

Living Under God's Blessing Matthew 5:1-4

"Blessed are..." those who live under God's approval, those who receive God's "thumbs up". Who gets to live under God's affirmation?

Those who:

Are poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Those who recognise their spiritual bankruptcy outside of the saving work of Jesus. The person who knows God's approval is the one who knows that they contribute nothing to their own salvation; the one who knows that even their best efforts are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Being poor in spirit is about getting rid of all self-assurance and self-reliance. We need a saviour. The degree to which we recognise our spiritual poverty is the degree to which we will know the kingdom of heaven/the presence of God.

Mourn for they will be comforted

This is not about bereavement, it is about mourning/grieving over our sin. It's about sorrow over our spiritual bankruptcy. As we're confronted with our spiritual poverty we're caused to grieve our sin and rebellion.

"People want the joy of salvation without conviction of sin. But true salvation necessitates a heart that mourns sin." (D M Lloyd Jones). Are we moved by our sin and the offence it is to God, or only when our sin gets us into trouble and is an offence to us or others?

As we grieve over our sinfulness we can know the comfort of God. What a wonderful promise! Repentance should not be a grievous thing but a joyous thing. We become aware of our need of a saviour and experience the grace of the Lord Jesus. How wonderfully comforting is this!

Martin Luther: 95 Theses No.1 *"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said "repent" he intended that the entire lives of believers should be repentance."*

Repentance should be a continual movement towards Christ and in so doing we receive comfort from God.

"Until sin be bitter—Christ will not be sweet." (Thomas Watson, 1620-1686)

Grace will never be amazing until we see our sin.

Note: These truths are vital for coming into the Christian life (the ABC) but they're also vital for us maturing in our walk with Jesus (the A to Z). Although we can be a Christian, forgiven, adopted etc we still need to remember the work of Christ for it is the truth of the gospel that is the source of change (sanctification). We therefore need to remember our spiritual poverty if it were not for Christ.

Points to Ponder

- 1 What was particularly helpful or difficult from the sermon? What stood out?
- 2 What would it feel like like/look like to know God's approval (to be under God's blessing)? How does this compare with having the approval of others?
- 3 What does it mean for us to be "spiritually bankrupt"? How does this happen? Why is it so important to understand this – what happens if we don't realise this and think "we're not that bad really"? What promise do we have about what happens when we are "poor in spirit"? What is it in our culture that mitigates against us understanding and experiencing our spiritual poverty?
- 4 What does it mean to mourn our spiritual bankruptcy? Why is this so important? Unpack and explore the Thomas Watson quote. What promise do we have for what happens for when we take our sin seriously? What might this look and feel like in actual practice? What serves to hinder us from really owning and dealing with our sinfulness.
- 5 What role does the Holy Spirit have in helping us to see our spiritual poverty and to see our sin as we should? [The Spirit reveals and illuminates Jesus. He is always wanting us to see Him and the wonderful grace He lavishes on us. As we ask for His help He will help us to see our need and the gracious provision of a Saviour.]
- 6 Pray that you would know God's approval through recognising our need of all that Jesus has done.