

# “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit”

## *The Pathway to Joy Founded on the Bedrock of God’s Grace and Favor*

- A. More than 300 years before the birth of Jesus, the Grecian philosopher Aristotle suggested that the highest human good for which people can aim is happiness. Thomas Jefferson famously wrote in the U.S. Declaration of Independence that we all have certain unalienable rights granted by our Creator, “that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- B. But how many have marred that pursuit by searching for happiness through the gratification of selfish whims and fleshly desires, all the while reasoning, “God wants me to be happy”?
- C. Jesus points us to an unexpected but better pathway that few are willing to travel (*Matt 7:13-14*).
- D. “Blessed,” he begins, describing joy and contentment that can endure despite “bad fortune” and difficult circumstances, founded on the bedrock of God’s grace and favor (*Matt 7:24-27*).

### **I. Blessed are the Beggars (*Matt 5:3a*)**

- A. When Jesus employed “poor,” he used *ptochos*, deriving from “to crouch.” It was frequently used of the poor who were known to crouch while begging. But how could this lead to blessing?
- B. Poverty of spirit – “If I don’t get help, I’m done.”
  - 1. The spiritual equivalent of Lazarus (*Luke 16:19-21*).
  - 2. Akin to the Canaanite woman whose daughter was oppressed by a demon (*Matt 15:21-28*).
  - 3. Clearly seen in a parable of Jesus and an interaction of Jesus with two people:
    - a. The Pharisee and the tax collector (*Luke 18:9-14*).
    - b. Simon and the sinful woman (*Luke 7:36-50*).
- C. *Matthew 5:3-6* could be described as steps in the journey to true satisfaction.
  - 1. The journey begins with brokenness, begging to be made merely a servant (*Luke 15:18-19*).
  - 2. Think of men who made incredible journeys with God—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Peter.
- D. Paul as a spiritual beggar (*Rom 7:14-24; 2 Cor 12:7-10; Eph 3:20-21; Phil 3:7-8; Gal 2:20*).
- E. **The paradox:** the very people who realize they’ve blown it with God, they don’t deserve one more good thing from him, and they are incapable of rectifying the situation... these are the ones God strengthens to obey, flourish, and truly live (*Psa 34:18; Isa 57:15; 66:2; 40:28-31*).

### **II. “For Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (*Matt 5:3b*)**

- A. One of our earliest indications of the truth behind Jesus’ assertion to Pilate in *John 18:36*.
- B. When we realize we can’t afford entrance and come crouching before Jesus, broke, destitute, and begging for mercy, we “*are not far from the kingdom of God*” (*Mark 12:34*).