

Lesson 3 – Matthew 5:3

The lesson this week will focus on Matthew 5:3. Please allow the message that the Holy Spirit has for you to penetrate your spirit. I challenge you to not read the verses without meditating on their significance in your life, and not just for today, but for the future as well.

Did you make a commitment to memorize the “Beatitudes” last week? Keep that fresh on your mind as you proceed. It is possible to do this, but it does take work and review and review and more review. Do not let the process defeat you. Ask God to help you, He will.

1. Before you start today’s lesson **pray** that God would take the words in the verses and make them living and active in your own heart. One way to study Scripture is to read the passage you are studying in another translation. You might open your time today by reading the “Beatitudes” in another version of the Bible to see how a different editorial team translated these verses. Now begin with the following **observation questions**.

- When someone is destitute or poor, they would generally not have much to call their own. What did Jesus say about the destitute in spirit?

- When will this promise be a reality?

2. Please examine these word studies of some of the **key words** used for this passage.

Strong’s # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong’s Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
3107 makarios makarioi Matthew 5:3-11	Blessed , supremely blest, by extension, fortunate, well off, happy. <i>Used in Greek literature as a sign of “outward prosperity.”</i> ¹	John 13:17 John 20:29
4434 ptochos ptochoi Matthew 5:3	Destitute , poor, implies deep poverty; <i>helpless.</i> ² From the word <i>ptosso</i> that means to crouch or cower.	Luke 4:18
4151 pneuma pneumati Matthew 5:3	Spirit , breath, or a breeze; i.e. (human) the rational soul, an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ’s spirit, the Holy Spirit. <i>Like the wind, invisible, immaterial, and powerful.</i> ³	Romans 8:4-6
932 basileia baseleia Matthew 5:3,10	Kingdom , royalty, (abstract) rule or a realm, reign	Matthew 19:23, 24 (Mark for later.)
3772 ouranos ouranos Matthew 5:3	Heaven , the sky, by extension heaven (as the abode of God) by implication happiness, power, eternity; specifically, the gospel, Christianity; air	Matthew 19:23

¹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1930, p. 39.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, Chattanooga, AMG Publishers, 1991, p. 953.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 948.

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3. Most often when the word destitute or poor was used in the New Testament, it referred to one's economic condition. Jesus was using a spiritual or religious context for the word destitute in Matthew 5:3.

Luke's gospel shared about Jesus' teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth. Read Luke 4:14-21 and consider Jesus' ministry as He Himself explained it. (Hold your place here for the next question.)

What was Jesus to do?	How was it possible for Jesus to do this?

4. The Luke 4 passage involved Jesus quoting from the prophet Isaiah. Some biblical scholars see threads of the Beatitudes in Isaiah 61. Isaiah 61 proclaimed the work of the coming anointed One and then told how this would impact people. Read Isaiah 61:1-3, and record the reasons these promises were made.

5. The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God came to earth with Jesus' ministry as He proclaimed from the reading of Isaiah 61 in the account recorded in Luke 4. While God's sovereign rule from heaven has "already" begun through His Son Jesus, there is a future element of His kingdom as well. Kingdom theology, the study of the kingdom of heaven or God has been simplified with the phrase the "already and the not yet." The rule of God has "already" been revealed through the incarnation of Jesus, and God's plan for mankind was clearly announced in the gospel. The "not yet" aspect of the kingdom is what will take place on the earth in the future because of God's purpose and plan for His creation. Those who follow after God and have asked Jesus Christ to be their Savior are justified; they are declared innocent by God. For those who do not choose to repent, severe judgment awaits. The "mystery of the kingdom" is the relationship between the present and the future.⁴

Please read Matthew 6:33 and Matthew 7:21 and list what is taught here about the kingdom of heaven.

- a. Matthew 6:33

Continued on the next page.

⁴ George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994, p. 93.

b. Matthew 7:21

6. It was an ancient Hebrew custom to not verbalize the name of God. In James' epistle he used the expression "from above" meaning "from God." Most biblical scholars believe that Matthew's account of the gospel was written to Hebrew people, who lived in the first century. Matthew was sensitive to the custom of not verbalizing the name of God, hence Matthew usually used the phrase kingdom of heaven rather than kingdom of God.

What does Matthew say about the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 5:3 and 10?

7. Please read through Matthew 19:16-26. Take the time to meditate on this passage and think about what Christ is saying about the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.

8. One effective way of teaching is to present contrasts for the student to see how one thing is different from another. Please read Luke 18:9-14 to see how Jesus demonstrated the difference between two individuals.

The Pharisee's opinion of himself:	The tax collector's opinion of himself:

Consider how this parable relates to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:3.

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9. In the culture of the ancient near east, the word that Jesus used for “blessed” was associated with prosperity. Jesus presented to His followers a new way of defining “prosperity.” In the kingdom of heaven *makarios* took on a different meaning. As we continue with this study we will examine the godly character that is expected of those who follow Christ. Those who choose to live by Christ’s standard will exhibit godly character and a passion for growing in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a calling Christ gave to His disciples.

D. A. Carson wrote “poverty of spirit has to do with a person’s assessment of himself, especially with respect to God.”⁵ Look at Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 11:28-30. What did Jesus say about Himself in these verses?

What did Jesus promise His followers?

What commitment do you need to make concerning your responsibility as follower of Christ?

The apostle Paul knew what it meant to be destitute in spirit. You can read about Paul’s background and training in Philippians 3:4-6. Paul also shared his attitude as a follower of Christ in Philippians 3:7-11. How did Paul express his attitude in this passage in Philippians 3?

At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry He faced temptation from the Satan himself. All Christians face temptations. The apostle Paul wrote that temptations are common to all men, in 1 Corinthians 10:13. Whether the temptation is from the world, your own flesh, or the enemy of your soul, you can be kept from following the commands of God’s holy word if you do not stand firm and obey Him.

Prayerfully close by asking God what do you need to change about your life so that you would become someone who is destitute in spirit?

⁵ D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1982, p. 20.

