

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – January 9, 2022

Theme: The Beatitudes

Topic: Blessed are the poor in spirit - Surrender

Main Text: Matthew 5:1-3, Luke 18:9-14 and Isaiah 6:1-9.

Key verse: Matt. 5:3 “*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: All four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – give account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on earth. Each gospel writer’s account give a distinct perspective of Jesus’ life and ministry. For the Apostle Matthew, the gospel of Jesus is the gospel of the Kingdom of God, with Christ as the Messiah King. From the onset, Jesus, in what is popularly called Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount lays down what someone has termed ‘the norms of the manifesto of His Kingdom. The Beatitudes is part of that manifesto. In the Beatitudes, our Lord Jesus Christ outlines the “attitudes” that characterize citizens of His Kingdom (the Kingdom of God), which He had come to set up.

- 1. The beatitudes is bracketed by ‘heaven.’ See Matthew 5:3, 10 & 12 (a) What do you think is the significance of this? (b) How should this affect how we view Jesus’ earthly life and ministry – His life, death, resurrection, and even the miracles He performed? (c) How should this affect our own lives and ministry as citizens of His Kingdom**

So, the first message about His kingdom Jesus declared is the blessed of those who are the poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit is to be **emptied** in our spirit man. The original New Testament Greek word, *ptochos*, variously means 'poverty, to cower and to cringe like a beggar. It describes someone who cannot survive of themselves, someone who cannot be self-sufficient. And if you take this meaning of the word “poor” and combine it with 'in spirit', our key verse could be rendered something like “blessed are those who are so desperately poor in their spiritual state, that they realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend them to God, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Bearing in mind that Apostle Matthew wrote primarily with the Jews in mind, who had the Law and the Prophets, to be poor in spirit is to be **emptied** in our spirit, not holding on to the old dispensation. It is to surrender, like the Prophet Isaiah did, when he found himself in the very presence of God, and he cried out, “*It’s all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.*” (Isaiah 6:5 NLT).

- 2. Our key verse says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And we have said that being ‘poor in spirit’ involves surrender (a) What correlation do you see between surrender (poor in spirit) and gaining the kingdom of God? See also Isaiah 6:5-7. (b) What things does one need to surrender to enter the Kingdom of God and how did this surrender play out in your life in making you a citizen of God’s kingdom? (c) How would you use this knowledge to help another who needs/wants to enter the kingdom of God?**

Scripture is littered with images of surrender and the kingdom of God. In Philippians 2:5-7 (ESV), we read how “... *Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*” Apostle Paul echoed this attitude of Jesus Christ, when he declared in Philippians 3:7-8 (GNT), “*But all those things that I might count as profit I now reckon as loss for Christ's sake. Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ.*”

- 3. (a) What do you make of the fact that ‘being poor in spirit’ is the very first norm of the Kingdom that Jesus Christ mentions? (b) Read Luke 18:9-14. How did surrender, as a poverty of the spirit influence the parties mentioned? (c) Using the lesson(s) from this study, how can we exemplify this norm of the kingdom at home and at work?**

Prayer: *Lord, I acknowledge that no skill, talent, experience, etc. which I may have can contribute to my entering Your kingdom. Help me to always approach You like that tax collector who laid aside any accomplishments before Your holy presence. I am not good enough in myself to enter Your kingdom. Help me be wholly dependent on You for salvation through Christ. Amen.*