

Humility

Signposts Along 2 Roads—part 1 of 8

Beatitude #1: Matthew 5:3

DAY 1: 2 Roads

1. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes two very different roads of life. One is the "broad road." The other is the "narrow road."

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

Matthew 7:14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

2. At first glance, one road looks more enticing than the other! He mentions three reasons why it looks enticing.

Jot down your thoughts as to why each of these would "make sense" to travel:

a. A wide gate:

b. A broad road:

c. Many enter this road:

4. We say, "appearances can be deceiving." Appearances can also be destructive! Where does this wide-gated, broad-road that many enter, lead to?

5. Let's look at the second road:

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

Matthew 7:14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

6. Jesus describes the second gate in verse 13 and 14. At first glance, this second road doesn't look so hot! Jot down your thoughts after each of the particulars of this second road:

a. A narrow gate (v. 13) and a small gate (v. 14):

b. A narrow road:

c. Only a few find it:

7. Where does the narrow road lead?

DAY 2: Signpost #1: Humility

1. Yesterday, we looked at the narrow road, with the small and narrow gate that fewer people take.

2. When I was in college, back before GPS, cell phones, Google maps, etc., I got lost a few times, driving at night on long trips on dark, country "narrow" roads.

"Did I miss the turn? If I did how would I know I missed it?" What helped immeasurably were sign posts!!!

3. The **beatitudes** are eight **sign posts** along the narrow road. Here's the first one:

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

4. "Blessed" is the Greek word, "makarizo." It means to "count as happy, or fortunate."

5. What connection could there possibly be between a narrow, difficult road and being called "happy or fortunate"?

6. "Blessed" means to be counted happy or fortunate because we are in right relationship with God. When God is central in our lives, "all is well," no matter what calamities are happening around us! There is peace (shalom) in the heart.

7. Reread Matt. 5:3. What is your first ideas about what "poor in spirit" means?

8. Let's take a look at what "poor in spirit" doesn't mean! Put an "X" next to the following that is **NOT** what Jesus means by "poor in spirit":

Someone with a poor self-image or poor self-esteem

Thinking "less" of yourself

Getting down on yourself

Shy

"Meek and mild"

Groveling attitude

Mock humility. The person who knows humility is a virtue and assumes that talking about his humility will make it true.

9. At this point, how would you define someone who is "poor in spirit"?

Day 3: What does "poor in spirit" mean?

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

1. We've looked at what poor in spirit doesn't mean. Let's try to figure out what it does mean.

2. "Poor" is the Greek word for "bankrupt." Bankrupt doesn't mean that you still have a "little" money in the bank. It means that your debts are hopelessly larger than your assets. There is no way of paying off your debts. But we're not talking about money. He's talking about our "spirit," who we are, and what is at the center of who we are.

3. Whatever my "spirit" is, apparently it is a VERY good thing if it is "bankrupt"!

4. When we are proud, self-sufficient and don't live as if we really need God, our spiritual life is broken. The problem is that we don't know that, and even if we did we wouldn't acknowledge it.

5. We have no power to change our proud, self-centered nature to a humble, God-centered and other-centered nature. When this realization hits of our utter inability to change our nature, that is the moment we realize we are "bankrupt in spirit." Our pride is broken. Heaven rejoices, and the promises and power of God begin to flow into us.

6. What strikes you so far about being "poor in spirit?"

7. Let's take it from another angle. Who do you know that you would consider "poor in spirit?"

8. What characteristics stand out about them? How do they relate to people? What do you sense coming out of them when you're around them?

9. How are you doing in being "poor in spirit?"

10. Ask God to break through lingering pride in your life. Ask Him to make you poor in spirit.

DAY 4: "...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

1. When our pride finally takes a gigantic fall, and we own it, all of heaven and the life of God opens up to us and in us!

2. What does Jesus mean by "the kingdom of heaven?" It means:
 - a. God's **rule** in the hearts of men and women,
 - b. The people of God in every place around the world make up His "invisible" kingdom,
 - c. The love of God centered in our hearts as our stabilizing anchor in this life,
 - d. The power of God released in us to continue to say "no" to our old life with ourselves at the center and "yes" to having God as the center of our lives.
 - e. Relating to the people around me in ways similar to how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate to one another.
 - f. Enjoying the blessings of God's presence and "presents" while we live in a dark and painful world.

3. That's a mouthful!!! Read back through that list, and underline at least one word in each point that strikes you.

4. Look back at the words you underlined. What strikes you the most from that list?

5. Unpack what you just wrote down. Why is that important to you?

6. One way we can see God's kingdom growing in us is our response when our pride "takes a beating." Check any of the following with which you have said or thought:
 Wounded pride;
 "Why didn't you ask me?"
 "Why didn't you consult with me before you made the decision?"
 "I have to fight for my just recognition."
 "Why doesn't so-and-so appreciate me?"
 "Did she just snub me? Well, I don't have to talk to her!"

7. The poorer our spirit, the less these kinds of things bother us! This is the road to freedom!

DAY 5: Parallel verses for "poor in spirit"

1. Let's look at some parallel verses to cement in what poor in spirit means, and why it's important!

Today's assignment is simple. Underline words or concepts that help explain what it means to be poor in spirit or the benefits of being poor in spirit:

Proverbs 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

*Luke 18:14 Every one that exalts **himself shall be humbled**; and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.*

Rev. 3:16-17 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth. [17] You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

[5] "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

1 Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

*2 Cor. 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will **boast** all the more **gladly** about my weaknesses, **so that** Christ's power may rest on me.*

*2 Cor. 12:10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I **delight** in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

John 15:5 (Living) "Yes, I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him shall produce a large crop of fruit. For apart from me you can't do a thing."

1 Peter 5:5-6... clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." [6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

2 Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.