

The Rich Poor  
Matt 5:3

ETS: Spiritually poor people are blessed people

ESS: Spiritually poor people let go and let God on their heart's throne

OSS: Let go and let God sit on the throne of your heart

PQ: Are you poor in spirit?

UW: Poverty

**ME**

How many like it when someone says [“I’ve got good news!”](#)?

Good News

- Stock went up!
- “You passed the test!”
- Your tests show that the cancer is gone!

We all like to hear **Good News**

- I noticed on the internet that there is a *Good News Network* website
  - Headlines: [“High School Football Opponents Rally for Ailing Player”](#) and

## “Group Throws Lifeline to Homeowners Near Foreclosure”

We all like to hear Good News

### WE

#### What makes something Good News?

- It is **positive**; It is **uplifting**, it is **encouraging** news
- It is **information** that helps us **accomplish** a **goal**
- It is news that the impossible is **possible**

Today, we are beginning a new series: “**How to have your Blest Life Now**”

- **Joel Osteen’s** book: “**Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential**”
  - #1 on New York Times Bestseller List
  - Over **8 million** copies sold
- **Thesis of the book**: “Our beliefs will prove either a barrier or vehicle as we strive to go higher, rise above our obstacles, and to live in health, abundance, and victory.”
  - In YOUR BEST LIFE NOW Osteen says, ‘I am what I am today because of what I believed about myself yesterday. And I will be tomorrow what I’m believing about myself right now. God sees us as more than

conquerors, able to fulfill our destiny. We need to see ourselves through the eyes of our Creator.”

- Osteen argues that ... our **self-image** should **mirror** exactly what God says about us, not what we feel or think.
- Osteen encourages the readers to be people of faith, *for if you can see the invisible, God will do the impossible.*”

Osteen’s **thesis**: We need to change what we BELIEVE about OURSELVES!

- **Goal**: To have your “**Best life Now**”

When you think of having your “**Best life Now**” what do you tend to think of your “*Best life now*” consisting of?

- Money
- Fame
- Power
- Prestige

Is that what Jesus taught?

- Did **Jesus** teach that we just need to **believe** in our **potential**?

- When Paul called us “more than conquerors” did he have in mind that we could achieve our “Best life now”?

Is what we believe about our **potential** God’s message to us in His Word?

- Is **God’s message** that we need to “**strive higher and rise about our obstacles?**”
- Is God calling us to strive for our “**Best life now?**”

## GOD

**Turn to Matthew 4**

**Disciples** were in the process of “**letting go**”!

- Disciples “**let go**” of their **fishing business** (Mt. 4:18-22)
  - **Mt 4:20** “**Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.**”
- Disciples “**let go**” of **familiarity**!
  - **Mt 4:22** “**Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.**”

The disciple’s let go of their **business** and **familiarity** to follow Jesus—and it seemed to be paying off!

Jesus was becoming like a ROCK STAR!

**Mt 4:23-25** “Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 Then the news about him spread throughout Syria. So they brought to him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And he healed them. 25 Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.” (CSB)

Just like the **Disciples** who had “**LET GO**”, the **The people** were “**letting go**”!

- People “**let go**” of trying to be healed by **doctors** (Mt. 4:23-24)
  - **Let go** of **human answers** to life’s problems
    - People “**let go**” of **pursuing the doctors** and **pursued Christ**
      - “**Brought Christ all who were afflicted**” (Mt. 4:24)
- People “**let go**” of daily **routines** to follow Christ (Mt. 4:25)
  - “**Large crowds followed Him**”

From the **perspective of ministry growth** this looked great!

**Jesus** had **gathered a team of men** who had “let go” of

- their **businesses** and
- their **hometowns**

Jesus was attracting large **crowds** who had “let go” of

- **pursing** human answers to their problems and
- their daily **routines**

**Mental Picture:** Jesus is standing there with small group of disciples and He is “**seeing large the crowds**” who are following them!

- The **disciples believed** that following Jesus was going to result in their **BEST LIFE NOW!**
  - Jesus was the Messiah who was going to **conquer the Romans**
  - Jesus was the Messiah who would **restore Jerusalem**
    - The disciples were going to be His **right-hand men!**
- The **large crowds** believed that following Jesus was going to result in their **BEST LIFE NOW!**
  - They were getting **healed of diseases**

- For some of them Jesus has **provided healing** and they were **starting to experience** their BEST LIFE NOW!
  - **Lame** were walking
  - **Blind** were seeing
  - Others were **free from pain**
  - Others were free from **demonic possession**

**PROBLEM:** They were ALL “**letting go**” and following Jesus for the **wrong reasons!**

“Why were they **following Jesus?**”

- Were the **crowds** following Him so they could **see more healings?**
- Were the **disciples** there because of **Christ’s personal invitation?**

“Why were they following Jesus?”

Were they following Jesus to have their “**Best Life Now?**”

The same questions face us: Why are we following Jesus?

- Are you **following Jesus** because you believe He will give you your “**Best Life Now?**”

What if Jesus' message is not what you think it is?

- What if Jesus' message is NOT about living up to your potential?
- What if Jesus' message is NOT about believing in yourself?
- What if Jesus' message is NOT about what you can GET from God?

**Mt 5:1** “When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.” (CSB)

- WHY did he go up on the mountain?

Remember the **audience** is primarily **Jewish!**

- There was **another man** in **Jewish history** that *went up on a mountain* and as a result he came back with the **foundation** of the laws the Jews lived by.
  - His name was **Moses**
    - Moses went up the mountain to get the law from God.

Jesus was going up the mountain to give the people a “*new law*”

- **Moses'** law focused on the EXTERNALS!
- **Jesus'** new law focused on the INTERNALS

Jesus was always “**on purpose**” in what He did!

Then Jesus sat down

- Why did Jesus **sit down**?

Until recent years, you taught people standing up in the **pulpit**.

- Why didn't the disciples erect a **pulpit** for **Jesus**?
  - Why didn't Jesus have an “**Advance team**” to **build a platform** and a **pulpit** for **Him** to deliver this famous sermon?

It was the custom for **Rabbis** to sit when they taught.

- They did stand and stroll about, but when they stood and strolled about, *their teaching was not official*.
  - When they sat down, **they taught officially**.

That's why we still have **expressions** in our educational institutions.

- We speak of professor so-and-so who occupies the **Chair of Philosophy**, or the **Chair of Theology** or the **Chair of Early Music Studies**.

Have you ever heard the **catholic** term “*ex-cathedra*?”

- **Catholics** believe that the Pope can give **infallible revelation** to church
  - According to Catholic teaching, this infallible revelation can only occur when the **Pope speaks ex cathedra.**
    - Do you know what ex cathedra means?
      - It means “**from the chair**”

The catholic doctrine of **ex cathedra** takes its **queue** from the **method of teaching** in Jesus’ day!

Jesus is about to give a “NEW LAW”  
 Jesus has taken an **official teaching** position

Why is Jesus going to all this trouble?

- Jesus wants His disciples to listen **carefully** to what He is going to tell them
  - He is **communicating** to them that what He is about to say is **important-**
    - It is foundational to living “***Your BLEST LIFE NOW***”!

Jesus’ teaching is going to **challenge** their (and our) **entire** way of **thinking**

The **Jewish people** had been **conditioned** to think that the “**kingdom of heaven**” is when God **set up His reign on the earth!**

- Although at this point it hasn't come out, it later becomes obvious that the **disciples** were **planning** to **rule** with Christ in His kingdom.
  - **They** have **visions** of sitting on **thrones** with Christ and telling people what to do. (Mt. 18:1)
    - Jesus knew that **pride** was crouching at the door.

WHY is Jesus going to all this trouble?

- Jesus wanted the **crowd** to know that **miracles** and **healings** were **not** what the **kingdom of heaven** was all **about**-there was **something more** to it than a temporary healing.

They all followed Jesus to have their “BEST LIFE NOW”

- They were **not following** Jesus to have their “BLEST LIFE NOW”

WHAT is the difference between a BEST LIFE NOW and a BLEST LIFE NOW?

**Mt 5:2-3** " Then he began to teach them, saying: 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs..” (CSB)

## **SPIRITUAL POVERTY = YOUR BLEST LIFE NOW**

Jesus said that the key to being “Blessed” is SPIRITUAL POVERTY!

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit”

WHAT does it mean to be “poor in spirit”

This is **NOT** an **injunction** against

- Having **enough money** to pay your bills
- Having **extra money** or even making a lot of money!

The problem is NOT the amount of money...*the problem is “The spirit”*

What does “poor in spirit” mean?

Have you ever been poor in something?

- Poor in **time**
  - You really **depended** upon everything *to go right* b/c you didn’t have any extra time to give.
- Poor in a **relationship**
  - You really were in a **relationship debt** to another person. You were **dependant** upon

that person to extend grace and forgiveness to you.

- Poor in your **grades**
  - You were really **depending** upon that **extra credit** homework to bring up your score.
- Poor in your **health**
  - You really depended upon that **drug** or **treatment** to get you better. There was nothing more you could do on your own.

To be “**poor in**” something is: To be in a state where we *depend* upon something *outside* of us to help us.

- Poor in **finances**
  - You are **depending** upon **others** to help you meet your needs b/c you don't have the resources!

**“Poor in” = a state of dependence**

- It means YOU have **nothing to offer** to help out

Anglican preacher/theologian **John Stott** defines being “**poor in spirit**” as being “...so *spiritually poverty-stricken* that [we] have nothing in the way of merit to offer”

- Reformer **John Calvin** describes a person who is “**poor in spirit**” as “[one] who is *reduced* to nothing in himself, and *relies* on the mercy of God...”

WHO are WE to DEPEND upon?

- Answer is found in *WHERE* we have to be dependent? “in spirit”

This is a SPIRITUAL POVERTY!

- It is a POVERTY which is **DEPENDANT** upon **GOD!**

The person who is “poor in spirit” is DEPENDANT upon God!

DEPENDANT upon God for what?

- To give you your **BEST financial life** now?
- To give you your **BEST health** now?
- To honor you with the **BEST position** now?

DEPENDANT upon God for EXTERNALS?

DEPENDANT upon God for INTERNALS

- Jesus was going up the mountain to give the people a “*new law*”
  - **Moses’** law focused on the **externals!**
  - **Jesus’** new law focused on the **INTERNALS**
    - **Moses’** law focused on the **doing!**
    - **Jesus’** new law focused on the **BEING!**

**“Blessed are those who are....**

- **Dependent** upon God for spiritual **strength** to face the day!
- **Dependent** upon God for **wisdom** as they make daily decisions
- **Dependent** upon God for daily **guidance**
- **Dependent** upon God to **provide** daily

*HOW can you tell if you are being “**poor in spirit**”?*

- **Fruit of the Spirit** flows through your life!
  - Remember, the Fruit of the Spirit is best **revealed UNDER PRESSURE!**
    - **Patience**
    - **Kindness**
    - **Gentleness**
    - **Self-control**
    - **Self-sacrificing love**
    - **Goodness**

*HOW can you tell if you are being “**poor in spirit**”?*

- Seeking **God’s counsel** through **Prayer** and the **WORD**
  - Desperate to **HEAR** from God
  - Desperate to **LEARN** from God

*HOW can you tell if you are being “**poor in spirit**”?*

- **Confesses and repents** of sin
  - Willingness to **live in humility and submission** to God
    - *No room for pride*

To have “**Your Blest Life Now**” you have to...

- Live in **Humility** before God
- Live in **Submission** to God
  - Be willing to **forgo** your **natural** desires
  - Be willing to **subject** your **dreams** to **God’s desires**

BEST Life: “I’m the captain of my fate”

- **BLEST LIFE**: “*God is the captain of my life*”

BEST Life: “I’ll name it and claim it”

- **BLEST LIFE**: “God names and you claim”

BEST Life: **External focused**

- **BLEST LIFE**: **Internal Focused**

The **disciples** had “**let go**” of their fishing business to follow Jesus, but they had to do more than that!

- Jesus’ **message** to the **disciples** is that they had to “**let go**” of their **desires** to **gain position** in the kingdom!
- Jesus’ **message** to the **disciples** is that they had to “**let go**” of their **pride** as being know as the “**disciples**” of the Lord.

The **crowd** had “let go” of trying to find a **doctor** who could cure them, but they had to do more than that!

- Jesus’ **message** to the **crowd** is that they had to “let go” of their desire to follow Jesus for **thrills** of seeing miracles

HOW do you become “poor in spirit”? **Live in Dependence on God**

How do you Live in Dependence on God?

- Practice humility
  - Humility is best seen by practicing repentance

**Bottom Line:** You won’t “repent” *until* you are “poor in spirit”

- **Proud** people don’t repent!
- **Self-reliant** people don’t repent!
  - Only “spiritually poor” people practice repentance!
  - Only “spiritually poor” people are willing to confess their sins!
  - Only “spiritually poor” people are willing to depend upon God!

Jesus said in **Jn 16:8** that the **role** of the Holy Spirit is to “**convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.**” (*HCSB*)

- **Pride** *resists* conviction
- **Self-reliance** *resists* conviction
  - Why?
    - **Attitude:** “I don’t need help!”
    - **Attitude:** “I can make it on my own”
    - **Attitude:** “I can make MY BEST LIFE NOW!”

Only people who are “**poor in spirit**” repent!

- Why?
  - “**repent**” means to
    - “turn from”
    - “Change your mind”
    - “Change your attitude”

Only people who are “**poor in spirit**” repent!

- You cannot truly “**repent**” until you “let go”
  - As long as you **hold on**, you will **not repent!**
    - As long as you will **not repent**, you will **not** be “**poor in spirit**”
      - As long as you will **not** be “**poor in spirit**” you will **not** be “**blessed**”

**Matthew 4:17** tells us that Jesus had been preaching “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!” (HCSB)

- Jesus had been preaching this message everywhere He went!
  - The crowds had heard the message!
  - The disciples had heard the message!

## **SPIRITUAL POVERTY = YOUR BLEST LIFE NOW**

WHAT happens when a person is “poor in spirit”

**Experience the “Kingdom of Heaven.”**

- **Mt 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, (WHY?) because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

What does that mean: ?

- Is this in the future? No
  - Jesus said the “kingdom of heaven *is* (present tense) theirs”
    - Is it possible to have a slice of heaven on earth?

Did you know that YOU have kingdoms?

- **Adults:** Your home is your kingdom

- You have authority to paint the walls purple and green in your home!
- You have the authority to rip up that shag carpet and put in tile!
- You can paint or stain the deck-you have the authority to do it!
- **Business owners:** Your business is your kingdom
  - You have authority to close early or stay open late
  - You have authority to hire and fire employees

A kingdom is a place where the **authority** of the King is manifested

- Your **home** is where you, as the king, **manifests** your **authority**
- Your **business** is where you, as the king, **manifest** your **authority**.

The “**kingdom of heaven**” is where God **manifests** His authority!

- The “**kingdom of heaven**” is where God’s “**will is done**”
  - “**Thy will be done on earth *as it is in heaven***” (Mt. 6:10)

When a person is “poor in spirit” ...

- God has **authority** over his/her life!
- They are **experience** the **RULE** of the **KING!**

When the **KING** of kings is **ruling** in your “spirit” there is:

- **Strength** to face the storms
- **Peace** in the midst of the storms of life
- **Confidence** as you encounter the storms of life
- **Rest** in the midst of the storms of life

When the **KING** of kings is **ruling** in your “spirit” you are a “BLEST” person!

- **Mt 5:3** “**Blessed are the poor in spirit, (WHY?) because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.**”

“Blessed” often is translated as “Happy”

- So being “poor in spirit” *does not* mean that you are a **sad, depressed person!**
- RATHER, a person who is “poor in spirit” is a **happy** person
  - HOW is a person who is “poor in Spirit” happy?
    - Because he/she is NOT trying to **fix life!**
      - He/she is **dependent** upon GOD as he/she goes through life!

- He/she is “at rest”
- He/she is “at peace”
- He/she is enjoying a **relationship** with the King of the “**Kingdom of Heaven**”

What kind of “Happiness” are we talking about?”

- Yippee skippy happiness? No
- Fake Christian smile happiness? No!

What kind of “**Happiness**” are we talking about?”

- **Happiness that “Gets it”**
  - **Understands** that God is in **control**
  - **Understands** that **whatever** we **have** is a **gift** from God
  - Understands that **life** is **temporary**
  - Understands that **health, wealth** and **position** are **temporary**

**New Century Version** “They are blessed who realize their spiritual poverty”

**The Living Bible** “Humble men are very fortunate!” he told them, “for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them”

Another meaning for “**Blessed**” is “**Fortunate**”

- A person who is “**Poor in spirit**” is **Fortunate**

- Why are they are fortunate person?
  - Because they “GET IT”
    - They see the BIG PICTURE
    - They see BEYOND the TEMPORARY
    - The “See God”
    - They are experiencing the joy of God ruling in their hearts!

## WE

If you want to look at this verse from a **human perspective** *you won't get it!*

- How can being “poor in spirit” give you your BEST LIFE NOW? It can't!

**IF** you are “poor in spirit” you can have **YOUR BLEST LIFE NOW!**

I want to quote to you the words of two songs with the same title and ask which one **reflects** the **heart** of a **person** who is “poor in spirit”

### Song 1

Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I  
cling;

Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee  
for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.

## Song 2

We got the power, got the glory, Just say you need it  
and if you need it  
Say yeah!, Ooh yeah

Now listen to me, I'm burnin. burnin, I got the fever  
I know for sure, there aint no cure  
So feel it, dont fight it, go with the flow  
Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme one more for the  
road

Both songs are titled: “**Rock of Ages**” but the  
messages are miles apart!

Do you see the difference?

- One is a song of total **dependence** upon **God**
  - The *other* is a song of total **dependence** upon **self**
- One is a song of a person who is **inheriting** the “**Kingdom of heaven**”
  - The *other* is a song of a person who is living in the “kingdom of this earth”
  - Only 1 person of these two is “**blessed**” in God’s sight!

- Which one do you think it is?

The Good News of the Gospel is that **anyone** can be “blessed”

- Being “blessed” by God is not **dependant** upon your **wealth**
- Being “blessed” by God is not **dependant** upon your **status**
- Being “blessed” by God is **not dependant** upon what you **do**, but your **heart**

This was certainly Good News for the **crowd** following Jesus

- According to **Mt. 4:24** there were people who had been healed of **paralysis, epilepsy, demon-possession, various diseases and intense pain**
  - Undoubtedly, many could **not** work b/c of their **illness**
  - Undoubtedly, many had little to offer!
    - Good News: the **Kingdom of heaven** could be theirs
    - Good News: They could be “blessed” by God
      - What they had to do was be “**poor in spirit**”

This was certainly Good News for the **disciples** following Jesus

- **Although Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen**, they could be “**blessed**” and experience the “**kingdom of heaven**”
- **Simon the Zealot** could experience the “**kingdom of heaven**” without being a zealot
- **Matthew the Tax Collector** experience the “**kingdom of heaven**” without **cheating** people on their taxes

The Good News is that the **Kingdom of Heaven** is **available** to **all** who are willing to be “**poor in spirit**”!

The Good News is that **anyone** can be “**blessed**” by God!

- How?
  - **Live in Total Dependence Upon God**
  - **Practicing Repentance**
    - *If you don't know Christ, respond to His conviction*
      - **Decide to turn** from your sin and self and extend a hand of faith to God!
      - **Allow Christ** to set up His kingdom-to have authority-in your life!

- **Repent** b/c the **Kingdom of heaven** is so **near** you!
  - **Repent and you will “inherit the kingdom of heaven”!**

*If you have repented*, the Good News is that you can **continue to experience** the Kingdom of Heaven!

- How?
  - **Repent** of trying to put yourself back on the throne of your heart

**Mt 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

**PQ:** **Are you poor in spirit?**

- Are you a person in **spiritual agony**?
  - If so, it is because you are not “**poor in spirit**”
- Are you a person in **turmoil**?
  - If so, it is because you are not “**poor in spirit**”
- Are you a person living in **fear** of the future?
  - If so, it is because you are not “**poor in spirit**”

A “**blessed**” person has an *Intimate walk with God*

- God said in **Is 57:15** “The high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, the Holy One, says this: I live in that high and holy place where those with contrite, humble spirits dwell; and I refresh the humble and give new courage to those with repentant hearts.”

**PQ:** Are you poor in spirit?