

What Did He Say?

Day 1 of the Making

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Matthew 5:1-3 NKJV

*"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Matthew 5:1-3 NKJV

BEFORE THE SERMON

The Setup in Matthew 4

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called four fishermen with one invitation: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." The order matters. Follow first. Made second. The making is His work. The following is ours. The Sermon on the Mount is not a random speech. It is the first day of that making. It shows us what Jesus does with people who say yes.

MOVEMENT ONE

Two Crowds, One Mountain (v. 1)

Multitude (Greek: *ochlos*): the crowd, the masses. Matthew 4:24-25 tells us they followed because of the healings. They came for what Jesus could do.

Disciples (Greek: *mathetes*): a learner, an apprentice. Someone attached to a teacher in order to become like him. They came for the making.

Both groups were on the same mountain, near the same Jesus, for two different reasons. The crowd stayed where it was. The disciples came to Him. Being near Jesus is not the same as pursuing Jesus.

Some people are near Jesus for what He can do. Some people are near Jesus to become.

For reflection: Which one describes me right now?

MOVEMENT TWO

The Posture Before the Word (v. 1-2)

Before Jesus speaks, Matthew records three movements. Each one carries meaning.

The mountain (*oros*): an echo of Moses at Sinai. But Moses went up to receive the Word from God. Jesus goes up to give the Word with His own authority.

He was seated (*kathizo*): in the first century, rabbis sat to teach with authority (see Matthew 23:2). Sitting was the official teaching posture. Jesus is taking His seat as King and Teacher.

He opened His mouth (*anoixas to stoma autou*): a biblical idiom that marks a solemn, weighty, fully intentional declaration (see Psalm 78:2). Scripture also reminds us that death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). What follows is spoken on purpose.

He taught them (*didasko*): the Greek tense describes continuous action. This was His ongoing pattern, not a one-time talk. Instruction. Formation. A curriculum of becoming.

What follows is not advice. It is the constitution of a new Kingdom.

MOVEMENT THREE

Blessed Is a Verdict, Not a Vibe (v. 3)

Blessed (*makarios*): not a wish, not a prayer, not an emotion. A declaration of objective condition: favored, fortunate, to be envied, flourishing under the approval of God.

In the original Greek there is no verb in the sentence. It reads simply, "Blessed, the poor in spirit." It is a present-tense ruling, not a future hope. Blessed now, not blessed someday.

The world defines blessed by what is in your hands. Jesus defines blessed by what is not: the first blessing of the Kingdom is spoken over people with nothing to offer.

MOVEMENT FOUR

Poor in Spirit Means God-Dependent (v. 3)

Greek has two words for poor. *Penes* is the working poor, the one who labors and barely gets by. Jesus did not use that word. He used *ptochos*: the beggar, the one with nothing, whose only move is an empty, outstretched hand.

Poor in spirit is not financial poverty, weak faith, a lack of love, or low self-worth. It is the humble spirit that stands before God spiritually bankrupt and knows it. No leverage. No resume. No merit to offer. The picture is the tax collector in Luke 18:13: "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Poor in spirit means God-dependent. Not God-assisted. Not God-adjacent. God-dependent.

Why dependence is not optional:

Self-sufficiency is the oldest temptation. The serpent's offer in Genesis 3:5 was independence from God. Dependence is our design: "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and "without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Self-dependence has a ceiling; His grace does not: "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). And the Kingdom door only opens from an empty hand: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

MOVEMENT FIVE

Three Postures: A Self-Examination

Self-dependent. Prayer comes after the plan, as a backup instead of a source. Worry is the default because everything rides on you. Rest feels like falling behind. Confidence rises and falls with performance.

Co-dependent. God as partner, not King. Bringing God a finished plan for a signature instead of a blank page for instructions. "God, bless what I am doing" instead of "God, what are You doing?" Obedience only when it makes sense to us.

God-dependent. Prayer before the plan. Plans held loosely, God held tightly. Able to say "if the Lord wills" (James 4:15) and mean it. Correction does not crush, because identity is not performance. Rest is possible because "He who keeps you will not slumber" (Psalm 121:3).

For reflection this week: When trouble hits, what do I reach for first? When did I last attempt something that would fail unless God showed up? Is my prayer life a briefing or a surrender?

MOVEMENT SIX

The Beggars Own the Kingdom (v. 3)

Kingdom of heaven (*basileia ton ouranon*): less a territory, more a reign. The active rule of God. Matthew writes "heaven" out of Jewish reverence for God's name; Mark and Luke say "kingdom of God." Same Kingdom, same King.

Notice the tense: "theirs IS the kingdom of heaven." Most of the beatitudes point forward ("they shall be comforted," "they shall inherit"). The first one is present tense. The reign of God belongs, right now, to those who come with empty hands.

The Kingdom does not go to the qualified. It goes to those who know they bring nothing and receive everything. The Kingdom is inherited, not earned.

THE TAKEAWAY

Open Your Hands

The first word of the Kingdom is not do, try, or perform. It is blessed. And the first people blessed were the ones with nothing in their hands. The entrance to the Kingdom is low, and the prerequisite is admitting we have none. This week, stop negotiating and stop performing. Come to God with open hands.

My one response from today:

Next in the series: What Did He Say? | Echo Church, Sundays 10:10 AM | No Games. No Gimmicks. Just God.

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