BURN OUR HEARTS · STUDY GUIDE

The Poor in Spirit

On the sermon **"The Poor in Spirit"** by **Pastor Matt Chandler**, The Village Church · September 13, 2026 · Matthew 5:1-3

MATTHEW 5:1-3 (ESV)

[1]Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. [2]And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: [3]"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MAIN IDEA

"The only way to come before God is empty-handed."

MAJOR POINTS in the order preached

1. **Jesus wastes nothing.** (John 16:33) *"He wastes none of the highs and He wastes none of the lows."*
2. **What "blessed" means.** (5:3) *"Blessed is the settled confidence in God amid changing circumstances."* The Beatitudes are not personality types: Jesus came to make these people.
3. **What "poor in spirit" means.** (5:3; Luke 18:9-14)
   - **a** **Empty hands.** *"You can't bring your résumé to God."*
   - **b** **Humble, not self-hating.** *"It's humility, not self-hatred."*
   - **c** **Two kinds of pride.** *"Humility says God is the center and I can tell the truth about myself because He's merciful."*
   - **d** **Why we resist it.** *"A fully optimized version of you is still you."*
4. **What empty hands receive.** (5:3) *"The promise is a present reality, not a future experience."*
5. **How it grows.** *"We become like Jesus with deep work over time in community."*

KEY INSIGHTS our observations, not from the sermon

- **The King is the Teacher.** Jesus sits down on a mountain to teach (vv. 1-2), the posture of a rabbi and an echo of Sinai. The One announcing the kingdom is its King.
- **The first word is grace.** The sermon opens with "Blessed," not with a command. Jesus announces who is welcomed before He describes how kingdom people live.
- **Bookends.** The promise "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" appears in verse 3 and again in verse 10. Every Beatitude in between describes the same kingdom people.

DIGGING DEEPER empty hands in the big story of Scripture

- **Creation.** God made humanity to live by receiving from His hand, in His presence (Genesis 1:29; 2:16).
- **Fall.** After sin, Adam and Eve "sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths" (Genesis 3:7), the first résumé. But "the LORD God made … garments of skins and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).
- **Promise.** God dwells "with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit" (Isaiah 57:15), and "a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17), for "all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment" (Isaiah 64:6).
- **Fulfillment.** Jesus came "to bring good news to the poor" (Isaiah 61:1). "Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- **New creation.** The meek "shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5), and the One on the throne says, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Empty hands will be filled forever.

DISCUSS

1. Pastor Chandler defines "blessed" as settled confidence in God amid changing circumstances. How is that different from how our culture uses the word?
2. Read Luke 18:9-14. What was in the Pharisee's hands, and what was in the tax collector's? Why did only one go home justified?
3. Which pride tempts you more: "I've got this," or "my sin … is too great"? How does each keep you from receiving mercy?
4. Where are you still trying to prove yourself to God? Who in your church can help you see your blind spots?

THIS WEEK

Each morning, before you plan your day, pray the tax collector's prayer: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). Then tell one trusted believer where you have been trying to prove yourself.

PRAYER

Father, we come with empty hands. We cannot save ourselves, heal ourselves, or rule our own lives. Thank You that Jesus became poor so that we might become rich in Him. Take our tiny kingdoms and our résumés. Give us settled confidence in You amid every high and low, and form us into the likeness of Your Son, together with Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

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