

NBC Devotional
September 8, 2021
“I Am a Jesus Pusher”

I am a Jesus pusher!!! **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:3). This location of poverty is where we discover the disaster of sin. Instead of allowing God to source him in his helplessness, man depends on himself, which is the demonic nature of self-centered carnality. Man enters the kingdom of darkness as he lives out of himself. What a tragedy! The issue is relatively simple. I am either linked with the Spirit of Jesus or linked with the demonic nature. Jesus either sources me, or the devil sources me, the deciding factor between the Christian and the non-Christian.

The demonic sourcing allows me to deny my helplessness. I live out of my ego, rights, and abilities. I strengthen my abilities in physical areas giving me the appearance of success. All the time, at the heart of my *spirit*, I am helpless. That helplessness appears in my broken relationships, affects my attitude, and demonstrates itself in my mannerisms. I attempt to compensate and overcome this state of helplessness through self. I can always find someone who is not doing as well as I am to cover my helplessness. I excel in physical and academic areas, giving me a sense of worth. I contribute to my self-worth by grabbing for position and power over others. All the while, at the heart of my life, I am helpless. “Helpless” is not something to get over but to embrace. We live in a state of helplessness, embracing Jesus as our source, which is the Kingdom of Heaven! Jesus is my source!

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The location of **the poor in spirit** in the list of Beatitudes is essential. Significantly, the first and the last Beatitudes contain the phrase, **“For theirs is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:3; 10). All the other beatitudes include **“comforted,” “inherit,” “filled,” “mercy,” “see God,”** and **“sons of God.”** These are all aspects of living in the Kingdom. They are aspects of intimacy with Jesus! The foundational state of this relationship is my helplessness. As my helplessness embraces Jesus, I experience the Kingdom in my life.

The opposite of this embrace is “pride.” The heart of sin is “I.” No one filled with “self-sourcing” is a part of the Kingdom. The door to the Kingdom is low, and no one who stands tall will ever go through it. Jesus cannot make me worthy until I recognize my unworthiness. He cannot fill me until I realize I am empty. His life cannot be mine until I admit I am dead, which is the basic state of my relationship with Jesus. **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”**

In our modern-day theology, we find little emphasis on death to self-centeredness. Self-helps fill our Christian books. We focus on happiness, how to have a good marriage, and steps to recovery. Deny yourself and take up your cross does not seem to be popular. We focus on success, not death to pride. Yet this is the message of Jesus. It is the first step to the Kingdom; in fact, it is the only step! **“Poor in spirit”** precedes everything else. I am responding to Jesus.

“How do we become **poor in spirit**” (Matthew 5:3)? This question spills forth from pride and self-sourcing. If we can “do” this, we are not helpless. Monasticism, asceticism, physical self-denial, mutilation are all foolish and futile attempts. They only increase pride rather than subdue

it. Anything that gives us a reason to boast in what we have done or not done pushes us further from *poor in spirit*. Self-sourcing is a trap. Any attempt of self to deliver itself from self-sourcing only produces more self-sourcing. Martin Luther had a daily list of things to do and not do. Every day he failed in some aspects of the list. Finally, the day came when he realized he measured up and had accomplished everything on his lists. That is when his joy turned to horror, for he knew he had committed the worst of all sins, “pride.”

Therefore, there is no list of steps, methods to master, or techniques to learn. We are helpless, *poor in spirit*. Jesus must move on our lives, which He details in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says that He is here. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; will you respond? In seeing my poverty, I can now embrace Jesus as my Source. The response is not a “doing” activity, yet it involves the act of my will to participate. Jesus came to them; they did not come to Him. Jesus delivered the message; they did not discover it. Jesus taught them; they did not teach Him. His coming brings revelation of our helplessness. We find answers only in Jesus. I am a Jesus pusher!!!

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