

# 1 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven



I came to know Jesus as my Savior when I was a very little girl, about 4 ½ years old. I remember so well how bad I felt about my sins, and I desperately wanted Jesus to forgive me. I was sitting on the arm of an easy chair in the living room of the little house Daddy built on Seminary Hill in Fort Worth, Texas, listening to my Daddy preach on the radio, when I asked Jesus to save me.

And for years, I never doubted that He had forgiven me. But there came a time in my teen years when I became troubled about my salvation. What if I hadn't been really sorry enough for my sins? What if I didn't really have enough faith? What if I was just a great big hypocrite? I remember that the questions became especially urgent as I walked the mile to high school and back each day.

I remember one day, finally, when I told the Lord, again, out loud, “I don't know if I'm sorry enough for my sins; I don't know if I have enough faith—obviously, if I did, I wouldn't be in this mess, would I? But I've done everything I know I can possibly do. If I go to Hell, Lord, it will be Your fault. I can't do anything more.”

And the Lord seemed to say, “Good, Libby. At last you've got it right. It's my responsibility to keep My promises, and I am going to get you to Heaven. You can relax. It's all taken care of.”

That day I was broken. I was absolutely helpless. If God didn't take me like I was, I was doomed for Hell. I was literally “poor in spirit” and in need of God's help. The

words of a chorus we sang in the youth group became my assurance:

Under the blood of Jesus, Safe in the Shepherd's fold.  
Under the blood of Jesus, Safe while the ages roll.  
Safe though the worlds may crumble,  
Safe though the stars grow dim.  
Under the blood of Jesus, I am secure in Him.  
Author Unknown

### ***The Blessing of the Poor in Spirit***

1. “Poor in spirit” is not groveling. It is not a “poor little me, I'm so worthless” attitude. You're not worthless. How could you be worthless, when God created you in *His* image!

How did King David express his feelings about this in Psalm 8:4,5? (The word translated *angels* is actually the word *elohim*, translated *God* elsewhere in Scripture)

God created us “a little lower than Himself!” Jesus confirmed this truth when He quoted it in John 10:34-36. What does Jesus say there about the reliable Word of God?

So you have the infallible, unbreakable Word of God to tell you how wonderfully made you are. Jesus thought you worth the price of paying the price for your sin, not with cheap stuff like silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:19). So being “poor in spirit” doesn't mean “valueless.”

2. Rather, poor in spirit means I am broken, spiritually bankrupt, and I admit my absolute helplessness and need for God.

Whom, does God say, He resists, and to whom does He give grace? (James 4:6)

I dwell in the high and holy place,  
with him who has a contrite  
and humble spirit.  
Isaiah 57:15

How did Jesus express this in Matthew 18:3?

The difference between the two attitudes is highlighted in the prayer of the Pharisee and the Publican in Luke 18:11-14. The Pharisee says, “God, you’re so fortunate to have me on your team. Just look at how wonderful I am and how awful that nasty man is over there.” The tax-collector couldn’t even raise his head. “Oh, God, please be merciful to me because I am a sinner.”

And, Jesus said, the taxpayer is the man who went home justified. It’s the poor in spirit who inherit the kingdom of Heaven.

3. Why is it so hard for us to admit our need, when

such joy and forgiveness is available? Perhaps because our American culture has made a virtue of self-reliance, get ahead by my own industry and skill, obligated to no-one, pulled up “by my own bootstraps.” So we don't find it easy to admit our deep need.

Or, like the Pharisee, I might excuse my weaknesses. I compare myself with others, but I'm very careful to choose who it is I am going to compare myself!

Or, I say, I'm doing the best I can. What more can you ask for?

4. But what joy and peace we experience when we finally lift our hands in absolute surrender! How did King David express his joy, in Psalm 65:3,4?

5. So what is the answer? Complete surrender. See, again, how King David expressed his sorrow for his adultery and murder of Bathsheba's husband:

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned” (Psalm 51:1-4)

When we do humble ourselves, what will God do? (1 Peter 5:6.)

But notice it will be “in due time,” when God's work has been completed in your heart!

## ***The Reward of the Poor in Spirit***

6. What is the blessing given to the poor in spirit? “Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” The blessed result of coming to God in penitence is that He makes you His child, the child of the High King of Heaven and earth. You become His child, not by doing something to earn it, not just by being sorry for your sin, but simply accepting His gift .

When you trust Christ, what rights and privileges do you receive? (John 1:12)

Hard to believe, but the aged disciple John repeats it: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God. . . . And that is what we are” (1 John 3:1,2).

7. What is the reward to the poor in spirit? “Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

In Luke 6:20-26, where this beatitude is repeated, the reward is “The Kingdom of God.” The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are synonymous. It is this future Kingdom for which we pray, in Matthew 6:10, “Thy kingdom come,” when the precious will of God will be done on earth as it is now done in Heaven.

But the Kingdom of Heaven is also present now, in the lives of those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior. Some of the blessings of the beatitudes are future: “they *will be* comforted,” “they *will be* satisfied.” But the blessing of the poor in spirit is immediate: “Theirs *is* the kingdom of Heaven.”

How did Jesus assert this in Luke 17:20,21?

Romans 5:17 makes it even clearer, as you may remember from our introduction:

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness *reign in life* through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17)

8. How do we receive the blessing of being an heir of the King? Jesus said it simply: “He who *hears* My word and *believes* in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

From this verse, see what are the two things should we do to receive everlasting life?

And what will we **not** face?

Remembering what you learned in English class, what is the tense of the verb “has passed”?

That means your salvation is already completed. You stepped over the line from death to life. You received *everlasting* life. It wouldn't be everlasting if you could lose it! It's everlasting because God keeps His promises. You

couldn't earn salvation by good works, and you can't keep it by good works. It's all a gift of God.

How can you be sure Jesus will accept you when you come to Him? (John 6:37).

9. When will we receive this blessing? Immediately. “He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me *has* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but *has passed* from death into life” (John 5:24).

Notice again the tenses of the verbs in this Scripture:

“ . . . has everlasting life,” present tense  
You possess it now.

“ . . . shall not come into judgment,” future tense  
Never, even in eternity, will you face judgment for your sin when you trust Christ.

“ . . . has passed from death into life” past tense  
It is already accomplished.

“So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Are you poor of spirit? Do you gladly admit you are unable to make yourself good enough to enter God's holy Heaven? Will you take the free gift of salvation from Jesus' hand? Then, congratulations! You are blessed! You have

inherited the Kingdom of God. You are a child of the High King of Heaven and Earth!

I have nothing to offer God,  
but He welcomes me into His kingdom as His child.