

# Sermon on the Mount – The First Beatitude

**September 5, 2004: “Sermon on the Mount – The First Beatitude”** by Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church. Pastor Kimber returned to the pulpit with his continuing series on Matthew and focused today on the first beatitude, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3 (NIV).

Pastor described the Sermon on the Mount as a message from Jesus on what he expects of people who follow him. Those who follow him are to be different than those who follow the world’s teachings, and Jesus’ message is one of contrasts. For example, to whom do they reach out to in love (Matthew 5:43-44), how they pray (Matthew 6:5-13), their attitude towards forgiveness of others (Matthew 6:14-15), what they seek (Matthew 6:25-32), etc.

But with these expectations comes the prerequisites of what it takes to be a follower of Jesus Christ and partake of the kingdom of heaven. The first of these is to be “poor in spirit.” And to those that are “poor in spirit,” they are “blessed of God” and “theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3). To be “poor in spirit” is to recognize one’s spiritual poverty and wretchedness because of sin in our lives.

To bring this point home, Pastor dramatically contrasted the attitudes of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14, with the Pharisee standing up and praying [publicly] about himself, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” While the Tax Collector stood at a distance [perhaps in the back of the temple] not even looking up to heaven, “but beat his breast and said [quietly to himself], “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Drawing from Isaiah 57:15, Pastor Kimber pointed out that those who live with God, in the kingdom of heaven, come before Him with a contrite and lowly spirit, and are then revived and raised up by God. The Apostle John fully understood this concept when he said, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:8-9 (NIV)

## Application Questions

1. What is the world’s agenda for our children, and for us as adults as well, in regard to self...how we should think about and view ourselves?
2. By way of contrast, what is Christ’s agenda in regard to self...how we should think about and view ourselves?
3. As followers of Christ, how can we display a humble attitude of being “poor in spirit” yet with a confident attitude that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil 4:13 (KJV)

4. Pastor mentioned how those who follow the world's wisdom tend to argue and fight among themselves, while those that follow Jesus are expected to think, be and act differently. With this thought in mind, read James 3:13 to 4:10 and discuss...
  - a. What are the behaviors, as described by James, of those who follow the world's wisdom?
  - b. What is at the root of such behaviors?
  - c. What are the behaviors, as described by James, that Christ expects of those who follow him?
  - d. What is at the root of such behaviors?
  - e. How do these behaviors relate to being "poor in spirit?"
  - f. How might we apply what we've learned of Jesus' expectations of us and how we should live?
5. What can we draw from Psalm 32:1-5 that might help us deal with situations in which we sometimes find ourselves?

### **Possible Follow-up Activity**

- A. Divide your group into gender subgroups for a time of prayer.
- B. Take a few minutes and reflect on this evening's discussion...and then...
  - a. Ask of yourself, is there anyone in your sphere of influence that has a problem of being "confident of their own righteousness and look down on everybody else," as described in Luke 18:9. If so, write their names on a 3x5 card, and include a prayer request for them in this area.
  - b. Then examine your own life and ask of yourself, is there a similar attitude you would like to bring before God at this time?" If so, take a few minutes and write your thoughts on the other side of the 3x5 card in the form of a prayer request.
- C. Share your requests with one another, perhaps in pairs, and/or spend time in silent prayer of repentance and commitment...as the Lord leads.
- D. Then commit to pray for one another during the coming week, and contact each other to encourage one another...as the Lord leads.

**Special Note:** Before Pastor Kimber began his message, he encouraged us to pick up a copy of "Praying through the Sermon on the Mount" located in the foyer of the church, and use it for our devotions during the coming weeks.