

**Matthew 5: 1-4 “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit”, Sermon # 4 in a series entitled –  
“These Sayings of Mine”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in the Morning Worship Service.**

We saw in the last message that I preached to you that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are the same kingdom. The kingdom of God is the realm of the Triune God’s saving activity and rule. The kingdom of heaven is the realm of the Christian’s heavenly spiritual experience. A sinner is brought into the kingdom of heaven when they believe in the gospel and are saved. Their “heavenly” experience begins with the blessing of having their mind illumined by the truth of God’s word, and their being born from above by the Spirit of God. It is then that God begins to teach the believer and to sanctify them by His grace. Their heart is opened to respond to the things which are spoken to them concerning their need of Christ. They are placed on the narrow road of the path of righteousness, and they begin to learn a new way to think and live in accordance with the word of God. In all of these things, the Christian’s mind is not only instructed, but their spirit is also taught many good lessons which lets them see how God is to be glorified by them over the course of their life. A heavenly and holy mind comes from God teaching your spirit, dear Christian. And over the course of your life, there will be a sense of blessedness which comes to your spirit when you learn these new attitudes. And you will then find heaven and eternal glory awaiting at the end of this learning process of life. Salvation is of the Lord.

When a person is saved they are placed into the body of Christ, which is the spiritual fullness of Him who fills all-in-all. The Holy Spirit continues His good working and a person who used to have bad and sinful attitudes comes to have new and righteous attitudes. This is what the Beatitudes that we are studying, are all about. They are the attitudes that “be”, and are developed, in a true Christian. They are the new and spiritual attitudes which are formed in the believer by Christ’s grace, and by the Holy Spirit’s working with their mind and their heart, and with their spirit. At this hour I would like, 1<sup>st</sup> of all – To develop the truth of the blessedness of being poor in spirit. 2<sup>nd</sup> – To develop the truth of the blessedness of mourning in your spirit. These are the first two truths of the 9 truths of blessedness which the Lord Jesus gives to all of His disciples in this sermon.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – I want to develop the truth of the blessedness of being poor in spirit.**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” What the Lord Jesus is saying here is that there is a blessedness which comes to a Christian when they are poor in spirit. What is that blessing? Well, in earthly things it seems that poverty is not a blessing. How can it be in spiritual things, then? Well, this blessing is the blessing which comes to all those who, by grace, come to realize very practically, the benefits of being a humble, teachable person; that is, the importance of your spirit being taught the right attitude that you should have towards yourself, towards God, and towards other people. If you are poor in spirit you see your own spiritual poverty and you want to be taught by God Himself in all of the various situations of your life, in accordance with your very real spiritual needs. All of mankind are spiritually poverty stricken by nature in God’s sight because of their sinful nature. Many people have no idea of just how spiritually poor they really are. They think of themselves as pretty good people by nature, and they are in some measure able to do what God commands of them naturally. Their ability in accomplishing things, or being good in business at making money, or skillful in their profession, or their being faithful, humanly speaking to come to church, is the basis of their thinking that they are pleasing to God. But there can be great deception in this.

You can see a good example of this in Mark 10: 17-27 if you will turn with me there. “Now as Jesus was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ “So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘DO NOT COMMIT

ADULTERY,' 'DO NOT MURDER,' 'DO NOT STEAL,' 'DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,' 'Do not defraud,' 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.'" "And he answered and said to Him, 'Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.'" "Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'" "But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." "Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' "And the disciples were astonished at His words. "But Jesus answered again and said to them, 'Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!' "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." "And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?' "But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Now, I want you to see from these verses that this young man had come to Jesus asking him how he could inherit eternal life? He knelt before Jesus when he came running up. He rightly saw that Jesus was a good man in an exalted sense, and so he called him – "Good Teacher . Jesus asked him why he called him good, because there is none perfectly good except God alone. Jesus was testing him when he said this, as to whether he really thought of Him as God, and to bring to his attention what he might not have really considered; that there is no one who is essentially good among men. Jesus would lead him to have true views of Himself, even from the beginning of their conversation; that He was indeed the Messiah; that He was God manifest in the flesh. And so He would also press this young man with his need to keep the commandments of God, and He mentions those commandments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> table of the law, so that he would see his duty to God in relation to other men. He lists the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> commandments of the Ten Commandments; not mentioning the 10<sup>th</sup>, for the moment.

The young man, who it says in the gospel of Luke, was a ruler, said to Jesus – "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." And the next verse says, and it is only mentioned here in the gospel of Mark – "Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him." This young man had sincerely tried to keep these commandments, and for that Jesus loved him. His intentions were good, but he did not understand the deceitfulness of his own heart. If he had understood his own heart and the spirit with which he went about to attempt to keep the Ten Commandments, he would have said – All these have I kept but very imperfectly from my youth." But he did not see this, and so he needed to be tested by the Lord Jesus and taught by him what his heart was really like. Jesus said to him in verse 21b, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." "But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

So, you see here, that even though he had tried to be a moral man, even from his youth, he could not come to see himself as needing to become poor in spirit. And he would not, in order to find salvation and eternal life, give away all that he had, to have Christ. He only looked at the fact that he would become poor in wealth and material things, and this he could not afford to do. And so he went away sorrowful, because he could not give up his great possessions. Jesus was telling him that he would have treasure in heaven; even true happiness and blessedness, in being able to pick up his cross and following Him, but he could not become poor in goods, or poor in spirit, to find eternal life and live the life of a Christian. Jesus looked around and said to His disciples – "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" He was actually a covetous man and had been breaking the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment since his youth. And the disciples were astonished and said – "Who then can be saved?" And Peter said – "See, we have left all and followed You." And Jesus answered him in verse 29 – "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sister or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and

sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.” “But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

So a person who is poor in spirit considers themselves to be a person who, even though they might be very good at doing many things, humanly speaking, even though they might be very successful at doing those things, even though they may be very wealthy, they know that this does not mean that they are rich in God’s sight or rich towards God because of anything that they have done. In order to be rich toward God you have to be poor in spirit, but there is a blessedness it because you are trusting in Jesus, and receiving all of God’s blessings in relation to Him and what He has done for you, and what He is doing for you. A person who is poor in spirit knows that they do not have the spiritual resources, the spiritual wherewithal, to be able to do and to keep God’s commandments by their own wisdom, strength, and ability. But by faith they have Jesus, and they look to Him for a righteousness better than their own. He is the only one who is good. They know that they are not a basically good person by nature. But by grace they can become good by the power of the Holy Spirit who is given to them. A person who is poor in spirit has been brought to see their entire dependence upon God for every good thing, and to do every good thing. The one who is poor in spirit has the right attitude towards God and the right attitude towards themselves because they have been humbled by the sight of what they are unable to do.

They are unable to keep God’s commandments perfectly as God requires. They see that they fall short in many ways. They have come to realize, having read God’s word that the person who shall keep the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2: 10) In fact, they have come to realize that there can even be this advantage of being poor in this world’s goods, as it says in that same chapter in James. It says there – “Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” This is how you come to know that you are poor in spirit; if you are rich in faith. By faith, you have come to love Jesus more than anyone or anything else, including your material possessions. You come to understand that sometimes, it may be by your losing your wealth or even by giving it away, if you are asked to do it by the Lord, this will lead to a greater blessedness in your life. You see that by knowing Christ and walking with Christ, you have so much more and can be given so much more if the Lord will have it to be so.

This is why Jesus says in Luke chapter 6, verse 20, ‘Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.’ There were many poor people listening to him that day. But He knew that it that it was not being poor that qualified them to receive this great blessing of entering the kingdom of heaven. No, Jesus knew, and we should know, that a person can be very poor and yet they may be very proud or covetous in spirit. If they had money, they might still be like the rich young ruler, and rather hold on to it than follow Him. But a person who is poor in spirit and has been humbled to consider their need of Christ and His help and His grace and His strength to do the least spiritual thing, and so having faith in Him, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Do you understand these things? Then blessed are you.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to develop with you the truth of the blessedness of mourning in your spirit.**

Verse 4 of Matthew 5 – “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Now this Beatitude is connected with the first one in this way. If you see that you do not have the resources within yourself to be able to do and keep God’s commandments, you will look to the reason why, and you will mourn over it if the Lord is working in your mind and in your heart. The reason why is that you are a sinner by nature and practice. And you see that this is very sad state and condition to be in. Sin is that which dishonors God and ruins everything in your life. Mourning over sin is the right response in every case, and in every situation. If you are a person who has received grace you will mourn over your sins. But you will certainly not mourn as one who has no hope, for there is a blessedness in mourning over your sins when it leads you to repentance. And further, there is a blessedness, Jesus says here; there is even a happiness that is brought to the person who mourns,

because you know that it is God who is giving you that grace to repent of your sins through Jesus Christ your Lord, and it is by this means, that real and lasting eternal comfort and happiness; true spiritual happiness, comes to you. But this eternal comfort and good hope came at a very great price to the Lord Jesus. He had to purchase our eternal happiness by His bearing our sorrows at the cross.

Let us remember that the Lord Jesus was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Why? Because He knew what it would mean to have to bear all our sins, our sorrows, and the griefs related to our sins. Isaiah 53: 4 – “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.” “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him.” “And by His stripes we are healed.” Let us also remember that He has something very spiritually tangible to give us as a result of His having accomplished our redemption by His sufferings. Isaiah 61: 1-3 – “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

So, here we find it once again – Christ by His life and death and resurrection, preaching good tidings to the poor and the poor in heart; His being able to heal the person who is broken-hearted over their sins, His being able to proclaim liberty to those held captive by the Devil. Those who are in bondage to their sin, in the prison of their own making, are released from it by His powerful grace breaking their bonds. We see that He is able to comfort all those who mourn by giving them the oil of joy for mourning. The oil of joy is the precious comforts and refreshment of the Spirit bringing joy to the spirit of the Christian by assuring them that their sins having been confessed, and repented of, will not be brought up and remembered, or held against them. But He shall assure them and comfort them in the knowledge of the thoroughness of the cleansing which He applies to their conscience, so as He brings to them great comfort. Christ by His Holy Spirit comforts all those who mourn over their sins. He comforts those who mourn over their sins as He gives to them the beauty of His righteousness for the ashes of what sin brought to their heart and life. He gives to them the oil of joy for mourning.

The comfort which is applied to all those who mourn applies to whole churches of people who may have made sinful mistakes in the toleration of sin if they will repent of those sins. Turn with me over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 7, and I will demonstrate the difference between godly and worldly mourning; for there is a great difference. In verses 4-13 Paul says this about the church of Corinth mourning over the fact that they had tolerated sin in one of their members; something which had greatly endangered the strength and well-being of the church. Paul had addressed them concerning this, and they had been brought to godly mourning and repentance. He says – “Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf.” “I am filled with comfort.” “I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.” “For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side.” “Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.” “Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.”

“For even if I made you sorry (sorrowful) with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it.” “For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.” “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance.” “For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.” “For godly sorrow (or mourning) produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces

death.” “For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!” “In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” “Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.” “Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort.” “And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.”

So here was godly sorrow, or mourning over sin, which led to repentance. The church at Corinth realized that they had sinned in tolerating this sin in one of their members, and at Paul’s rebuke, they repented of their sin, and they were comforted in doing so, and Paul was also comforted in beholding their comfort. The comfort that comes, when sin is repented of, is the comfort of the Holy Spirit ministering peace to the conscience of the one who has sinned, now that they have repented; now that they had been cleansed by the blood of Christ being applied to mind and conscience and affections; now that all has now been made right with God. What a blessed thing this is.

I hope that you will remember that the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter by the Lord Jesus in John chapter 16, verses 5-14. “But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?” “But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.” “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

So here we find the disciples sorrowing. We find them mourning over the fact that Christ had told them that He would be leaving them. They did not understand what this would mean. They did not understand what it would mean for Him to go the cross, and from the cross to the resurrection, and from His resurrection to ascend and take His place at the Father’s right hand. It would mean the sending of the Comforter. If He did not do all of these things, the Comforter could not come to them. But because He did them, we have this Comforter, the Holy Spirit in our hearts in our hearts. Let us take our comfort from Him in relation to all the things which we mourn over in our living our lives to God. Are we grieved and mourning over the motions of our hearts; those sins which proceed from our indwelling remaining corruption? Let us remember that the Lord knows our hearts, and is greater than our hearts and knows all things. He knows when we are really doing battle with the corruption of our hearts and mourning over our sins, and praying for the strength to mortify those motions of sin.

The Spirit knows when we are watching against temptations and guarding our hearts. He knows when we are really doing battle with the flesh and when we are not. Let us be comforted by the fact that we are mourning over this remaining corruption, if we are, and let us remember that Christ died so that we will have the victory over all of our sins through Him. He will give us joy in every victory over the flesh, and every sin mortified. There will be joy in the presence of God over every sin which is repented of. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.