is Jesus talking about in this beatitude?

2. Why is it important that we are poor in spirit?

3. What is the benefit of being poor in spirit?

C. Application

1. How well do I follow the principles of being poor in spirit?

2. In what way can I strive to take on the quality of being poor in spirit this week?

3. Suggested Practice: Choose one small, concrete way each day this week to consciously humble yourself before God and others. At the end of the week, reflect: *How did practicing poverty of spirit change my attitude, my interactions, or my prayers?* Here are a few ideas:
 - a. Prayer posture: Begin each day on your knees in prayer, confessing your dependence on God.
 - b. Silent service: Do something kind or helpful for someone without drawing attention to yourself—no recognition, just quiet service.
 - c. Confession challenge: Share with a trusted friend or family member one area where you struggle with pride or self-reliance, and ask for prayer.
 - d. Childlike posture: Spend a few minutes observing or talking with a child. Reflect on Jesus' words in Matthew 18:4 and ask, "What can I learn from their simplicity and dependence?"
 - e. Scripture meditation: Meditate on Matthew 5:3 and Philippians 2:3–8 each morning, and journal one sentence that reminds you of your need for God.

D. Teach It

1. How would I explain poverty of spirit to my children?
2. How can I model it this week?
3. Conversation starter: "How do you remind yourself of your need for God?"

II. Those Who Mourn, 5:4

A. Observation

1. What does it mean to mourn?
 - a. Matthew 2:18
 - b. Matthew 5:29-30
 - c. Matthew 9:15

d. Matthew 11:16-19

e. Matthew 24:30

f. Matthew 26:75

2. What happens if we are not comforted?

a. Matthew 8:12

b. Matthew 13:42

c. Matthew 13:50

d. Matthew 22:13

e. Matthew 24:51

f. Matthew 25:30

B. Interpretation

1. Why is it important that we mourn?

2. Why do we make excuses when we know we have done something wrong?

3. Do excuses really help us? Why not?

4. How should we mourn?
5. What does it mean to be comforted?

C. Application

1. Do I know that I am a recipient of this blessing?
2. In what ways do I need to mourn in my life?
3. Suggested Practice: Set aside intentional time this week to mourn over sin—not with despair, but with a heart that seeks healing and renewal from God.
 - a. Here are some practical ways to do this:
 - 1) Private confession: At least once this week, spend 10–15 minutes in quiet prayer, asking God to reveal any hidden sin in your life. Confess it specifically and ask for His mercy and strength to change.
 - 2) Psalm of mourning: Read and pray through Psalm 32 or Psalm 51, inserting your own words where appropriate. Let the words of David guide your expression of sorrow and hope.
 - 3) Fast for clarity: Choose one day to fast from a meal or activity (like screens or entertainment), and use that time to reflect on the seriousness of sin and your need for God's grace.
 - 4) Ask for forgiveness: If you've wronged someone—especially within your family or church—go to them this week and humbly ask for forgiveness. Let your mourning be visible and restorative.
 - b. Daily journal: At the end of each day, write a short reflection:
 - 1) Where did I sin today?
 - 2) Did I feel sorrow for it?
 - 3) How did I seek God's comfort?
 - c. At the end of the week, reflect: *How did godly sorrow change me? How did I experience God's comfort in response to honest mourning?*

D. Teach It

1. How would I teach my children about mourning over sin?
2. How can I model repentance in my home?

3. Conversation starter: “When was the last time you mourned over sin? What did God teach you through it?”

Conclusion

Poverty of spirit and **mourning over sin** are not weaknesses — they are the starting points of Kingdom strength. As men of faith, fathers, and leaders, we must model this humble spirit. We must teach it to our children and embody it in our homes.

The road of **righteousness** begins here — with a humble heart.

Next, we will explore what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and to live with mercy and purity of heart.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit... blessed are those who mourn..." — these are the men the King calls blessed.