



Sweet Surrender – Matthew 5:3

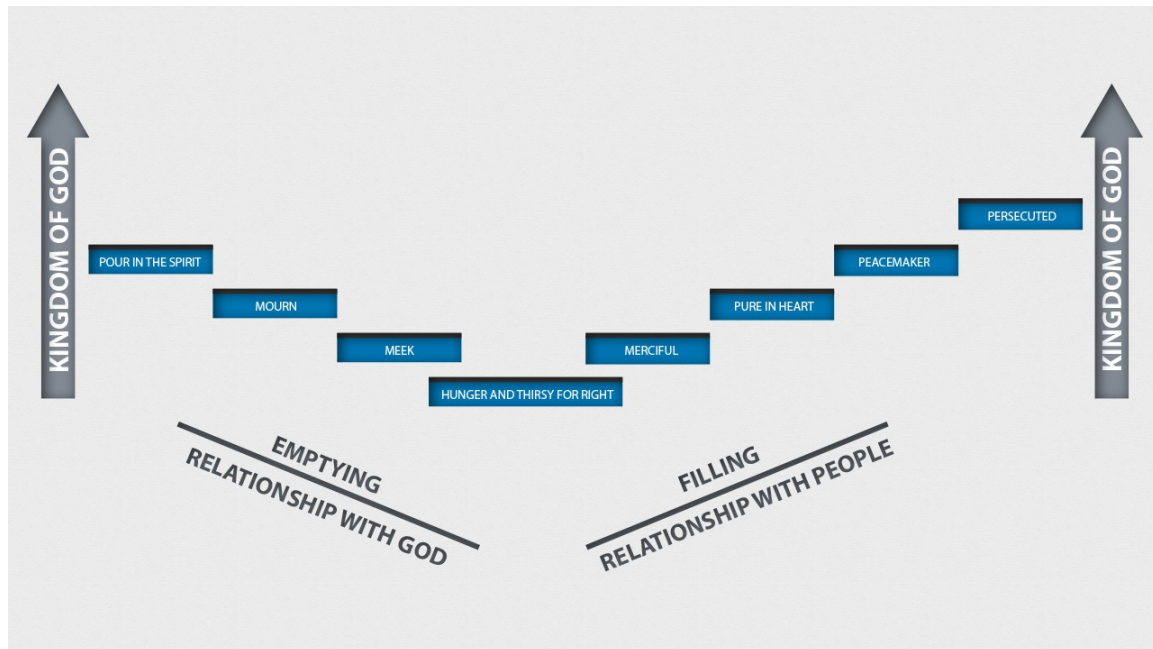
I. INTRO

- A. In July of 1741, a pastor by the name of Jonathan Edwards took the pulpit at a church in a small town in CT and began to preach. His sermon was titled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
1. The big idea of the sermon was, "There is nothing that keeps wicked [people] out of hell, except for the mere pleasure of God." And most of the sermon consisted of Edwards creating **vivid verbal imagery** of hell.
 2. The congregation was initially quite disturbed and upset. (They were **not** convicted, they were agitated and angry.)
 3. But finally, a young woman stood up, she was convicted and grieving -- and she cried out for God's mercy. Several other young people followed suit.
 4. When Edwards finished, nothing was the same. A **revolution** had erupted—a series of regional **revivals** began to transform the spiritual landscape that came to be known as The Great Awakening.
- B. My hope for King's Harbor Church and for the South Bay is that a **revolution** will be **re-ignited** here. We are in need of a cause, a vision, and a focus to unify us and move us forward.
- C. This is exactly what Jesus was doing when in Matthew's Gospel, Chap 5 He led the crowds up on the mountain, sat down, and began to teach. (The SMOTM takes about 11 minutes to read, so this is most likely Matthew's Cliff Notes version.)
- D. You'll notice I used the word "**revolution.**" This word is an appropriate descriptor of the KOG – because, at its core, Christianity is a **counter-intuitive** and **subversive revolution.**
1. In fact, Jesus is the MOST revolutionary person who ever lived - and the purpose of His coming was to initiate a **revolution.**

2. Speaking of the SOTM John Stott (the late pastor, theologian, & missiologist) said, “[The Beatitudes are] the nearest thing to a manifesto that [Jesus] ever uttered, for it is His own description of what He wanted His followers to be and to do.” –John Stott
- E. I have come to see the Beatitudes as, our surrendered response to the “gospel.” As we will see in a moment the Beatitudes provide for us a step-by-step discipleship process that moves us toward a revolutionary gospel joy, spiritual depth, and emotionally healthy maturity (i.e., integrating emotional health into the discipleship process).
1. Charles Spurgeon (19th century, Prince of Preachers) referred to the Beatitudes as, “a ladder”¹ (stable base then one rung at a time).
 2. I would add that our **embrace and study** of the Beatitudes become cyclical as we continue to circle back around we will grow deeper and deeper in our faith.
 - a. The Beatitudes become the in-working AND the outworking of the gospel - **in** and **through** our lives that, I hope, will launch a church-wide revolution.
 - b. In his seminal work, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, the 20th century preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: “We are not told in the SOTM, ‘Live like this and you will be a Christian;’ rather we are told, ‘Because you are a Christian [it is possible to] live like this.’”²

¹ C.H. Spurgeon. *The Beatitudes* (#3155), Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: 1873.

² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Studies In the SOTM*, Eerdmans; 1 v. ed edition 1997:16.



F. So, the significance of the SOTM, which includes the Beatitudes, is that it is the first recorded sermon of Jesus. And the verse we will be looking at today is the first sentence of the first sermon Jesus gave.

1. "How blessed are those who are destitute in spirit, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to them! (ISV)
2. "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule." (MSG)
3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." – Mathew 5:3 (ESV) [Pray...communion]

II. BODY

A. I would like us to consider three obvious yet extremely important concepts: 1) *Blessed*, 2) *poor in spirit*, and 3) *kingdom*. And then we will close by considering the implications of this verse and celebrating the Lord's Supper together.

B. Let's look at them one at a time:

1. **Blessed:**
 - a. The word *beatitude* comes from the Latin word meaning "blessed." The word carries the idea of Being privileged with divine favor.

- b. More specifically the word means **exalted joy**, or **true happiness**. In modern culture we sometimes confuse “joy” with “happiness” so it’s important that we understand the difference.
- c. While they share some momentary similarities, ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’ are really quite distinctive...
 - 1) ‘Happiness’ comes from the same root word as ‘happenstance’ and is related primarily to our circumstances. The prefix ‘hap’ means luck.
 - 2) Joy, on the other hand, is an orientation of the heart.
 - i. Joy is a settled state of contentment, confidence, and hope. It’s residential.
 - ii. Joy is something (or Someone) that provides the source of happiness.
 - iii. Happiness is external while JOY is internal (calm delight).
- d. The Beatitudes are the “unlikely route to joy³”...

2. **Poor in spirit:**

- a. The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma* and it is used in a variety of ways throughout the NT. In this context it is speaking of the center, or source, of human affection, emotion, and desire.
- b. There are two primary words for *poor* used in the ancient Greek text.
 - 1) *Ptōchós*, which literally means to crouch or to cower.
 - i. The word describes someone who’s poverty, or infirmity, is **so** deep that all they can do is beg. They are utterly dependent in every way on someone else.
 - ii. Everything comes to this person from an outside source.
 - 2) The other Greek word that is translated as “poor” in the NT is *penes*, which speaks of the “working poor” those who have to diligently labor everyday just to get by. They have

³ Adapted from Dan Allender’s book, *The Wounded Heart*, NavPress 1992.

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no cash reserves, no economic security -- so every day is a battle from start to finish.

- c. So, which word do you think Jesus uses here in Matthew 5:3? It's the first word, *ptōchós*.
- d. To be poor in spirit means several things. Here are some bullet points:
 - 1) It is a growing awareness of utter dependence on God to overcome our spiritual poverty, bankruptcy, and helplessness.
 - 2) It is a growing awareness of our powerlessness to accomplish anything of eternal value.
 - 3) It is a growing awareness of moral and ethical impurity before God.
 - 4) It is a growing sense that if we are to experience true happiness or exalted joy, it will have to be God's doing.
- e. As you can see, these are counter-intuitive in our culture -- and if we're honest, these tend to be counter-intuitive to us as well.
- f. Here's what John MacArthur says about being "poor in spirit"... "Because [being *poor in spirit*] is the fundamental characteristic of the Christian...All other characteristics flow from this one. This is where everything starts." --John MacArthur ⁴
- g. Lloyd-Jones continually refers to our need to "keep showing up" at Mat 5:3."⁵

3. **Kingdom**

- a. Jesus is the most revolutionary person who ever lived - and the purpose of His coming was to initiate a revolution. When Jesus Christ showed up He announces the old kingdom is going to crumble and that He has come to establish a new kingdom. We see this clearly in the early chapters Matthew's gospel...
 - 1) "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" --Matthew 3:2

⁴ Sermon: *The Only Way to Happiness: Be Poor in Spirit*, April 26, 1998.

⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Studies In the SOTM*, Eerdmans; 1 v. ed edition 1997:17.

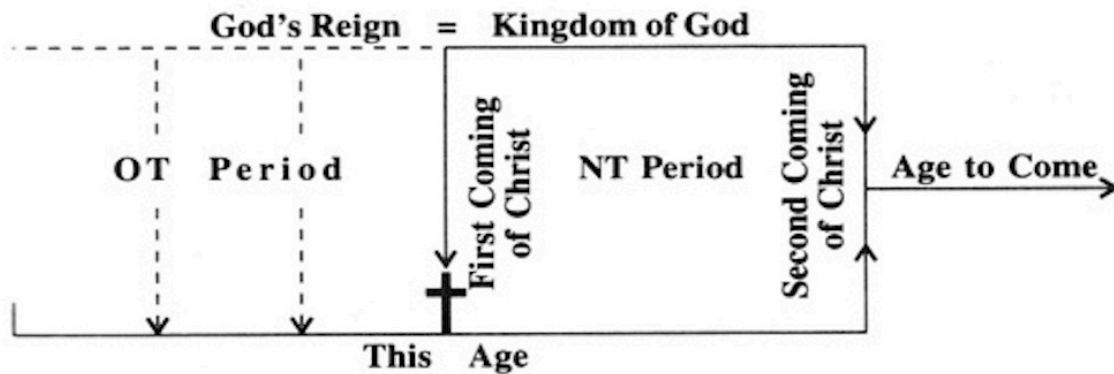
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2) "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" --Matthew 4:17

b. There are three gospel words: Kingdom, Cross, Grace. These are each summaries of the gospel message. It is vitally important for churches to keep these three theological concepts in an appropriate balance, or tension.

c. When Jesus came the first time He **established** the KOG on earth. When He comes the second time He will **consummate** the KOG on earth.

1) We have the privilege of living in the in-between period of time.



2) World War 2 Illustration: When the Allied Troops successfully landed on Normandy Beach the back of the Nazi army was broken and the end of the war became inevitable – but there was another 11 months of fierce fighting before VE day...

III. CONCLUSION

A. What's the bottom-line regarding being "poor in spirit"?

1. If you know you're not a good person you will find God (or He will find you :). If you think you're a good person you will not find God.
2. If your base-line perspective is that you are "a good person" than you have not understood the gospel.
3. We must travel through Matthew 5:3 to enter the kingdom of God.

B. "Sweet Surrender" is admitting that I do not have the spiritual resources necessary to carry out God's requirements. And that I need God's free

generosity at the cross to liberate my soul to love and to live the way God intends.

- C. Last we considered the gospel as the undergirding of every worship service. God → Sin → Jesus → (and responding in) Faith.
- D. We are moving into a time of partaking of the Lord's Supper together, which is a time of both solemn reflection and glad celebration.
- E. Jesus, in 1 Corinthians 11:24, said, *"Do this in remembrance of Me."*
- F. I would like to encourage you to take a few moments (or minutes) before you partake to consider the current state of your surrender.
- G. If you're already a Christian maybe you need to recalibrate today. If you are not a Christian I would say that today is a great day to join God's family.
- H. Here's an example of a prayer: "Heavenly Father, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through your Son Jesus I can be more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you that He lived the life I should have lived and paid the debt and punishment I owed. Receive me now for His sake. I turn from my sins and receive Him as Savior. Amen."
- I. As the worship team comes I would like, those who will be serving communion to take their places at the communion table?
- J. After sufficient reflection and repentance, come forward to celebrate by taking a cracker and dipping it into the juice. You can partake at that moment or move off to the side and pray with your spouse or your family. Or, partake on your own...