

## **The Son Shines on the Mourning**

It is apparent that this title is a play on words. To refresh your middle school English lessons (not that you need it), Son and Mourning are homonyms for sun and morning; two words that are pronounced the same but have different meanings. I know the topic of one's spiritual condition has been at the front of most of the lessons we share or have shared for the past couple of years. For some reason, I feel driven to hit this even harder in the coming months. The world being in the disorder that it is, our spiritual condition is of critical importance.

We covered the Beatitudes in several lessons and if you recall, they are sequential to building one on the other. Laying a footing for a foundation is critical in building a new house or structure. In our walk towards God's Kingdom, our spiritual growth is a construction project, God the Father's design, with Jesus Christ as the Engineer and God's Holy Spirit is the Construction Element. We are being rebuilt to the image of His Son.

We need to understand the difference between heart and mind. Are we Christian in our minds or does our heart truly reflect the characteristics of and desire to be like Jesus Christ. For an example, we can read of one such incident in Luke 7, where Jesus was invited to dine at the house of Simon the Pharisee.

**Luke 7:36-39-** “Now one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him. And after going into the Pharisee’s house, He sat down at the table. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that He was sitting in the Pharisee’s house, took an alabaster flask of ointment; And she stood weeping behind Him, and knelt at His feet, and began to wash His feet with her tears and to wipe them with the hairs of her head; and she was ardently kissing His feet and anointing them with the ointment. But when he saw this, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what the woman is who is touching Him because she is a sinner.”

In his judgment of the woman, Simon failed to realize as Jesus did, the woman was filled with godly sorrow and repentance, whereas Simon obviously felt more righteous as he was a Pharisee. Being in the church, member, or other role, does not automatically constitute right standing with God. The first two Beatitudes establish the condition of our hearts necessary to grow spiritually.

**Matthew 5:3-4-** “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

In reading these two scriptures from The Sermon on the Mount, why would Jesus list them first? With all the prosperity hype and “God wants to bless you” and churches that preach this without any spiritual efforts, why are they important?

**Psalm 34:15-19-** “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

How can someone be blessed by being poor in spirit or be blessed for mourning? It is an oxymoron to those who do not understand. “Destitute in their heart” or “Joyful are the miserable?” Makes as much sense as “military intelligence, jumbo shrimp, or almost pregnant.” Our normal human perception is far different from God’s. How can someone following Jesus Christ be poor in spirit and why would he mourn, much less considered to be blessed?

But knowing the meaning of the message opens the eyes and ears and more important, the heart. Because it is here that He can begin His work.

## Poor in Spirit

To most people, it is contrary to logic. One usually connects being blessed with being happy, prosperous, and today, loaded with material possessions. Cars, jewelry, money, etc.

The word, “poor,” is translated from the Greek word, “*ptochos*,” which means “to cower or crouch as one who is *helpless*.” It came to mean one who was in poverty, a beggar, someone who is penniless, and *dependent* upon others or the necessities of life. Truly the “poor” would eagerly reach out for assistance to rise out of their situation. They knew there was nothing they could do within their own power that would elevate them above their condition. Eventually, the word “poor” began to take on spiritual connotations as people of the times believed that these afflicted individuals had nowhere to turn to but to God.

**Psalm 34:6-** “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

Unlike some of the population today, who choose to remain the same. Just look on the internet at the photos of Seattle or numerous cities in California. San Francisco has turned into a virtual toilet. You can see what “poor” looks like by today’s

standard and all with the government's assistance. Why work if you get paid to do nothing?

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-** “For indeed, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: that if anyone is not willing to work, he should not be allowed to eat.”

This only applies to those not getting over \$100,000 per year in state and federal assistance as I read one woman in California is receiving.

Back in 2008, then Senator Barack Obama mocked the working class stating, “they cling to their guns and religion.” Someday soon, he may get to meet one of those clinging to their guns and eventually all will meet our Lord. It will be a “Kodak” moment.

What is depressing is that anyone who is motivated and desires to change his or her status will take the necessary steps to rise above their poverty in the economic areas of their lives.

It is this realization in the spiritual sense, we come to know how our spiritual relationship with God is sadly lacking and in a neglected condition. God wants us

to come to this place in our walk with Him, to know and understand our deficiencies regarding true spiritual things. He wants us to have the initiative to seek His presence and overcome our spiritual poverty. In being poor in spirit, we will reach out to Him.

**Isaiah 61:1-2-** “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me because the LORD has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To preach the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;”

So, when we are speaking of “poor in spirit,” we are not referring to economics, or how much money you have in the bank or your material possessions. We are discussing our spiritual qualities relating to our relationship with God. Do you think a billionaire is spiritually poor? It does not matter if someone has a mansion, Rolls Royce, private jet, or more gold than Ft. Knox. None of these would be considered a godly characteristic.

The realization of being poor in spirit is not something of which we are naturally aware. It becomes a work of God’s Holy Spirit in the hearts of those of those He

has called. When we come to the place of repentance and baptism and receive His Holy Spirit, the veil is lifted, and His truth becomes clear. We come to realize the spiritual deficiencies we have compared to the sacrifice Jesus paid for us. The closer we draw to Him, the more He reveals Himself to us. By comparison, we realize our true spiritual condition.

**Psalm 51:6-10-** “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

To be poor in spirit is to fully recognize and understand how inadequate our spiritual condition is. If we applied for a mortgage based on our spiritual condition, would the bank lend us the money? Being spiritually bankrupt can be overcome by fully trusting and acknowledging God and our total dependence upon Him.

But we need to keep the Laodiceans in mind from Revelation 3 and not become complacent.

**Revelation 3:14-17-** “And to the angel of the church of *the* Laodiceans, write:

These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. For you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing;’ and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

We can never let ourselves be duped into believing we are in perfect standing with God because we “serve the brethren” or “do something for the church.” I have said it dozens of times, God know the heart. Much like someone choosing to move out of a bad financial situation, we can so choose to move even closer to God in our relationship with Him. Our wholehearted devotion through prayer, study and fasting will yield the blessings mentioned in Matthew 5:3. God’s promises always come with blessings *IF* we do our part with desire and in the proper spirit. He will know the difference between lip service and playing church. Religious in the mind vs. righteous in the heart.



**Psalm 72:12-13-** “For He shall deliver the needy when he cries, and the poor with the one who has no helper. He shall have compassion upon the weak and needy, and shall save the lives of the needy.”

**Psalm 107:41-43-** “But He raises up the poor from affliction and sets their families like a flock. The righteous shall see it and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop its mouth. Whoever is wise, let him give heed to these things, and let them consider the mercies of the LORD.”

There are numerous references to the poor throughout scripture. God does not favor poor over the rich, as we know He does not play favorites (**Acts 10:34**).

Solomon certainly was not poor. I am not sure how he would compare to today’s billionaire standards, but he was the wealthiest King of his time. The focus on the poor or at least those of lower economic means, they have more of an inclination to focus on God and His Providence.

As the distractions of greed and wealth seem to be ever increasing, along with the moral decay of our nation, we must remain focused on our spiritual condition and our total dependence on God and His grace. His Kingdom is promised to those who are poor in spirit. That is truly a blessing.

## Those Who Mourn

People think that mourning is associated with a funeral or the loss of a loved one. Yes, it can be. We have read that the heartache related to this subject can and will bring about desired change. Mourning also deals with a sense of remorse, attitude, and humility and having the all-important, *contrite spirit*. You are probably tired of me mentioning this, but remember, the Beatitudes are building blocks and these two we are discussing are foundational to spiritual growth.

As we growth in the likeness of Jesus Christ, we will begin to see things through His eyes, we will hear through His ears. Our spiritual discernment will increase. Our perspectives and views will change. Lately, I find certain things are becoming less acceptable than I did a couple of years ago. Television is almost intolerable, the things that are happening in churches are insufferable. I know if these events and things are grieving me, how much do we grieve God in our occasional disobedience or lack of devotion? Seeing things through the Eyes of The Lord puts things in a totally different view. Conviction comes quickly to repent.

**Romans 2:3-4-** “Now do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the

judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?”

God says He will spare those who grieve over the depth of sin in the world and the destruction it causes.

**Psalm 51:16-17-** “For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

The mourning of which we speak is a godly sorrow. This sorrow leads to repentance. It is a motivator to walk the walk and stay the course. One that takes us from the realization of being a sinful person to the grateful state of change and drives us even more towards righteousness. The realization that our “poor spiritual condition” needs work and our mourning is a turning point. We have turned a corner and desire to please God.

**Psalm 51:7-12-** “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You

have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me.”

**2 Corinthians 7:9-11-** “And *so* I rejoice—not because you were caused to sorrow, but because you sorrowed unto repentance; for you sorrowed in a godly manner, so that you were not injured by us in any way. For sorrow unto repentance before God works out salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works out death. For see how this very thing—your personal sorrow before God—brought about such earnestness in you! And, *what* a defense, and *what* indignation, and fear, and vehement desire, and zeal, and vengeance! In every *way* you have proved yourselves to be pure in the matter.”

Godly sorrow is motivational in bringing about an earnest desire and a fear of God. It filled the Corinthians with zeal and righteous indignation. These are qualities in the building blocks of the Beatitudes necessary in the change from the sinful man to one who desires to fully serve and please God. Righteous indignation is not necessarily an outburst of violent anger. It is being incensed to a wrong action.

Much like David confronting Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, or when Jesus turned over the tables of the moneychangers in Matthew 21. Both poor in spirit and mourning are foundational and must be present so the other beatitudes can be built upon. Are you incensed in any way by the condition of our nation? Our churches?

God gives grace to the humble.

**James 4:6-** “But He gives greater grace. This is *the* reason it says, “God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble.”

When we are truly is truly humble, sorrowful, and walking with a contrite spirit we will come to a place of repentance and grow spiritually. God cannot work with the proud or puffed up. God’s grace is sufficient. Our comfort is in His perfect peace and His truth.

Please understand the comfort we have in the relationship we have with our Savior Jesus Christ. As we are now part of the Body of Christ and a member of God’s Family, He is with us all the time. Through the infilling of His Holy Spirit, we have spiritual discernment and are aware of the evil that is all around us. We have been foretold of the things to come. They are unfolding daily right before our eyes.

We can take comfort and find peace and joy in the knowing of God's Word that His promises will be fulfilled at the return of Jesus Christ. Stay focused on the prize that lies ahead.

**Ephesians 5:15-17-** "So then, take heed that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*."

We have been given an incredible truth and way of life when so many have not.

**Matthew 13:14-17-** "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; For the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.' But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard."

We have trials and sorrows, grief, and mourning. God does not take delight in our punishment, but He will use what is necessary to get our attention of it is for our own good. Have you had any trials in the past year or two? Is God speaking and we are not listening?

“The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”-

**Revelation 2:7,11,17.**

Passover is in 106 days. In preparation, our spiritual condition will be closely examined between now and then. There must be a reason we have two ears and one mouth, we should listen twice as much as we speak. As God’s judgment will begin in His own house (**1 Peter 4:17**), we must pay attention to what is profoundly important in God’s word and set your hearts on growing closer to God.

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