**The Sermon on the Mount**

***Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit*; Matthew 5:3**

**Background**

1. Why the Sermon on the Mount
   * The teachings of Jesus Christ are critical to the life of a believer, Matthew 7:24-27
   * The teachings of Jesus Christ are the primary discipleship training for His followers, Matthew 28:19-20
2. Context of the Sermon, Matthew 4:23-25 and 5:1-2
   * Protect the disciples from false preconceived notions about Christ and His Kingdom in the midst of popular appeal
   * Provide the disciples with transferable material to teach others

**Exposition of Matthew 5:3**

1. Blessed
   * Makarios – inward joy that comes from God
   * Connection to the Old Testament of blessings: Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 32:1-2, Psalm 34:8, Jeremiah 17:7
   * Contrasted to happiness which comes from external factors or personal accomplishment
2. Poor in Spirit
   * Humble toward God
   * Contrasted with “Blessed are the meek” – humble toward others
   * Poor – someone who is destitute, completely dependent on the help of another to survive; an acknowledgement of spiritual poverty or spiritual bankruptcy
   * In Spirit – a spiritual poverty in which the individual is completely dependent on God for their spiritual life
   * Connection with poverty, wealth and right relationship to God
3. Kingdom of Heaven
   * The message of John the Baptist, Matthew 3:2
   * The message of Jesus Christ, Matthew 4:17
   * “Theirs is…” present tense – already possessing or already in
   * The Kingdom of Heaven – under the authority and reign of the King of Heaven

**Conclusion: The first statement by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is a pronouncement of blessing on all those who consider themselves to be spiritually destitute and absolutely dependent on the King. This attitude marks them as kingdom people.**

***The Sermon on the Mount:* Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit; Matthew 5:1-3**

**I. New Series Briefly Introduced (Header slide)**

* The Sermon on the Mount is some very challenging material
* I remember in the New Testament Greek course at Southwestern, during the first semester we translated Matthew 3 through 7
* I thought then, this is really difficult material, in the case of preaching, avoid it
* Then along came the top 50 events of the life of Christ
* I wanted this year to follow up the top 50 events with the top 50 teachings of Jesus
* The Sermon on the Mount would surely contain many of those top 50 events
* As I tried to break it into teachable portions, the impossibility of the task was clear
* First, the Sermon on the Mount should be studied as a work onto itself
* Second, 50 weeks is not long enough to teach the Sermon on the Mount and all the other major teachings of Jesus – His parables, His Olivet Discourse, His Upper Room Discourse covering John 13-17, His rebuke of the Pharisees
* So for now, I am content to say for the rest of 2010 we will look at this one sermon
* It covers Matthew 5, 6, and 7
* This great teaching opens with the beatitudes and ends with the parable of two builders
* First nine weeks we will study just the beatitudes
* However, each week some aspect of background at the Scripture reading
* Why the Sermon on the Mount
  + The teachings of Jesus Christ are critical to the life of a believer,
  + **Read Matthew 7:24-27 (Slides 2 and 3)**
  + In Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus claims that a failure to hear and live according to His teachings will lead to destruction
  + The teachings of Jesus Christ are the primary discipleship training for His followers
  + **Read Matthew 28:19-20 (Slide 4)**
  + In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus calls us to make His teachings the focus of disciple making
  + It is this verse that should prompt us to teach the Sermon on the Mount
  + The Sermon on the Mount is critical in the overall teaching ministry of Jesus because
  + The eternal significance of the message
  + The practical application for followers of Jesus
  + The breadth of the topics covered
  + The clarity and application of the Old Testament
* Context of the Sermon
* **Read Matthew 4:23-25 and 5:1-2 (Slides 5-7)**
  + Protect the disciples from false preconceived notions about Christ and His Kingdom in the midst of popular appeal
* The crowds coming to Him, He pulls aside His disciples and teaches them
* Not that the crowd isn’t listening, for chapter 7 says the crowds went away amazed at the authority with which Christ was teaching
* This just gives us a picture of His intended audience, this message to the disciples is to be repeated to others
* Jesus is likely concerned that the opinions of the crowd may negatively impact His disciples, having them think certain ways about His ministry
* Jesus is likely wanted His disciples to not only avoid such misunderstandings of the ways of God and the purpose of His ministry
* He also is giving the disciples some teachable material
* What should the disciples teach when they start the church? This is the material

**II. Scripture Reading and Prayer**

* We will read all twelve of these verses every week
* Goal is for us to become extremely familiar with these verses
* **Read Matthew 5:1-12 (slides)**

**III. Exposition of Matthew 5:3 – “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Header slide)**

* This is the first statement in the Sermon on the Mount
* **Read Matthew 5:3 (Slide 2)** 
  + **Blessed**
    - Makarios – inward joy that comes from God versus eudaimonia
    - Connection to the Old Testament of blessings:
    - **Read Psalm 1:1-3 (Slide 3)**
    - **Psalm 32:1-2 (Slide 4)**
    - **Psalm 34:8 (Slide 5)**
    - **Jeremiah 17:7 (Slide 6)**
    - Contrasted to happiness which comes from external factors or personal accomplishment
    - Jesus longs for our true happiness and He gives to us the keys to true happiness
    - However, these steps to happiness challenge our thinking for the beatitudes are filled with paradoxical statements
    - True happiness, Jesus says blessed are the poor and the worlds says blessed are the rich, Jesus says blessed are those who mourn and the world says blessed are those who laugh, Jesus says blessed are those who hunger and thirst, the world says blessed are those who are filled
    - Why do these bring true, lasting happiness? Why do these bring everlasting joy?
    - These are the attributes or attitudes that are necessary in order to enter the kingdom
    - In the kingdom is found true happiness and lasting joy
  + **Poor in Spirit – Read Matthew 5:3 (Slide 7)**
    - Humble toward God
    - Contrasted with “Blessed are the meek” – humble toward others
    - Great weakness and spiritual poverty
    - Danger of Baptists, giving all their background, all their service, all our titles (deacon, Sunday school teacher, etc.) as if God is impressed with this list
    - However, it is best to have a sense of spiritual poverty
    - Humility about our spiritual condition
    - Right thinking about our spiritual bankruptcy
    - Poor – someone who is destitute, completely dependent on the help of another to survive; an acknowledgement of spiritual poverty or spiritual bankruptcy
    - Connection of poverty and wealth to spiritual conditions
    - In Spirit – a spiritual poverty in which the individual is completely dependent on God for their spiritual life
    - Connection with poverty, wealth and right relationship to God
  + **Kingdom of Heaven**
    - The message of John the Baptist, Matthew 3:2 – **Read Matthew 3:2 (Slide 8)**
    - The message of Jesus Christ, Matthew 4:17 – **Read Matthew 4:17 (Slide 9)**
    - “Theirs is…” present tense – already possessing or already in
    - The Kingdom of Heaven – under the authority and reign of the King of Heaven

**IV. Closing – Read Matthew 5:3 (Slide 10)**

* **Conclusion: The first statement by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is a pronouncement of blessing on all those who consider themselves to be spiritually destitute and absolutely dependent on the King. This attitude marks them as kingdom people.**