

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – January 16, 2022

Theme: The Beatitudes Topic: Blessed are the poor in spirit: Humility & Dependence

Main Texts: Isaiah 57:14-21; 1 Peter 5:1-9

Key verse: Isaiah 57:15– *‘For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday, we looked at ‘surrender’ as an aspect of being poor in spirit. And how that surrender leads one to ask God for mercy rather than merit. Today, we look at twin aspects of this poverty of spirit – humility and dependence. According to Barnes Notes on the Bible, “To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God;...” Someone is reported to have asked Billy Graham, ‘What does it mean to be poor in spirit, as Jesus said we ought to be... shouldn't we strive to be rich in spirit?’ He responded with the following: “What did He mean? Simply this: We must be humble in our spirits. If you put the word “humble” in place of the word “poor,” you will understand what He meant.”

1. Read Isaiah 57: 14-21. (a) Isaiah 57:15 speaks about God in a grand manner, as ‘High and Lofty’ who dwells in the high and holy place, and dwells ‘with one who has a contrite and humble spirit’ (57:15) How are these two characters of God comparable? (b) What does it mean to have a contrite and humble spirit,” and how can this be achieved? (c) What are the benefits of living a life of humility as seen in Isaiah 57:15,18 & 19 and 1 Peter 5:5-6?

The beatitudes would have shocked the listeners as Jesus declared that blessedness belonged to, not only the “poor in spirit,” but also “those who mourn” (Matt 5:4), the “meek” (Matt 5:5), and those who are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Matt 5:10). Jesus was turning much of the conventional wisdom of the day on its head. While the Pharisees, the religious elite of the day, were marked by moral superiority and prestige, Jesus elevates those who recognized their own helplessness and desperate need for divine grace. It is in this context that Jesus mentions the “poor in spirit.” These are the ones who recognize their lack of spiritual resources and therefore their complete dependence on God.

2. Read 1 Peter 5:1-9 (a) How does Apostle Peter invite believers to exemplify this humility and dependence in the church? (b) From 1 Peter 5:1-4,7, what role does humility and dependence play in leadership? (c) According to 1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6, what are the expected consequences of not being humble and dependent on God?

In John 3:30. John the Baptist says to his disciples: “He must increase, but I must decrease.’ When Jesus came on the scene, John the Baptist faded into the background, letting Christ alone be magnified. John knew that being least in God’s kingdom is what makes one great. An attitude Jesus Christ repeatedly emphasized as in Matthew 23:11-12 (CEV) “*Whoever is the greatest should be the servant of the others. If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored.*” In other words, God elevates those who humble themselves. (See also Luke 14:11).

3. (a) Read Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2-3; how does this verse speak into our topic of discussion for today? (b) From Luke 22:26; Hebrews 13:17, what are some practical ways we can exemplify a life of true humility and dependence on God? (c) What is the relationship between humility and dependence on God?

Prayer: *Dear Lord, we choose to walk humbly with You. We choose to live by Your Holy Spirit and to follow Your lead. Help us to hear You clearly, for we do not want to walk by pride or self-sufficiency, we want to walk with You always, Amen.*