

Sermon: The poor in spirit

What is “poor in spirit”?

Matthew 5:1-3

The word “poor” means to crouch or cower, as in begging.

“Poor in spirit” must mean humble in spirit.

Jesus warns us against spiritual pride.

Luke 14:7-11

The temptation to feel important

Self-importance is a dangerous temptation.

What are the blessings of spiritual humility?

Humility recognizes its need.

Pride divides; humility unites.

Humility is truth.

The humble find their true value.

Psalm 8:1-9

Growth group study: The poor in spirit

Getting to know you

1. Last Sunday's sermon was on the poor in spirit. Is there anything about the sermon that you would like to discuss in your growth group?
2. When was a time when you felt very good about yourself? Why did you feel that at that time in particular?

There is nothing wrong with enjoying the encouragement of others. We don't want to depend on them too much; however, because the praise of human beings is so fickle. If we depend on them for our self-image, we will surely have our heart broken.

Going deeper

3. Read Isaiah 57:15. According to this passage, what is necessary to have God live with you?

We need to have a lowly and contrite spirit. This verse contrasts God's exalted heavenly home with his willingness to live with the humblest person on the earth. But the implication is that pride will cut us off from God.

4. What are the signs of a person who is "lowly and contrite in spirit"?

This is someone who is not all about themselves. The humble person will only talk about themselves when it is helpful to others. The humble person will be genuinely interested in knowing and helping others.

5. Read James 4:1-6. Verse 6 shows that this is all about humility and pride. According to this passage, what does pride produce and what does humility produce? Have you seen this in your own life or the life of others?

Pride produces fights, quarrels, envy, covetousness, and bad feelings about others. It also produces a sense of lack, a desire to have what one does not have. Humility produces God's favor and friendship.

6. Read James 4:7-10. What steps can you take to live a more blessed life of humility?

It takes true repentance. This means drawing near to God and truly being sorry for one's sins.

Putting it into practice

7. In the sermon, we read an online article by Nathan Foster about how he tried to "practice irrelevancy." Try this week to see in all of your interpersonal interactions whether you are trying to impress others. Resolve to try to lessen these actions and spend more of your effort to bless and lift up others.