

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Study #2 (Updated 8-11-17)

Now that we know Jesus intends for us to really live by His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, let's go back to the beginning of His sermon and see what He wants.

Read Matt. 5:3-6 (NIV)

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, ² and He began to teach them.

³ *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

⁵ *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

⁶ *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

Q: What does Jesus mean when He says, "blessed"?

- The word Jesus uses here is the Greek word "**makarios**" (*mak-ar'-ee-os*), and it means "fortunate" or "well off".
- In other words, Jesus is saying, when you're blessed, **you're in a good place!**

Read vs. 3-6 again. But this time, replace "blessed" with "in a good place".

³ *"The poor in spirit are in a good place, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *Those who mourn are in a good place, for they will be comforted.*

⁵ *The meek are in a good place, for they will inherit the earth.*

⁶ *Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are in a good place, for they will be filled."*

Q: What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"?

- A **spiritually** poor person is not a proud person; they are humble and realize they need help, and have nothing to offer anyone else.
 - For Example: Peter thought he had nothing to offer Jesus but embarrassment (**Luke 5:8**).
 - Christians can't walk the way God wants them to walk unless God gives them the ability to (**1Cor. 4:7**); so they have to trust God, not their own ability (**Matt. 7:7-8**).
- The Bible speaks frequently about the blessing of having a low opinion of yourself.
 - High self-esteem is often recommended today, but the Bible doesn't recommend that at all (**Rom. 12:3**; **1Cor. 1:26-31**; **Phil. 2:3-8**)! All stand in sharp contrast to the popular pursuit of high self-esteem.

Q: Why does the Kingdom of Heaven belong to the poor in spirit?

- **James 4:6** "...God opposes the proud but shows **favor** (grace) to the humble." (NIV)
 - The word translated as "favor" or "grace" is the Greek word "**charis**" (*khar'-ece*), and it means "the Divine influence upon the heart".
- Someone who is proud is too full of themselves for God to pour any of Himself into them. (*Think of a glass that is already full.*) They trust in themselves too much.
- The person who is poor in spirit is ready for God to fill their heart with His influence. They trust in God more than in themselves. They are the only kind of people that God accepts in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Q: Who are “those who mourn”?

- **James 4:7-10** “Those who mourn” are the ones who are grieving over their sin. They know they have offended God and they are upset about it.
- **2Cor. 7:10-11** There are all types of mourning. Some forms of mourning are just plain selfish.
 - **Wallowing in self-pity or self-disappointment is not blessed!**
 - Godly sorrow is the kind of mourning that is blessed.

Q: Who is it that comforts those who mourn?

- God is the one who comforts those who see their sin and mourn because of how it affects Him. (**2Cor. 1:3-7**)

Q: Who are the “meek”?

- *Meek*, in modern English, has negative connotations of someone who is submissive and easily pushed around. But the word Jesus used is the Greek word “**praus**” (*prah-ooce*), and it means “gentle, tender, and free from pride”.
- A meek person is a gentle person... they handle other people gently... they don’t push other people around. They rely on God to make things right.
 - A self-assertive or pushy person is just the opposite of meek.
 - Meekness is being willing to give up your rights, to let someone else have their way. (**Matt. 5:39-43**)
- It takes strength to be meek!
 - Moses was one of the strongest leaders ever, and was also meek above all others (**Num. 12:3**).
 - A cowardly, timid person is not really meek; they may just be insecure or weak.
- In **Romans 15:1-3**, Paul tells us about how to be meek.

Q: What does it mean to inherit the earth?

- There will be “a new heaven and a new earth”, and people in His Kingdom will reign with Jesus (**2Peter 3:13; Rom. 8:21-22; 2Tim. 2:18**).
 - Cesar, Napoleon, Hitler, and others have tried to inherit the earth through force, but the meek (*those who don’t use force*) are the ones who will inherit it!

Q: What does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness?

- Hunger and thirst are two of the most powerful cravings we can have.
 - If you are really hungry or thirsty, you will be relentless in your pursuit of food and water.
- “Righteousness” is the Greek word “**dikaioisune**” (*dik-ah-yos-oo’-nay*), and it means **doing what God requires, and what pleases Him**.
 - If you are only concerned with your reputation, you might be satisfied with “fake righteousness” like the Pharisees.
 - But if you are truly hungry and thirsty for righteousness, you will pursue what God requires, and what pleases Him, relentlessly!

Q: Who will fill those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

- God, through His Spirit (**Eph. 5:15-20**).

What About You?

Q: How poor in spirit are you?

- **Read Luke 18:9-14.** Which of these two men are you more like? _____
- **Read Phil. 2:3-9.** On a scale of 1 to 10, how well does this passage describe you?

Q: What kind of mourner are you? (Answer each on a scale of 1 to 10)

- I wallow in self-pity and/or self-disappointment: _____
- I mourn my sin: _____
- I mourn for people who cheat and offend God: _____

Q: How meek are you? (Answer each on a scale of 1 to 10)

- I try to control things and/or people: _____
- I fight for my rights: _____
- I am willing to defer to others: _____

Q: How hungry and thirsty for righteousness are you?

- What do you spend the most time and money on? (Circle one)
 - Possessions
 - Entertainment
 - Knowing God