

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Blessed are the Poor

Matthew 5:1-3

Rev Reuben Ng

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- Matthew 5:1-3 introduces to us the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus starts with the Beatitudes – eight blessedness to receive. The first, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” The word “blessed” can mean consecrate (eg, bless this food), praise (eg, bless the Lord), happy, fortunate or favoured (eg, I am blessed). In this verse, Jesus refers to being happy, fortunate or favoured. Jesus is not against us being blessed. This was certainly something Jesus’ listeners wanted to hear as they were living in oppression under Roman subjugation.
- “Poor in spirit” does not refer to material poverty, but rather people who consider themselves unworthy of God’s grace on their own merit, but fully dependent on God’s grace. They realize that their own righteous acts are nothing but filthy rags and cannot impress God enough to earn a place in heaven.
- Jesus sets the example and role model for us in this aspect as He revealed in Matthew 11:29 that He is gentle and humble in heart; not like us that we have nothing, but rather, a total dependence on God, bringing Himself low and exalting God.
- The blessing we receive is not a reward for us to earn. When we are poor in spirit (i.e. fully dependent on God’s grace), we position ourselves to be partakers of the blessing of the kingdom of heaven. Romans 14:17 tells us that the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This blessing is not dependent on our external circumstances but an attitude of the heart.
- Jesus starts with this “blessed” because all the other “blessed” links to this one quality – poor in spirit. Pastor shared about the quality of Cavendish bananas. Their greatest strength (genetically identical and easily reproducible) became its biggest vulnerability (all susceptible to the same disease), because their critical quality was not protected. Being poor in spirit is critical to our Christian walk. We need to protect our attitude of being poor in spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Let’s take time to count our blessings! What are some ways that you are blessed (both physically and spiritually)?

Writing Team:

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Lye Kuan Loy, Ravi Cuttilan, Sharon Ward

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2. How do you recognize a person who is poor in spirit? Why are people who are poor in spirit more blessed?

[Verses to help us go deeper: Psalm 34:6; Luke 18:10-14; Ephesians 1:3-5]

3. How can you live life with an attitude of being poor in spirit? What are some ways we can protect this quality of being poor in spirit?

[Verses to help us go deeper: 1 Peter 5:6-7; Philippians 2:5-7; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10]

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us and continually remind us what it means to be poor in spirit – to be totally dependent on God.
- Thank God that we can experience the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit despite our circumstances.
- Ask the Lord to help you guard this critical quality so that we can be blessed – happy and favoured.

MEMORY VERSE

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

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