

Radiant Church, October 11, 2015
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SOTM #1 - a Disciples' Heart
Matthew 5:2-3
A Disciple's Heart is...Certain of its Poverty

Matthew 7:28 says, "*and when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished...*"

They were left thunderstruck. They were blown away. All of their ideas about religion had been turned upside down. The greatest sermon ever preached!

This sermon is preached at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry
This preacher died, so His followers could live out the Sermon on the Mount.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew wants us to see the foundation of Jesus' teaching - this is a kingdom manifesto declaring how to live as a child of the King in a world that continues in rebellion and has yet to be fully transformed.

The Sermon on the Mount is best understood when broken down into 7 sections:

1. The Beautitudes (or the Beautiful Attitudes) (Matthew 5:2-11) where Jesus describes 8 heart attitudes recognizable in a true child of God. These are the building blocks of true discipleship, each trait leads to the next as you are transformed into the image of Jesus
 The first 4 attitudes deal with our relationship with God
 The last 4 attitudes deal with our relationships with others
2. Salt and Light (5:13-16) is where Jesus coaches his disciples on their identity and mission
3. Radical righteousness (5:17-48) which flows from a heart completely transformed by the power of the gospel
4. Spiritual practices (6:1-18) where Jesus teaches his disciples on how to be reoriented in prayer, how to give and how to fast
5. Ambitions and Possessions (6:19-34) where Jesus shepherds his disciples' hearts on money and anxiety
6. Gospel Relationships (7:1-12) on how to saturate their relationships with people and with God with the gospel
7. A Decision is Imperative (7:13-17) Here Jesus closes his sermon insisting that the audience choose between the wide and narrow gate. He then gives 3 warnings regarding failure to make the right decision. Jesus

boldly declares that the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven is to listen and obey his commands.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a code of ethics or morals. It is not a new Ten Commandments or a set of rules and regulations. Instead the Sermon on the Mount is a description of what we Christians were meant to be, and how we live.

If you find yourself arguing internally with Jesus' words, be honest enough to ask yourself why you're opposing what he said.

Matthew 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

The Sermon on the Mount is those things that Jesus commanded. He meant them to be taught. He meant them to be practiced/internalized. This is how a Christian is meant to live...what the Kingdom of God is really like

A Disciples' Heart is...Certain of its Poverty

Matthew 5:1 *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him*

The audience made up of two kinds of people:

His "disciples," wanting to be like their Master Jesus. This was for them
They sat closer to Jesus

The "crowds," curious, primarily interested in a king who would bring
military victory and freedom from their Roman overlords

The crowds were beginning to flock to Jesus, chasing Him around the countryside - because they wanted healing from their various diseases

They wanted the benefits of God without the heart surgery

Matthew 5:2-3 *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

In this verse, Jesus pronounces you approved/acceptable...when, and only when you accept that you are a spiritual beggar.

"Poverty" - needing the grace of others to survive; without help you die

It is a good thing when each of us finally believes that we have run out of options to make yourself acceptable or worthy to God. In realizing you have nothing to bring to the table, you then gain everything.

This is kind of a big deal to Jesus - the heart attitude we bring when we think we want a relationship with Him

Luke 18:9-14 *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: God, I think you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing for off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner! I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Does it bother you that the Bible teaches us that you have nothing good inside of you?

Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel*

A lot of people want to embrace Jesus, but don't want to acknowledge their own sin.

It may be a lot of people who populate our churches want to be Christians, but never have nor do they want to repent of their sin in the first place

True gospel repentance is both a necessary component of the gospel, and essential for any of us to be changed by the gospel

Lamentations 3:39-41 *Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven.*

This is what repentance looks like:

Acknowledging that we have sinned against our Creator God

Realizing that we are totally depraved; we cannot change ourselves

Reaching up to God like poor beggars in dependence, as He is the only way out of our condition

Romans 3:10-12 *None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks after God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.*

Here's a question for you to ponder: Would your family and friends agree that you have acknowledged the depth of your depravity?

Are you any different than you would be if you were not a Christian?

We want the benefits to us...but not the required change in us
We may be guilty of wanting a relationship with Jesus, but on our terms

Coming to the end of yourself, recognizing maybe for the first time that your sin runs deep in your DNA, is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit

John 6:44 *no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*

Being “poor in spirit” is not our natural response after we’ve had a bad day. Being poor in spirit is a heart attitude - it is the basis for how we approach God, and how we interact with people.

We cannot do this. We cannot just decide to make ourselves poor in spirit, for two reasons:

1. Naturally, we don’t want to be poor in spirit - we want to be seen as good, and worthy, and impressive, and important
2. Our bad will always overtake and drown out our good

Here’s a gospel truth - we cannot come to Jesus - we cannot even want to come to Jesus unless the Father (through the Holy Spirit) draws that person to Jesus.

It is God who gives us a desire to want to be in relationship with God
To some people He does give this desire - to repent and believe
And to others, He lets them continue to the end in their rebellion
against Him

Again, the Sermon on the Mount is not a list of good things to go out and do. It is instead a description of someone whose heart has been transformed by the truth and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Blessed” - congratulations! You are approved! The Kingdom is for you!

“He only who is reduced to nothing of self and relies only on the mercy of God is poor in spirit.” John Calvin

In Christ alone
By grace alone
By faith alone

Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

Everything Jesus talks about in the Sermon on the Mount is based on this one thing: Poverty in Spirit

Blessed by Him, blessed in Him, Blessed to be a citizen of His Kingdom

Because of what Jesus did on the cross, giving up Himself, we now have reason to live outside of ourselves. We are blessed because we know we have release from our sins, pardon for our rebellion, freedom from ourselves

This is why we celebrate communion every week:

Celebrate if you know you are blessed, in spite of your spiritual poverty,
and because God rescued you through His immeasurable grace

And ask yourself the hard question: Am I really poor in spirit?