

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Beatitudes

Week 29

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Pray the Reflection on Blessed are the Poor in Spirit.
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we praise You, for You are the source of all blessings. You make a way for us to live in relationship with You. You lovingly come to free us, forgive us, and show us the way to a new life in You. Forgive us for the times we've failed to recognize that the stories of our lives are the story of You redeeming us. Thank you, Father, that You so love the world that You gave Your only Son, "so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). Thank you for so generously giving Yourself for us. Help us to know, not just with our head but with our whole being, how Jesus' coming is truly good news for our lives. Lord, help us to live in the true joy and gratitude for all that You have done for us. Jesus, we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Reflection

Our soul longs for God, but because we struggle to accept fully God's unconditional love, we are left with a deeply-felt void or emptiness inside. Trying to fill this void, we turn to the things of this world – material goods, activities, entertainment, etc. Many spiritual leaders refer to these as idols and our behavior as worshipping a false god. Our culture responds to our “worship” by feeding us with more fear and insecurity until we lose sight of who we are and what we are supposed to be about.

In this Beatitude, Matthew is inviting his community to choose its gods. In contrast to these false gods who play on fears and insecurities, Jesus invites his hearers to discover the faithful God of our memories and imagination. If God is God, and if this world is God's and we are part of this world, does it not follow that God will be with us as God? Will not God affirm life in us by sharing all resources we may need?

Matthew makes it clear that then, as well as now, “Your heavenly Father knows all that you need” (Matt. 6:32). God is a God of care, affirming the importance of each person, and always willing to provide them with whatever resources are needed.

Matthew invites us to deepen our faith rather than be controlled by the struggles, anxieties, and preoccupations of a consumer mentality. Being poor in spirit recognizes that nothing but God can satisfy our innermost longings, fill our deepest void. We stop chasing after the newest gadget, most exciting amusements or thrilling entertainments. We cease filling our time with ceaseless and meaningless activity. Rather, we open to that which can only fulfill and satisfy – God. Thus filled, to be poor in spirit means we no longer reflect the unbelief of our culture which urges its members to chase after these false gods but instead mirror the unconditional love and grace of God. “Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness and all these things will be given you besides.” (Matt. 6:33)

The underlying attitude for such spirituality is trust. God must be trusted as a “heavenly Father [who] knows all that we need” (Matt. 6:32), who does not want us to remain controlled by our wants. As loving parent, this God only asks that we request what we need in a spirit of total dependence matched by a spirit of trust and confidence. If our daily life reflects our commitment to trust in God's plan, our needs will be met. “Enough, then, of worrying about tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Today has troubles enough of its own.” (Matt. 6:34)

Jesus asks for our trust that God will be as faithful to us as to Jesus himself; this request underscores a central requirement for being poor in spirit: abandonment to divine providence. With our life affirmed, why can we not trust that God will take care of our needs? God wants us to trust that our cries will be heard, and our needs will be met. God merely asks us to give ourselves over fully to this divine providence.

In what way do your struggles, anxieties, and materialistic preoccupations pull you away from God?

What would help you trust in God's promise to provide for all our needs?

Closing Prayer

O Lord,
teach me to seek You,
and reveal Yourself to me
when I seek You.
For I cannot seek You unless
You first teach me,
nor find You unless
You first reveal Yourself to me.
Let me seek You in longing,
and long for You in seeking.
Let me find You in love,
and love You in finding.

Saint Ambrose of Milan, c. 340 – 397