# **The Beatitudes- Part 2**

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Sermon on the Mount / The Beatitudes / Matthew 5:3–16; Matthew 5:3–12

# [Matthew 5:3-16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.3-16)

This week we are going to focus on Verse #3 - “3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Before we unpack this and learn what it means, lets learn what it does not mean:

• Some have read, particularly within Catholicism and even Anglicanism, this verse to say “Blessed in spirit are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” as if to say that material poverty is a virtue

They see this verse supporting “religious piety (a word largely meaning “*Devotion*”) through poverty”, righteousness through the renunciation of material gain. This idea comes in large part from several passages of scripture combined:

[Matthew 19:16-21](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt19.16-21) and verse 21 in particular when Jesus is talking with the rich young ruler “21 Jesus said to him, **“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven**; and come, follow Me.””

Also:

[Matthew 8:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt8.20) which is used to imply that Jesus was in fact Himself poor: “20 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, **but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head**.””

Even [Acts 2:45](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac2.45) Where the early church is described as those filled with people who sold their possessions to live a generous life together by helping meet each others needs “45 and **sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.**”

It also comes from that tradition of Francis of Assisi who was moved from his wealthy lavish lifestyle to one of voluntary poverty. That journey for him started when he was selling fabric from his fathers business and a beggar came upon him asking for alms. He took all the money from the sale and ran down that beggar and gave him all of the money. as this moved him so he ended up renouncing his wealth and inheritance from his family’s business and became a beggar himself, living amongst the monks in a monastery as a servant. he later formed the “Friars Minor” a group of monastics who took vows of poverty they renounced any and all ownership of property for those who would follow after Christ.

Francis of Assisi was made a saint by Pope Gregory in 1228

Such was this idea of Christianity being devoted through poverty that The Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (332–63) is reputed to have said with vicious irony that he wanted to confiscate Christians’ property so that they might all become poor and enter the kingdom of heaven.

No, Friends this is not what is meant in the text at all, in order to get to a translation of this verse that means that, one would have to reverse the order of the verse to put spirit in front of poor and that would “do violence to the text of scripture”

Μακαριοι | οι πτωχοι | τω πνευματι | οτι | αυτων | εστιν η | βασιλεια | των | ουρανων

Blessed [are] | the poor | in spirit | for | theirs | is the | kingdom | of the | heavens. (translated “of heaven” rather than “of the heavens”)

The order is clear - the describing adjective is the word poor, the noun is the word spirit, adjectives describe the noun, this is clearly meant to describe a spiritual condition rather than a physical one.

So its not talking about any economic physical state, also:

• Poor in spirit is not “self deprecation” - a false humility that seeks **play down oneself** for the sake of others opinion of you. Self Deprecation is trying **to make yourself,** yourabilities**, or** yourachievementsseem **less** important

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So then, What is being poor in Spirit?

Although Jesus is not concerned here with financial poverty, he does draw on the analogy of material destitution to make his point.

There are two Greek words normally used to refer to the poor: (1) *penichros [penny-kros]*, used of the widow in [Luke 21](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk21) who had only two small copper coins (she was poor, but at least she had something); and (2) *ptochos [p-tow-hose]*, the word used here in this beatitude, which means **utterly destitute, with no means of self-support, wholly dependent on someone else for sustenance.**

*The poor in spirit* in the sense of this beatitude are those who recognize that they are completely and utterly destitute spiritually. They recognize their lack of spiritual resources and therefore their complete dependence on God - these then are “those who feel their spiritual need” “This is the man to whom I will look,” the Lord says, “he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word” ([Isa. 66:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is66.2)). These are the poor in spirit.

In other words Those who are poor in spirit recognize their bankrupt of any spiritual worth before God.

The kingdom of heaven is not given on the basis of race, earned merits, the military zeal and prowess of Zealots, or the wealth of a Zacchaeus. God is no respecter of persons, all are equal at the foot of the Cross.

[Galatians 3:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ga3.28) “28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

[Romans 2:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro2.11) “11 For there is no partiality with God.”

[Isaiah 6:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is6.5) “5 So I said: ***“Woe is me, for I am undone!*** Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.””

**As Calvin wrote: ‘He only who is reduced to nothing in himself, and relies on the mercy of God, is *poor in spirit*.’4**

**To such, and only to such, the kingdom of God is given.**

Paul says it this way in [Romans 7:18](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro7.18) “18 **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells**; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.”

Perhaps the best later example of the same truth is the nominal church of Laodicea to whom John was directed to send a letter from the glorified Christ. He quoted their complacent words, and added his own assessment of them:

[Revelation 3:17-19](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Re3.17-19.17)  “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, **and have need of nothing**’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

This visible church, for all its Christian profession, was not truly Christian at all. Self-satisfied and superficial, it was composed (according to Jesus) of blind and naked beggars. But the tragedy was they would not admit it. **They were rich, not poor, in spirit.**

It is a reminder then of what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah in [Isaiah 55:1-2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is55.1-2) “1 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”

[Isaiah 57:15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is57.15) “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.”**

[Isaiah 66:1-2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is66.1-2) “1 Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? 2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the Lord. **“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.”**

**A contrite heart is one in which the natural pride and self-sufficiency have been completely humbled**

As C. H. Spurgeon expressed it, ‘The way to rise in the kingdom is to sink in ourselves.’

Poor in Spirit is the recognition of our complete lack before God, we have nothing to offer. It is the entrance to the Kingdom, recognizing our complete dependency on Jesus as savior. The empty get filled.

The more we recognize out lack and press into Jesus , His word and His presence the more we are filled. The more we see the Kingdom in operation in our lives.

**Matthew 5:3–16**

