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Attitude Determines Altitude

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, January 31, 7:00 AM in HHR #5

(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, January 31, 7:00 PM in Office #225

(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

**Capitol Commission is non-partisan and
non-denominational**

Blessed are the poor in spirit (those who see their need), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus on His own terms. Its message is the most comprehensive moral teaching that flows from the nature and character of God. It inspires, challenges and remains relevant to our front door. The values, and the ethic of this kingdom would be diametrically opposed to the kingdoms of the earth, that he is in every way bringing a counter-culture.

We are well-aware of the recent inauguration of our Missouri Governor, Eric Greitens, and the President of the United States, Donald Trump. The Sermon on the Mount is a profound inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Jesus invites the crowd into a new community of faith, love, and authentic relationships.

It's present to those that have submitted themselves to the governance of Jesus. Our identity is in a person.

The Kingdom of God refers to God's sovereign rule over the whole universe.

"What are the beatitudes?"

The Beatitudes are the eight declarations of blessedness each beginning with "Blessed are..." The Greek word (original language of the New Testament) translated "blessed" as "Oh, how happy" or, literally, "to be enlarged." Not a shallow happiness that is fleeting, rather, a state of spiritual health, a joy reaching the soul. It's been said, when **one sows** into the first part of the beatitudes (poor, mourn, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful,

pure, peacemakers, and persecuted), **one reaps** the second part (comfort, inherit the earth, filled, mercy, see God, called sons of God, inherit the kingdom of heaven). It's a foretaste of heaven.

Years ago, while working on my Master's degree, I started flying small planes. One of the most important lessons learned was the planes attitude determines the planes altitude. Attitude must be parallel the horizon to maintain

Our Attitude Determines our Altitude

proper altitude. The instrumentation panel shows a compass-globe with wings and lines to inform the pilot of attitude. If you want to increase your altitude you lift your attitude, if you want to decrease your altitude, you lower the nose of the plane. Life is much like flying a plane.

We pick up the narrative in the book of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1-12, notably summoned, "The Beatitudes". The poor, religious, irreligious, leaders, servants, and twelve disciples all listening from the foothills of the Sea of Galilee. Its effect is like an amphitheater. A clarion call to come, listen and learn.

8 Characteristics that comprise the Christian character

We will look at the first of seven in this week's Bible study and wrap up with the eight beatitude, which is more of what our response to persecution ought to look like.

God does not build upon the foundation of pride, arrogance, self-centeredness or ambition. God's path is one of emptying prior to filling.

Blessed are the "Poor in Spirit"

The Message paraphrase translation reads:

You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule" (Matthew 5:3).

The first beatitude is foundational to all of Jesus' teachings. Miss this one and you'll miss the rest. Get this



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one and you've positioned yourself to learn and become spiritually rich.

It's been said: **'You're at your best when you depend upon God to help you with life'.**

Waldo Emerson was right when he said:

"What lies behind us, and what lies before us, are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

The poor in spirit is an acknowledgement that we cannot manufacture spiritual life. The poor in spirit are needy.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, ESV).

Humility opens to the door to all of God's blessings. The poor in spirit are the humble. They recognize who they are and who they are not.

How Do We Become Poor in the Spirit?

Recognize and admit there is a gap between our life sermon and the sermon on the mount. A gap exists in most of us. The poor in spirit discern they cannot close the gap without the dramatic intervention of the Holy Spirit helping us turn toward God, bend our knee in humility and ask God for help. At times, the most powerful prayer is: God help!

Ultimately, the **main idea of the sermon is love**; the very foundation of Christianity. Jesus turns the form of religion upside down.

I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20)

The former is a religion of polemics, the later, a religion of relationships.

The Ethic of Love is Counter Culture

➔ **Love your enemies**

Right now, in your mind, see the face of your enemy, the person who has done you the most harm.

➔ **Do good to those who hate you**

He says, "It's easy to do good to those who do good to you". Who dislikes you? Be kind to them. Don't return evil for evil.

➔ **Bless those who curse you**

How difficult is it when someone curses you, they speak evil against you, they attack you with their words, they gossip about you. The tendency is to throw more logs on the fire, Jesus says to put water on that fire.

➔ **Pray for those who mistreat you**

Make a list of those that have mistreated you; pray for them. It's hard to curse people when you are praying for them.

➔ **Give freely**

Give and people will take advantage of you, give anyway. Forgive and people will offend you, forgive anyway. Love and people will defraud you, love anyway.

The big idea of the countercultural kingdom ethic of Jesus, **treat other people the way you want to be treated.** It's that simple.

"Blessed are the "Poor in Spirit" for theirs is the kingdom"

The kingdom of God is now. Any who lives poor in spirit would experience the kingdom—a fullness of God's presence, clarity of God's plan, belonging to the new community of Jesus. Just as the interested bystanders and the Disciples were invited into this kingdom at the foothills of the Sea of Galilee, you are invited into His kingdom on the marble floors of the Capitol.

