

Lesson 4

SEEKING GOD'S HELP

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

When we compare ourselves to others around us, we don't look so bad. But when we look at the Lord in His purity and holiness, we agree with the apostle Paul when he said, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

WHAT IS POOR IN SPIRIT?

Poverty of spirit is a accurate evaluation of yourself, not in the light of man but the light of God. When you see yourself in the light of the Lord, the effect on you is poverty of spirit. You realize you are a sinner in need of God's forgiveness. It's a very humbling experience to get a true vision of yourself in the light of God's holiness and purity.

To be "poor in spirit" means to understand that you have no spiritual wealth on your own—that in your own efforts, you could never please God. You could never come close to God. It means saying, "I am a sinner in need of a Savior."

This humility is the entrance into the kingdom of heaven. This same humility looks only to God for help. It does not consider the world's ways or its philosophies. Only God's Word is acknowledged as truth. This is the beginning consciousness of a person who has a right relationship with God.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." They are blessed because they have had a genuine encounter with God, and as a result, the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. They no longer live in this temporal material realm, but they now are a child of God and a citizen of the eternal kingdom.

1. When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord, write down his response. See Isaiah 6:5.

2. What was Peter's initial response after he encountered the Lord for the first time? See Luke 5:8.

THE PROUD CANNOT SEE GOD

When you really see the Lord, you have the consciousness of being spiritually bankrupt. Blessed are the poor in spirit! They are the ones who discover the truth about themselves and seek God's help.

On the other hand, if you see a man who is proud, pompous, or declares he doesn't need God, this man has not yet really seen the Lord. No one can see God without a feeling of grief and despair, appealing to God for His mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

3. Read Proverbs 16:5 and share how the Lord views the proud and what is their end result.

4. Define the meaning of "abomination."

5. Write James 4:6

The literal translation of “gives” is “hand to hand.” God extends His very hand to the hand of the humble to give them grace. He places His hand in the hand of the humble. God forgives the humble (the poor in spirit), for the humble seeks His forgiveness; but He resists the proud, for they fail to seek Him.

If you come to Jesus Christ, He will reveal the Father to you. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). Today many people boast in their knowledge of God. But Jesus, in essence, said, “It’s only as I reveal Him that you can know God. Now come unto Me, for in knowing Me, in understanding Me, you’ll know and understand God, the Father.”

READ MATTHEW 11:28-29

6. Whom did Jesus invite to Himself? (Verse 28)

Every person is laboring to please themselves. Every person tries to satisfy their need to be happy. Jesus is the One who gives rest.

7. What does Jesus desire to teach us, and what will we find? (Verse 29)

A yoke was fitted to a pair of oxen so that they could pull the plow. Jesus says, “Take My yoke.” Jesus has a plan for your life. Jesus has a purpose for your existence. Jesus wants to take over the reins and begin to direct your life.

Jesus extends the offer of forgiveness and rest from the labors of our sinful nature. He also reveals to us that after He forgives us, He wants to teach us how to have a forgiving spirit like His, a spirit of gentleness (meekness), and lowliness in the heart.

The key to receiving this forgiveness is your willingness to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

8. Write James 4:10.