

CONFIRMATION

“Starting At the Top....err, Bottom”

10/1/06

Text: Matthew 5:3

“³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus is offering to let us in on the key to *real* happiness. It is based on a new kind of living, a selfless standard. This message we call “THE BEATITUDES” is for us. It is to be the distinctive life-style of the Christ-follower in any age.....including ours. God wants us to be happy. He desires that we be blessed. And...He gives us the principles by which we can be.

Q. – Why start with being “poor in spirit”? What does it really mean? There are two words for *poor* in the Bible....

Jesus is saying here ‘you can’t be filled until you’re empty. I only accomplish a heart-work – a saving work – in jars made of clay.’ 2 Corinthians 4:7 says, *“⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay (earthen vessels/clay jars) to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”*

1 Corinthians 4:13 says we *“have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.”*

Poverty of spirit is the foundation of all graces, yet so much of our modern Christianity feeds on pride.

In Robert Schuller’s book *Self-Esteem: the New Reformation*, there are numerous statements that deny the very thing we are speaking of today. **E.g.** – *“Classic theology has erred in its insistence that theology be God-centered and not man-centered... The pearl of great price is genuine self-respect and self-esteem... God needs you and me to help create a society of self-esteeming people.”*

PT. = As long as we are not *poor in spirit*, we cannot receive grace. You cannot become a Christian unless you’re poor in spirit.

Cross References:

“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:2)

“¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

“¹⁷ The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:17)

James wrote, *“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”* (4:10).

