

**“SITTING IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST
CAN CHANGE US!”
MATTHEW CH5:3-4**

ILLUSTRATION

Let's come back to the circles! Remember the two kingdoms? Let's come back to the drawing – The two aspects of Kingdom life, being, the “already now” aspect and the “not yet fully” aspect. Remember?

JESUS' BLESSINGS V3-12

The word “Blessed” in the Greek “*Markarios*”, meaning “joy or happy”, suggesting that there is something about being favoured by God, that results in joy and happiness! When God places His favour on a person, the “joy and/or happiness” that is on offer, is available now, and fully permanent in the future, for the disciples of JESUS!

So one way to consider this word “Blessed” is, not so much as, on hopes of what shall be (although that is an aspect of it!), but “congratulations” now from and by JESUS, *on what is!* (Bring out the “Congratulatory” banner) It is like JESUS is literally saying “Congratulatory for being!”

But “congratulatory”, for what?

Dr. A . T. Pierson puts it this way “When an artist draws a picture, each line may be graceful and masterful, but it is the union of the lines that reveals their mutual relation; it is the combination of the various artistic delineations and minute touches that gives us the complete portrait. So here, though each separate aspect has its own peculiar beauty and grace and shows the hand of a master, it is only when we take all the lines in combination that we get the full portrait of a true subject and citizen in the Kingdom of God.” (Pink, A.W., The Beatitudes and the Lord's prayer pg11+12)

So, let's have a look at the lines, before looking at the “full portrait”.

JESUS' FIRST BLESSING! V3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.”

What is a paradox? Because all of the beatitude statements are a “paradox”. If a paradox, is a conflict of statements, how can someone who is poor in spirit, be blessed, congratulatory? Furthermore, are the beatitudes “statements by JESUS or “explanatory” by JESUS or both?

What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”? For us to truly get this we need to pray and ask God for help and visualise a “CHRIST CENTRED COMPASS”. We need to actually repent of a “self centred compass “and start to implement the use of a “CHRIST CENTRED COMPASS” to help us navigate through these statements and

explanations by JESUS.

Using a “CHRIST CENTRED COMPASS” we can navigate what JESUS means when He says “Blessed are the poor in spirit”. To be poor in spirit, we have to realise that we are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, and need all things! Poor in spirit is when a person realises that they are nothing, before a holy God!

In our generation, we once, were like those we are trying to reach who claim that they do not need God, God doesn't exist, God is not relevant to them and they worship “self”. This person is not considered “blessed” or “congratulated” by JESUS, and His Kingdom is not for them! (Have a look at Luke Ch18:9-14)

But for those that realise they are “spiritually bankrupt”, that their best efforts mean nothing to God, it is the first experiential evidence that God is at work in their life! JESUS invites those who are spiritually bankrupt into His Kingdom, where He will revive that spirituality! His Kingdom is for those citizens!

JESUS' SECOND BLESSING! V4

“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.”

From suffering and sadness our spirits instinctively shrink! From suffering and sadness we mourn, so how can someone be “blessed” or “congratulated” for “mourning”?

Let's keep using our “CHRIST CENTRED COMPASS”. The “mourning” for which Christ promises comfort, must be restricted to what is spiritual. One way to interpret the sequence of the beatitudes is to see them in pairs. So as one is spiritually bankrupt, it's only right that through this work of God, that one will mourn. But what is spiritual mourning?

The sin in one's own heart, the sin that we commit, our propensity to wander from CHRIST, the unbelief that we see, the awful wickedness we see, the despising of CHRIST, the untold personal sufferings that make us groan inside of ourselves! The pain and sorrow that is all around us!

JESUS promises to comfort those who mourn! A promise where He will constantly fill us with comfort, through experiencing more of Him, through promises in His Word, through Christians and non- Christians that He puts around us, that act in precious ways to help sooth our pain and sorrow!

APPLICATION

Whose is not the Kingdom, according to v3? Whose is the Kingdom, according to v3? How has JESUS comforted you as you have mourned over things? How have you been used to comfort others who mourn?