

Main Idea: As we consider how Jesus begins His sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:1-3, we’re confronted with the reality that spiritual poverty is a prerequisite to becoming a Christ-follower.

- I. As we begin ...some questions (1-2)
 - A. What is the purpose of this sermon?
 - B. Why did Jesus deliver this sermon?
 - C. Who can benefit from this sermon?
 1. Jesus is speaking to disciples directly.
 2. Jesus is speaking to the crowds indirectly.
- II. As Jesus begins...a shocking prerequisite for going to heaven (3)
 - A. Jesus identifies the blessed person.
 - B. Jesus commends spiritual poverty.
 1. A person who is poor knows about need.
 2. A person who is poor in spirit has filed for spiritual bankruptcy.
 - C. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is at stake.

Make It Personal: Some questions we need to consider...

1. Am I admitting that I am spiritually bankrupt apart from Christ?
2. Am I putting my hope for heaven in Christ alone?
3. Am I now seeking to make much of the One who erased my debt and brought me into His kingdom?

Jesus said many shocking things during His ministry. It’s not surprising then that He began His most famous sermon with this shocker. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” As we’ll see today, Jesus offers heaven to all, but to go to heaven one must admit that one does not deserve to be there. We’ll see why as we consider Jesus’ words together today.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

I’ve given some thought to this morning’s message title, calling it, “Spiritual Poverty—A Prerequisite to Becoming a Christ-follower.” I could have entitled it, “Spiritual Poverty—A Prerequisite to Going to Heaven,” for these two things are inseparable. According to the Bible, to go to heaven a person must follow Christ who said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me (John 14:6).” And according to Jesus, if a person wants to become His follower, that person must possess this most shocking credential.

Spiritual poverty. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” With those words Jesus begins His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount.

We need this sermon. I need it. You need it. The church in America needs it for there is great confusion about what it means to be a Christian. Who is a real Christian? Which, according to Jesus, is another way of asking, who is really going to heaven?

Jesus answers the question for us in this sermon, indeed, in the first sentence of this sermon, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

As we consider how Jesus begins His sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:1-3, we’re confronted with the shocking reality that spiritual poverty is a prerequisite to becoming a Christ-follower.

We know what prerequisites are. Before you can take the 400 level classes at the university, you must begin with the 100 level classes. We’re about to hear Jesus talk about the

^{**} Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the series preached at WBC in 1988.

400 level subject of the kingdom of heaven, but He says, if you want to take that class you must start here. Kingdom Living 101.

Spiritual poverty. My friend, if you want to enter the kingdom of Christ the King, you are certainly invited, indeed the whole world is invited. But you must admit that you do not deserve to be there. And it takes a sovereign work of grace for any sinner to admit that.

There have been some tremendous sermons delivered throughout history:

*Jonah at Nineveh

*Peter at Jerusalem during Pentecost

*Jonathan Edwards--"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

But there's never been a sermon like the One we're beginning to consider today. It can be read in less than 15 minutes, yet men have pondered the depths of its truth for centuries. It's recorded in an abbreviated form in Luke 6:20-49. It appears more fully in our text, Matthew 5-7. Today, we have the privilege of beginning to consider its message together.

I. As we begin ...some questions (1-2)

Specifically, three questions, and here's the first.

A. What is the purpose of this sermon? Matthew's introduction to the sermon points us to the purpose. Verse 1, "Now when he saw the crowds." Stop there. Who is "he"? Jesus. What crowds did He see? Those mentioned at the end of chapter four.

We're told in 4:23, "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." The effect? Verse 24 says, "News about him spread all over Syria..." As a result, verse 25 says, "Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him."

Those crowds. Those are the crowds He saw, hundreds, even thousands of people who had heard Him preach about the kingdom of God and demonstrate His kingly power by healing and casting our demons. Those crowds are now following Him wherever He goes.

So what does He do? 5:1-2 "He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying..."

Put yourself into the scene. Jesus stood at the height of his popularity with the people. He had just completed His ministry tour of the Galilee region (4:23-25). He had taught and preached and healed. And his fame spread. He was the talk of the town. The Jewish people were intrigued. They were optimistic. This man talked about the "kingdom". "Could He be the Messiah who will free us from Roman bondage?" People brought their friends to Jesus, especially the sick and diseased. The "multitudes" clung to him (1). Privacy became a scarce commodity. He had already called his initial disciples to follow Him—Peter, Andrew, James, and John (4:18-22). But now, in addition to those He chose to follow Him, others are following Him. Crowds are following Him.

What does Jesus think of crowds? That's a vital question in an American church culture that seems to equate success with attracting crowds.

The public tumult made it difficult for Jesus to teach the people. So He decided to travel up into a "mountain." Luke records the place as a "plain" but that need not be construed as a contradiction for two reasons. First, it wasn't a "mountain" like we think of the Rocky Mountains. Second, Luke may be describing a level plateau up in that "mountain" just north of the Sea of Galilee.

And it was there that Jesus delivered his famous discourse. What was the purpose of Jesus' sermon? Permit me to ask another question first. What is the message of the Bible? In one sentence, it's this. *God is forming a people for Himself*, that is, God is establishing His Kingdom, or better stated, *reestablishing* His kingdom.

Why would He be doing that? Because this was His eternal plan. He chose to create a perfect world, then create an image-bearer to populate and take care of His world, knowing His image-bearers would commit treason to their own destruction, but that He would graciously do something to reclaim an undeserving people for His glorious purposes.

How did God decide to form this people? Matthew wrote this book to answer that question. In the first four chapters he shows how God sent His Son into the world to provide redemption (1:21 "to save His people from their sins"). He presents Jesus as the King who has come to regather the people of God by giving His life for them. He shows how Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in chapters 1-3. He demonstrates the sinless character of Jesus in chapter 4. Then he begins to answer an important question.

What kind of people is God intent on forming for Himself? The sermon on the mount answers this question. In essence, the beatitudes (5:3-12) show us eight marks of God's kind of person. The rest of the sermon is a series of contrasts. God's people are to be different, different from nominal Christians, different from the world. Jesus was being bombarded by imitation-followers, imitation-disciples, crowds of people who saw a "good deal" about to happen and wanted in on the action. So Jesus spoke to them in direct terms about the nature of His kingdom and His followers.

Jesus had a twofold purpose for this sermon:

1. Corrective—The Sermon on the Mount is corrective for non-believers. He corrects their false views about the kingdom He had come to establish.

2. Instructive—The Sermon is instructive for genuine believers. Jesus instructs us about the cost involved in being a Christian, about the standard for following Christ. Jesus is saying to His followers, "Because you are a Christian, this is how you will live."

Related to this, a second question...

B. Why did Jesus deliver this sermon?

This is not an easy question to answer. There has been tremendous disagreement concerning the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. There are at least seven major approaches of interpretation! Here are five:

1. Sermon is an exposition of Law designed to drive men to cry for grace (Lutheran). This is true (in Paul), but there's more.

2. The Sermon is a Moral Road Map toward social progress (Post-Millennialism of early 1900's—optimism eliminated by WWI & II)

3. The Sermon is a list of ethical demands to apply to all believers in every age (Anabaptist-Mennonite). This leads to pacifism--no use of weapons or force (5:33-42 No oaths or vows, no military service).

4. On the other extreme, The Sermon is the law for the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus first offered it to the Jews, but they rejected it. But why would God's people need to know about "face slapping" in the millennial kingdom (5:39)? And doesn't Jesus talk about the kingdom in both a future AND present sense--6:33?

5. The Sermon is instruction given by Jesus to his disciples describing his expectations for their behavior as citizens of His kingdom (Stott). Matthew just told us that the primary

content of Jesus' preaching was the gospel of the kingdom (4:17, 23). The unifying theme of this sermon is the kingdom of heaven, as we see in the following verses.

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

5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

5:19-20 "Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

6:10 "Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done."

6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and righteousness."

7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

So Jesus is describing *kingdom life* for His followers. This is "Kingdom Living 101."

C. Who can benefit from this sermon? Jesus addressed two groups in the Sermon on the Mount. Those committed to Him, and those simply curious about Him. We meet them both in Matthew's introduction in verses 1-2, "Now when Jesus saw **the crowds**, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His **disciples** came to him,² and he began to teach them."

So He saw the crowds, but He began to teach the disciples. In other words...

1. *Jesus is speaking to disciples directly.* He told them in clear terms the radical demands He placed on His followers.

2. *Jesus is speaking to the crowds indirectly.* He allowed them to overhear these words about His requirements for His followers.

Question: Do the beatitudes teach salvation by works? Are they a means of earning salvation?

Answer: No! The sermon on the mount is quite pride crushing. It shows us that we can't please God on our own merit. We think we're pretty good until we listen to Jesus. Jesus raises the bar. He says, "Whoever is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment (5:22)." "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (5:28)." "Love your enemies (5:44)." "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

No, we can't live up to the guidelines and ethical principles Jesus gives. This sermon shows us we need a Savior. This sermon drives us to Christ, not just to heal our sick bodies, but to save our sin-enslaved souls.

So Jesus gives this sermon at the beginning of His ministry, and then gives His life at the end of it. Don't miss this connection. In His sermon He shows our need, we need a Savior. In His death, burial, and resurrection, He meets our need. He provided the salvation we need.

How do we receive His salvation? Not by doing something, but by asking and receiving something. That's what Jesus said as He wrapped up this sermon in 7:7, "Ask and it will be given to you." Or as Paul later explains in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

Perhaps you're here today and you're tired of the imitation Christianity that's all around us. You have honestly taken a good look at your own life, and realize that you're missing out. You're wondering, "What's the real thing?" That's exactly what Jesus is about to show.

So as we begin, we've asked some questions to prepare ourselves for what's ahead.

II. As Jesus begins...a shocking prerequisite for going to heaven (3)

Verse 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." One simple verse. Three profound realities.

A. Jesus identifies the blessed person. He says it nine times in His sermon introduction. "*Blessed* are the poor in spirit." "*Blessed* are those who mourn." "*Blessed* are the meek." Blessed. Blessed. Blessed.

What does Jesus mean by using the term "blessed"? Often, people will substitute the word "happy". This has some value. God's people alone can be truly happy. But "happy" is misleading because when Jesus uses this word (Greek *makarios*), He is not talking about a subjective feeling. He is talking about objective realities. Blessed *are*. Blessed *are*. Blessed *are*.

Happiness depends upon circumstances. Being a blessed person does not. It's a fixed matter. We are more accurate when we think of "blessed" in terms of "approval." The blessed person is the person who has received God's approval and favor. That person is well off. That person is happy in the right sense of the term, no matter what life's circumstances may be.

Think of that word *approval*. With these eight beatitudes Jesus is showing us who has God's approval and who doesn't. Back in the 1940s Pastor Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached a series on the Sermon on the Mount that became a book, and he says this about the beatitudes:

"These descriptions, I suggest, indicate clearly (perhaps more clearly than anything else in the entire realm of Scripture) the essential, utter difference between the Christian and the non-Christian...There were times when the distinction was clear cut, and those have always been the greatest eras in the history of the Church. We know, however, the arguments that have been put forward. We have been told that we have to make the Church attractive to the man outside, and the idea is to become as much like him as we can...The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first. That is how revival comes. That must also be true of us as individuals. It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian, but rather to be as different from everybody who is not a Christian as we can possibly be. Our ambition should be to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian."²

Approval. We're about to see who has God's approval, and who does not. We're about to see what should have our approval, and what should not.

Jesus is showing us the blessed life, the God-blessed life. He paints a picture with words so that we can see what His people are to be like. He identifies eight related characteristics of the individual who is living for the King.

--The first four beatitudes pertain to our attitudes towards God.

--The last four beatitudes pertain to our attitudes towards our fellow human beings.

This pattern resembles the Ten Commandments, the first commands addressing the vertical and the final commands the horizontal. Some see Jesus' actions reflecting Moses. Moses went on a mountain and then gave the Law. Jesus went on a mountain and proclaimed the fulfillment of the Law.

² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 36-37.

Each of the beatitudes begins with "Blessed", followed by one particular characteristic which needs to be present in the lives of God's people, followed by a specific nature of the blessing that results.

So there's reality number one. He identifies the blessed person. Now a second reality.

B. Jesus commends spiritual poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." I nearly entitled this message, "*A Sermon that Goes for the Heart from the Very Beginning.*" That's what Jesus does in the first beatitude. He goes for the heart. This is what you see in the heart of the person who belongs to His kingdom.

Poor in spirit. What does that mean? First, let's talk about what this does NOT mean. Jesus is not saying that God places a premium on poverty, and that all of us should strive to be poor. He does say elsewhere that it is hard for the rich to enter His kingdom, but riches aren't the problem. Riches just cloud a person from seeing the true nature of his heart, and a person who has riches tends to think he's sufficient, while a person who doesn't have them knows he isn't.

Nor is He saying, secondly, that a person who is poor in spirit has no personality. Blandness. Sameness. Non-noticeableness.

Nor is Jesus promoting a very low view of self, the "Oh, I'm no good. Don't pay any attention to me. I'm a nobody" view of self. By the way, that kind of talk is often just a backhanded way to gain attention, a mask to cover the very opposite spirit, the "Please tell me I am good" spirit.

That's not what poor in spirit means. What does it mean? Let's examine in detail the language used here. Matthew wrote this account in Greek and in Greek there are two words for "poor". One, there is the word *penes*. This describes the man who has to work for his living. He's the man who serves his own needs by using his own hands. He's the working man. He's not rich, but he's not destitute either.

There's a second Greek word for poor, *ptochos*. This word describes absolute poverty. It comes from the root word which means "to crouch or cower". It describes poverty which beats a man to his knees. *Penes* describes the man who has nothing extra in life. *Ptochos* describes the man who has nothing at all.

Which word do you think appears in verse 3? It's *ptochos*. The person who is blessed is the person who is completely poverty-stricken and destitute. In spirit, that is. This person is spiritually destitute, and admits it.

But there's another language element to consider. Aramaic. Jesus spoke in Aramaic and would have preached this sermon in Aramaic, which Matthew later translated into Greek so the Gentile world could read it. The Jews had a special way of using the word "poor" to refer to the person who had no money, and therefore had no influence, power, or prestige in this world. Because of that, the "poor" man was often the victim of abuse and oppression. Those with wealth and power manipulated the helpless poor. The poor had no earthly resources. So where did he put his trust? In God. The Aramaic sense of the word reminds us that the poor man was the man who trusted in God. He had to. He had nowhere else to turn.

Now let's take the two sides of the word, the Greek and Aramaic, and put them together. One who is poor is one who is absolutely destitute, and has nothing at all. One who is poor is one who is humble and helpless, and has put his total trust in God. That's the kind of people that meet God's approval. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" which means, "Blessed is the person who has realized his own utter helplessness, and has put his whole trust in God."

Think of it this way...

1. *A person who is poor knows about need.*

2. *A person who is poor in spirit has filed for spiritual bankruptcy.*

To be "poor in spirit" is to acknowledge one's spiritual poverty before God. We all enter the world as sinners who owe a debt we cannot pay. We are in chains in the debtor's prison. We are under the wrath of a holy and angry God and deserve nothing but His judgment. We have nothing to offer God, nothing to plead in our defense, nothing with which to buy the favor, the *approval*, of heaven.

The poor in spirit are those who can say wholeheartedly with the hymn-writer:

Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to thy cross I cling:

Naked, come to thee for dress;

Helpless, look to thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly:

Wash me, Savior, or I die.³

Jesus told a parable in Luke 18:10-14 about two men who went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who said, "I thank You God that I am not like other men." The other was a tax collector who beat his chest and cried, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Which one was poor in spirit?

C. H. Spurgeon expressed it, "The way to rise in the kingdom is to sink in ourselves." God places a premium on humility. The way up is the way down. The one who receives God's favor and blessing is the one who realizes he has nothing to offer to God.

That's what God Himself tells us plainly in 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 also who is of a contrite and humble spirit. . ."

There's no room for arrogance in amongst Jesus' followers. No place for demanding one's way. Pride is not a virtue, but a foe we seek to eliminate from our hearts.

A moment ago I quoted Martyn Lloyd-Jones who said that the beatitudes reveal the essential, utter difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. Here we begin to see this vivid contrast. The Christian sees being poor in spirit as something commendable. To the non-Christian, it is deplorable. Turn to Hollywood and you'll see the person the world applauds. Or watch the NBA playoffs, or the politicians in Washington, or the people in the break-room at work, where the commended virtues are self-confidence and self-expression.

Believe in yourself. Feel good about yourself. Promote yourself. Stand up for yourself. That's the mindset of the world. It's the person who *doesn't* do so that has the problem.

But what the world admires is the very opposite of what Jesus here commends, of what Jesus says is a prerequisite to going to heaven. Let's think carefully about this third reality.

C. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is at stake. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Who participates in the kingdom of heaven? The poor in spirit do. Not the people who feel good about themselves and believe in themselves, but those who admit their lack, their emptiness of soul, their spiritual poverty.

I am a sinner. I am unworthy. I have nothing with which to merit the approval of God.

So that's it? Just admit you are a sinner and you go to heaven? No, hell will be full of people who admitted they were sinners, who said, "Sure, I've done bad things, but you can't blame me for it. I'm no worse than the next guy." Do you hear the pride in that sinner's

³ See John Stott, 39

admission? What you don't hear is the poverty of spirit which Jesus says brings the unmerited approval of God and results in the undeserved experience of His heavenly kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Notice the present tense. Blessed *are*. Theirs *is*. Being poor in spirit isn't just how we get in, but who we are. We live this way. We are people who say with John the Baptist, "He must increase, I must decrease." We Christians *are* the poor in spirit.

So does that mean we are gloomy and sour-faced? No! We who are poor in spirit know we possess something that produces joy that the world cannot fathom. We know that *theirs IS the kingdom of heaven*. We are participants in the kingdom of heaven. This is what we possess.

We touched on this earlier, but let me emphasize it again. According to Jesus, the kingdom of heaven has a present aspect and a future aspect.

Matthew 4:17 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." That's present.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and righteousness." That's present.

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" That's future.

How can the kingdom be both present and future? The answer to that is related to five biblical truths about the kingdom.

1. Three things are needed to have a kingdom. As long as these three things are present, God's kingdom is present and active.

a. A Ruler—that's Christ

b. Those Ruled—that's God's people

c. A Realm—that's where the Ruler exercises his rule

2. The kingdom is essentially ethical, not geographical.

3. God's rule is independent of the realm. God's rule is spiritual in nature, and can be exercised in any realm.

4. There is coming a physical, world-wide millennial kingdom which Jesus the King will establish when He returns to earth. We read about it in Revelation 20:1-6.

5. God's rule is not only earthly and millennial. Though this is a fervent hope in the Bible, and though this future aspect is coming, God's rule involves MORE than a physical kingdom. The King is ruling right now in the hearts and lives of His people.

So the reward of the "poor in spirit" is the kingdom of heaven. The primary emphasis of this promise is future. God's people will participate in the blessings of God's kingdom which will be established in the Millennium and continue forever in the new earth and heaven that the King will create (see Revelation 21-22). But even now, in the very present, the poor in spirit are experiencing a foretaste of these coming blessings, the first-fruits as it were, as we experience the care and provision of our King Jesus.

Listen to King Jesus as He delivers His kingdom address. Listen to Him as He offers His kingdom to the poor, later to the feeble, the children, to the tax collectors and sinners. Why these kind of people? Because these kind of people know all about need, and need is the prerequisite to entering His kingdom.

Spiritual poverty. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Make It Personal: Some questions we need to consider...

1. *Am I admitting that I am spiritually bankrupt apart from Christ?* That's a harsh term. Bankrupt. But we have a harsh problem. "Declared in law unable to pay outstanding debts." That's the definition of bankrupt. And that is our condition. That's how we enter the world.

"There is no one righteous, not even one." Romans 3:10

"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23

"All our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6

Am I admitting that? Not simply, *did* I, but *am* I? Far too many have turned it into a past transaction. Say you are a sinner, pray the prayer, and you're in. But this isn't simply past tense. Blessed *are the poor in spirit*. True Jesus-followers live this way. They keep admitting the truth that they are spiritually bankrupt apart from Christ.

Those final three words make all the difference, don't they? Apart from Christ. Yes, I am spiritually bankrupt on my own. But I'm no longer on my own. Now I have Christ, and now I burst into praise with Paul, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph 1:3)."

That brings us to a second question.

2. *Am I putting my hope for heaven in Christ alone?* "In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (Eph 1:7)." Jesus Christ came to redeem, that is, to buy back bankrupt sinners. He did it through His blood, that is, by dying in their place and paying their sin penalty. When a spiritually bankrupt sinner puts his trust in Jesus Christ, God puts into that sinner's bank account, as it were, the inexhaustible riches of Christ. From bankruptcy to royalty.

Oh my friend, on what are you placing your hope for going to heaven? There's a difference between trusting in a prayer you prayed a long time ago and trusting in Christ alone. Are saying with the hymn-writer, "Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to thy cross I cling."? If not, why not now? If so, a third question...

3. *Am I now seeking to make much of the One who erased my debt and brought me into His kingdom?* This is the Christian life, a life of devotion to the One who erased my debt, who took my poverty and gave me His riches, who brought me into His kingdom. I live for Him. I seek first His kingdom. And when I don't, I admit it, to myself, to others at times, and always to Him who said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."