

- *White Elephant Party: January 16, 6PM at the Harter's.*
- PRAY
- READ Matthew 5

Theme of Matthew: "Behold your King is coming to you" (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)  
Theme of the Beatitudes: Christ's portrait of His people (John Stott)

### **CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THIS EVENING:**

- THE BEATITUDES: JESUS CHRIST'S PORTRAIT OF HIS PEOPLE
- BLESSED ARE THE POOR AND LUKE'S GOSPEL
- LUKE 16: RICHES & POVERTY, ABRAHAM'S BOSOM AND HELL
- SUMMARY OF POOR IN SPIRIT

### INTERPRETING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- ✓ The Sermon on the Mount is not a mere exposition of ethics, but of the Person and Work of Jesus.
- ✓ The Sermon on the Mount must be interpreted in the larger context of Matthew and the rest of Scripture.
- ✓ In Matthew 5-7 Jesus is discipling His disciples (Matthew 4:18-22; 5:1-2; cf. Mt.28:20; Luke 6:12-20)
- ✓ Jesus is also teaching the crowd who would follow Him (Mt.4:25-5:1; 7:28)
- ✓ The Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of "Kingdom Living" (Mt.4:23; 5:19-20; 6:10,33). Kingdom living trumps all our other responsibilities in life. We are called to live as Kingdom Citizens in every sphere of our lives.
- ✓ That the Sermon on the Mount is "Kingdom Living" is another way of saying that it is a description of "life in the Spirit." Kingdom and Spirit are inseparable (cf. Matt.3:17).
- ✓ There is no contradiction between Kingdom Living and Law (Mt.3:16 with 4:4,7,10; 5:17-20).
- ✓ The Sermon on the Mount was not intended for non-Christians as a way of life or righteousness (cf. Gandhi).
- ✓ Kingdom Living apart from union with Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit is impossible (John 3:1-8).
- ✓ The Sermon on the Mount is for every Christian and not just an elite few (Mt.7:21-27).
- ✓ The message of the Kingdom is not just: You must be born again (John 3:3,5-8). The message of the King about His Kingdom is: You must be born again AND your righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). The power of the Spirit is such that it goes far beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees! Jesus is taking the Torah to a new and higher level of obedience.
- ✓ There are two differences between Jesus and Moses. The first difference is that Jesus' teaching points to Himself. Secondly, it seems to me that Jesus explicitly makes greater demands on His followers than Moses. Why can He do this? Because of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

**THE BEATITUDES: JESUS CHRIST'S PORTRAIT OF HIS PEOPLE (Matthew 5:3-12; cf. Psalm 1:1; 2:12; 32:1-2; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4-5,12; 94:12; 112:1; 119:1-2; 128:1; Prov.8:4; Isa.56:2; Jer.17:7; Dan.12:12; Matthew 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 24:46)**

A. The meaning of "blessed"

*How are kingdom and king interrelated in the beatitudes?*  
(vv.3,10,11; see Psalm 72:17-19)

"The beatitudes set forth the balances and variegated character of Christian people. These are not eight separate and distinct groups of disciples, some of whom are meek, while others are merciful and yet others are called upon to endure persecution. They are rather eight qualities of the same group who at one and the same time are meek and merciful, poor in spirit and pure in heart, mourning and hungry, peacemakers and persecuted" (Stott 31).

B. The beatitudes outline for us the attributes of “kingdom citizens.” The beatitudes do not describe only the Christian “elite.” There are not two types of Christians in the world: brand name super-Christians versus generic run-of-the-mill Christians (contrary to the monastic interpretation).

*Are the beatitudes attributes that some kingdom citizens have or that all should have?*

*In what ways are kingdom citizens different from citizens of the kingdoms of this world?*

poor in spirit (v.3; Isa.57:15) – In the Old Testament context, the ‘poor’ are those who are members of God's household who are in some way oppressed. The word poor is synonymous with “afflicted,” “unfortunate,” “orphan,” “humble,” “needy” and “oppressed.”

- ✓ “Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the **afflicted.**” (Psalm 10:12)
- “The **unfortunate** commits himself to You” (Psalm 10:14)
- ✓ “You have been the helper of the **orphan**” (Psalm 10:14)
- ✓ “O LORD, You have heard the desire of the **humble**; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear (Psalm 10:17)
- ✓ To vindicate the **orphan** and the **oppressed**, So that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror. (Psalm 10:18)

*In the Old Testament, when you think of pride, who comes to mind?*

God opposes the proud (**Psalm 76:12; 138:6; Prov.3:34; 8:13; Dan.5:22,23; Matthew 13:12; Mark 7:22; James 4:6; 1 Pet.5:5**).

## **BLESSED ARE THE POOR AND LUKE’S GOSPEL**

Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:20

And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke gives nothing more than a simple metaphor: but as the poverty of many is accursed and unhappy, Matthew expresses more clearly the intention of Christ (John Calvin ).

*Are the “poor” that Jesus blesses those who are poor socio-economically?*

- ✓ In Luke’s Gospel Jesus talks a lot about “material riches.” But usually it is for the purpose of illustrating what “true riches” are (Luke 16:11). Likewise, Jesus can talk about “material poverty” to illustrate “spiritual pride” and “spiritual poverty” (Luke 16:1-31).
- ✓ I think that I have mentioned before that 16 of 38 parables deal with money and possessions. 1/10 verses of the Gospels, 288 in all deal directly with the subject of money.

"Money is never a problem. It's a symptom."  
Larry Burkett

# LUKE 16: RICHES & POVERTY, ABRAHAM'S BOSOM & HELL

What is the story of the rich man and Lazarus about?

“We live in a material world, and I’m a material girl.”  
-Madonna

What is the meaning many preachers give to this story?

## A. The Larger Context of Luke 16

Read Luke 15:1-2

1. Parable of the 99 (15:4-7)
2. Parable of the lost coin (15:8-10)
3. Parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32)

The fellow that has no money is poor. The fellow that has nothing but money is poorer still.  
*Citation: Billy Sunday (1862-1935).*

B. Luke 15 is about the kingdom and those who are entering it!

C. Luke 16:19-31 is primarily about:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Unrighteous wealth is simply a reference to “earthly riches.”)
2. DEFINING THE CHILDREN OF \_\_\_\_\_. In other words, who are the inheritors of the Kingdom?

What is the “biting” irony of the story about the rich man and Lazarus?

## SUMMARY OF POVERTY IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

Mary gives a helpful summary of poverty as it is used in Luke's Gospel:

Luke 1:52-53 (NASB95)

52 “He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.

53 “HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed.

- In Luke's Gospel, the condition of material poverty is not praised or blessed nor is the condition of material wealth praised or blessed. Rather, material poverty and wealth are used to teach spiritual truths about the Kingdom.
- Wealth and private possessions are sometimes condemned (Luke 12:16-21) but not always (Luke 8:3). The real issue in Luke is how the children of Abraham use their wealth.
- Material poverty or loss is often used to illustrate spiritual riches (Luke 15:1-10; 16:19-31) but in at least one instance poor financing lead to being cursed (Luke 19:11-27)!
- Those who are blessed are the one's who recognize their need of Jesus Christ and His teaching. It was the tax collectors and the sinners who listened to Jesus (Luke 15:1) and the Pharisees who scoffed at His teaching (Luke 16:14).
- Tax collectors were typically wealthy in the material and earthly sense of the term. But many tax collectors were also poor! They realized they had a need that only Jesus could fulfill (Luke 18:9-14).

- The story of the unrighteous steward is not about how we can get into heaven (Luke 16:1-18). Rather, it is a story about how citizens of the kingdom should “store up for themselves treasures in heaven.” Jesus explicitly applies the story to the true children of Abraham, “for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light” (Luke 16:8).
- The story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is not primarily about life after death, but how we are to live now as children of Abraham. It’s not primarily about the intermediate state, but living as righteous stewards.
- The story of the unrighteous steward and the Rich man and Lazarus are parallel stories (Luke 16). The unrighteous steward exemplifies how children of Abraham are to use “unrighteous wealth” and store up for themselves treasures in heaven. The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates what happens when children of Abraham do not store up for themselves treasures in heaven.
- Jesus’ view of wealth is not different from that of the Old Testament (see especially Job). Material poverty and “unrighteous wealth” is used throughout Luke to illustrate truths about the Kingdom (Luke 19:11-27; 21:1-9). Most everyone understands money, and Jesus takes what is earthly to illustrate the heavenly.

“The real point of materialism is not how much we have, but what has us. It's not what we hold, but how tightly we hold it. Not what we have, but how we got it. The test of materialism is whether our goods have made us proud or grateful, self-sufficient or God-sufficient.” Citation: Joseph Stowell

**SUMMARY OF “POOR IN SPIRIT”**: The blessing of the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3) is rooted in the Old Testament principle of God humbling the proud and exalting the humble. The poor should be understood in terms of God’s covenant people, the true children of Abraham. The poor in spirit like the materially poor and like children have in common an attitude of dependence (see **Matthew 18:3; 19:14** [like Mt.5:3 both passages emphasize the “kingdom of heaven”]). The poor in spirit recognize their need of deliverance by their King (**Psalm 72:1-14,17-19**).

One of the greatest statements of poverty of spirit comes from the greatest of the Old Testament prophets: “I have need to be baptized by You” (Matthew 3:14). God’s *grace* is central to poverty of spirit.

## FOR NEXT WEEK: REREAD MATTHEW 5-7

*What is the meaning of the second and third beatitude? (Matthew 5:4-5)*