

A Salvation Message

by Joseph Carroll

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a humble and dependent spirit, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and being merciful and pure of heart in order to be truly blessed and saved.

Duration: 41:08

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Salvation", "Blessedness", "True Salvation"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the profound teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly the concept of blessedness that contradicts worldly values. He explains that true blessedness comes from being poor in spirit, mourning for one's sins, and exhibiting meekness, which leads to a reliance on God rather than self-sufficiency. Carroll challenges listeners to examine their lives for genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercy, and purity of heart, asserting that these qualities are essential for true salvation. He warns against superficial Christianity and urges a complete renunciation of self to embrace the Lordship of Christ, highlighting the importance of being a new creation in Him. The sermon concludes with a call to respond to God's offer of salvation and to live a life that reflects true faith.

Transcript

Shall we turn again in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 5? We have seen in our study of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount that the keynote in the beginning is blessed. Our Lord here speaks about the blessed man. He outlines the ideal life and then he goes on to speak of that ideal life which is lived by the blessed man and we are apt to be a little surprised at what our Lord says the ideal life is.

Now we need to understand that when he speaks about blessedness or this man being blessed it means the blessing of God. It means the favor of God is upon him. This life which is acceptable in God's sight and which is favored by God is the exact opposite of that which is sought by the man in the world.

As he outlines this blessed life we see that it consists of things that men and women in the world try to avoid. The first thing he speaks about is poverty. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Poverty. And there are two words translated poverty or poor. One refers to a laborer who just has sufficient income to exist.

He has nothing superfluous. The other refers to a person who is a beggar by choice and who has absolutely nothing whatsoever. He is destitute.

The laborer has just enough to exist. The beggar is destitute by choice. It is the latter word that is used here.

The one who is poor in spirit is one who is absolutely destitute. The one who has been stripped of all self-reliance, he is the blessed man. Now our Lord here begins with this.

And I want to say again that you will not go any further in the school of Christ than when you meet this condition, this attitude, and trust the Lord to make it real in your life. You are not going to go any further. Why is it that our Lord permits his choiceless saints to suffer? Why is it that he permits his choiceless saints to go through the most excruciating hardships and experiences, not only physically but mentally and spiritually, to keep them poor in spirit? To keep them poor in spirit.

To keep them destitute of all self-reliance or all self-sufficiency. Now the man in the world takes the opposite viewpoint. He wants to be self-sufficient.

Why? Because his security will then be in his self-sufficiency. The man who is poor in spirit has his security only in his Lord. That man is blessed.

The other man doesn't need blessing. He's got what he thinks is blessing. He's got nothing.

Oh no, he wants to be self-sufficient. And so he builds up his bank account, he builds up his insurance policies, he builds up his stocks, he builds up his bonds. Why? Because he's not poor in spirit.

That man is not blessed of God. He's not blessed of God. He's seeking his blessings in a way that relate to what he is, what he has done, because of what he wants.

God isn't really in it. No self-abnegation there. No definite choice to be reliant only upon God.

People are sometimes amazed at what the Lord has done for us here. I'm sure he would have done much more if we would have been more obedient. One prominent businessman constantly says, where does the money come from? That's not our business.

That's the Lord's business. You see, as long as you remain reliant, you remain a candidate for God's blessing. As soon as you cease to be reliant and you rely upon some other source which is basically human, you dismiss yourself from God's blessing.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who are emptied of all self-reliance, all self-sufficiency. And because of that, the man who is poor in spirit will consider himself to be very insignificant. Now, the training in schools is the exact opposite of this.

The exact opposite. Why do some people send their children to certain schools? Well, it's a prestigious school. Has a name.

Where does it have a name? In heaven or on earth? Where does it have a name? Where is its name? I tell you, some of these schools have their name in hell. And yet some people, professing to be Christians, would send their children there, and the truth of it is this, very often they want their children to have a degree from a university, hasn't they? Poor in spirit? Never. Never.

Never. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Why do you say the kingdom of heaven? Because they've divorced themselves from the kingdom of earth.

They've divorced themselves from the kingdom of earth. And they leave themselves utterly in the hands of the Lord, to determine what He knows they need to be provided for them. And very often He provides in a magnificent way.

Even from the world's viewpoint, there are times when He sees fit to humbly serve. But the apostle said, I have learned to be abased, and I've learned to abound. He said, I'm content.

Whatever God provides for me, I'm content. He was a man that was completely divorced from everything that this world had to offer him. Therefore, as having nothing, he possessed all things, and he could enjoy what God gave him.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. We trust, we touched briefly on this last Monday.

It is a sorrow over our own spiritual failure, or actual sin. I am sure you will observe that the man or woman who walks with the Lord speaks very little about what God has done. He doesn't have time to think about what God has done.

He's all taken up with what God wants to do in the future. As I look back upon the work here at the Institute, or in any work that I've been identified, at any time in my life, it's never a cause for rejoicing in what I have been, or what I have done, or what anybody else has been, or anybody else has done. What could God not do if He had truly men and women of undiluted faith? Four years to do this, it should have been done in two.

We should be well on our way, but we're not. We ought to be sorrowful. You see, blessed are they that mourn.

I tell you, the true Christian who really loves his Lord is never going to be released from that sorrow, and from that burden, until he stands in the presence of Christ. Because in a very real sense, he fills up that which is behind him. In the sufferings of Christ, for his body.

And it's that great need of the body of Christ, which is the burden of the Lord, which his Lord shares with him. And that burden he never loses, day or night. And he's sorrowful.

The days go by, and the weeks go by, and the months go by, and the church is at ease in Zion. How can he be anything else but sorrowful? Blessed are they that mourn. For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. The meek. Now, meekness is not weakness, it's not mildness of disposition.

Our Lord was meek and lowly of heart. But I want to define it again this evening. Meekness is that attitude of mine that does not insist on its own rights.

I found very early in my Christian experience, when I was preaching, and identified with a man who was quite a famous preacher, that the enemy would always try to get in and disrupt the work we are engaged in by appealing to people's rights. Well, I am entitled to this, because I have done this. This is not fair, this is not right.

Whenever you hear that voice, it's always the voice of the devil. Because by what standard are you going to judge whether it's right or wrong? You can only judge it on the basis of the cross. And when you consider the Son of God suffering there for your sins and mine, we can never again speak about our rights.

When what we would presume to be our rights are ignored, it's simply a glorious opportunity of identifying ourselves with our crucified Lord. This is the meek man. He does not insist upon his own rights, that is, from the natural viewpoint.

And he's always ready to waive his privileges in the interest of others. In other words, he'll always renounce his own plans in order that he might adopt another plan given him by the Lord for the sake of others. And he will joyously embrace this.

Now, how far can we come in this sermon? Can we come this far? As we sit here tonight, can we say in the presence of the Lord, Lord, you know my heart. You know that I know that I'm just, apart from Jesus Christ, a wretched, hopeless failure. You know that, Lord.

And you know that I am increasingly and unceasingly conscious that unless you give me every word to speak for you, no word is going to be added. And unless you give me the grace to live for you, no example is going to be set. Lord, I am absolutely, utterly destitute.

Now, can you say that? If you can't, there's something wrong. Because that's the attitude that the Holy Spirit's going to work into you. It's the exact opposite of the attitude the devil's going to work into you.

Blessed are the meek. Is this meekness manifest? Do you want your rights recognized? Do you want your plans to be fulfilled? Do you want your will done, period? Do you? Blessed are the meek. Then blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

This is a tremendous verse. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, a passionate desire for holiness and likeness to God. Do we have that tonight? Hungering and thirsting for holiness, a holy life.

Hungering, thirsting. Not merely an appetite for these things, but a hunger and a thirst. They shall be filled.

There are some people even here present tonight who have sins which they try to hide, and you can smell them a mile off. Who do you think you're hiding them from? You can't hide from the Lord. Is there in your heart a hunger and thirst for righteousness, for holiness, to be like Jesus Christ? Only that person will be filled.

Now let's test our appetites tonight. What does the man in the world say? Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after the first million. That's what many men in the world are after.

Hungering and thirsting for money, and they hunger and thirst, I can assure you. Hungering and thirsting for money. Is that what you hunger and thirst for? Is it? Let's face up to it tonight in the presence of the Lord.

What are you hungering and thirsting for in life? I tell you, my friend, you are dealing with the Christ who died to save you on the cross from the guilt of your sins. If there is not at least a goodly amount of what he is speaking about here manifest in your life, you can write a great big question mark against your

profession to being a Christian. And I mean a big one.

What do you hunger and thirst for? The Holy Spirit is a spirit of holiness. And when that spirit of holiness dwells in us, he occupies our spirit. His desires will be our desires.

And he desires that we be like Jesus Christ, holy. Is there a hunger and thirst for holiness? Not just a desire, not just you want to be, but do you will to be holy, to have nothing to do with any thought that isn't acceptable to the indwelling Christ, with any motive that cannot come under the searchlight of the Spirit of God? Holiness, with a capital H. That's what our Lord is speaking about here. But there are some who hunger and thirst after fame, some who hunger and thirst after reputation, but not after holiness.

And the Lord says they shall be filled. They shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

We reap what we sow. If you are merciful, you will obtain mercy. The man who shows mercy receives mercy.

And mercy here is shown to those who have no claim upon it. Blessed are the merciful. Are we merciful in our dealings with others? The Lord has a lot to say about those who do not deal with others as they are dealt with by their Lord.

I remember some years ago, at a time of very real testing, reading a word from George Macdonald, not a very good theologian, but a great poet. It runs something like this, Help me to take men's wrongs as thou takest mine. Help me to take men's wrongs as thou takest mine, so that when there could be an angry retort, and when there could be a vengeful spirit, just to pause and consider how the Lord Jesus has taken your wrongs and your sins.

His attitude toward you, a sinner, and your attitude toward the sinner, the one who wrongs you, must be the same as his attitude toward you. One of forgiveness, and not only forgiveness, but one of desiring the blessing of the one who has sinned against you. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the purity of heart, purity of imagination, purity of motive, purity of act. Out of the heart are the issues of life.

If the heart is pure, the motives will be pure, the thoughts will be pure, the imagination will be pure, the act will be pure. They shall see God. And the verse here refers to a moral holiness, and it relates especially to those who are without guile.

Those who are without guile. The man who has an open heart, because he has a pure heart. A pure heart.

Now, we know that no man can have a heart that is absolutely pure. But his attitude of heart toward having a pure heart is all that God wants it to be. It's a perfect heart.

In other words, his attitude of heart is perfect toward holiness. His attitude of heart is perfect toward being pure in heart. You see what our Lord is getting at here? Our Lord is getting at character.

What we are. We hear Sunday after Sunday in many churches that all you have to do is make a decision. That's it.

That isn't it. The Lordship of Jesus Christ should be preached before the Saviorhood of Jesus Christ. And then people would know what it's all about.

Jesus Christ demands a total renunciation of self. Total. And an absolute enthronement of Him as Lord before you can be saved.

And when the Lordship of Jesus Christ is preached, and Campbell Morgan funded this word in his day, in a day of decisionism, even as today is a day of decisionism, he kept on telling preachers, you must preach Jesus Christ as Lord first. Then Jesus Christ as Savior. He is Lord and Savior.

If He is not Lord, He is not Savior. And when He is Lord, the Spirit of God comes in and the Spirit of God transforms the life so that what our Lord is speaking about here is manifest in the life of the one that is truly His. We must ask ourselves how many people are truly saved.

I was asked recently by telephone concerning a certain man who is very prominent in this city and would be considered by many to be quite a Christian. And this person asked me, what do you think? I said, I have some serious doubts about his salvation. I do not see what the Bible tells me I should see.

I hear a great deal, but I don't see it. See, it doesn't matter a great deal what you say if what you say is not seen. This is what our Lord is getting at here.

And there are men and there are women who, like Judas, who we will come to if we have time tonight, who have seen the greatness and the glory of the Lord, who have seen miracles wrought in the name of the Lord, who have heard powerful preaching, preaching in a demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost, and they are no more saved than Judas. They are no more saved than Judas. But they have all the outward manifestation that can deceive even the closest disciples of Jesus Christ, even as Judas deceived the disciples that were with him.

They didn't know who it was who would betray him. They didn't have the faintest idea why Judas had the bag. He was the most trusted of all by the other disciples.

They must have voted to give him the bag. They could trust him with the bag, yet he was a thief and he betrayed his Lord. He was not saved.

It's what you are that reveals what you believe. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Now, here our Lord is not speaking about peace keepers, but peacemakers. Those who make peace in a situation where peace is broken. Those who come into a situation and are able to make peace.

Dr. Neely told me of an occasion when in a very large Baptist assembly of preachers, I think in the state of Texas, there was quite a row going on. There was quite an uproar, and suddenly it all ceased. You could hear a pin drop.

What was the reason for it? Into the auditorium had walked George Truitt. He just walked into the auditorium and everybody was silent. Why? Because Truitt manifested what our Lord is speaking about here.

You see? I've read Truitt's sermons, I don't think a great deal of them. I think he had 70 sermons which he kept on preaching over and over and over again. Those were his 70, he went round and round, the

merry-go-round with 70 sermons.

It was Jesus Christ in George Truitt, that was the power. That was the power. I'm not moved by sermons, they're very ordinary as far as I'm concerned.

But the man was not ordinary. He was not an ordinary man. He was a great Christian.

George Truitt had a crisis in his life. He was not always a great Christian, he was not always a powerful preacher. But he was hunting one day with his best friend.

And he accidentally shot his best friend who died in his arms. And that's what changed George Truitt. An accident.

The dear man, his best friend, died in his arms with his blood spattered over Truitt's body. And that changed him. It changed him from a man who was superficial to a man who had one aim only in life.

To know and to follow Jesus Christ. That's what changed him. I wonder if that's your aim in life, my friend.

Is that your objective? Is that your aim? Or do you have split objectives? You're not a man of a single eye. You're not a woman of a single aim. You have many aims, many objectives, and Jesus just fits in to your overall program.

Are you sure you're saved? I don't preach experiences, but I want you to know that the night I was saved, everything that I'd ever lived for dropped off. The Bible says, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. All things are passed away.

All things have become new. All things have never passed away in the lives of scores of you people who come here Monday after Monday. They're still the same.

You are not saved. You are lost. Either that word is true and you are lost or you are saved.

And the word is not true, but the word is true. Old things have not passed away. A few little new things have been superimposed on the old things, but they haven't displaced them.

The old things are still there. And they are very much in evidence. Now, you may be a witness or you may be even a pastor.

It doesn't mean a thing. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. A new creation.

Hallelujah. He's a new man. That old man was left behind in the grave with Jesus Christ, and a glorious new man has risen again in Jesus Christ.

Totally new. Hallelujah. That's Christianity.

And you can't have a new man without a new manifestation of life. That's impossible. But we find these corpses trying to put on the garb of resurrection life.

And they don't fool anybody except themselves. No, when the Holy Spirit comes in, He comes for holiness of life. And He gives that desire to be like Jesus Christ.

And such a man is a peacemaker because of what he is, not so much by what he says. What are you hungering and thirsting for tonight? Ah, it's a very challenging thing to study this passage of Scripture. And I'm afraid it's going to be a very embarrassing thing for many people who are not willing to accept its teaching.

If you are not saved tonight, why not be saved? Why don't you stop fooling yourself and fooling God? There is a young man present here tonight who was saved about a year ago in another city here in the south. He'd been brought up in a Christian home, heard the word from his earliest years, never saved as a teenager. And there was great rejoicing in the church when he truly repented of his sins, came to Christ.

And one evening they had a meeting of the teenagers, or his particular group there in the church, and each teenager had to testify to what he thought was the greatest need of the church. And when they came to this young man, he said, I think the greatest need of the church is the conversion of the membership. You see, he knew those members and he knew them well.

He said, I think the greatest need is the conversion of the membership. I believe he's right. Now that's an evangelical church.

They've got a man who knows the word of God and he preaches the word. And he can preach it with power. But the greatest need of the church is still the conversion of the membership.

Now my dear friend, will you face up to this tonight? Are you a new creation in Christ, brand new, new outlook, new motivations, new everything? Or are you just that old creation with a little superficial touching up here and there? What are you tonight? You've got sins in your life, sins of the spirit perhaps, sins of the flesh as well, that don't really bother you. They don't really bother you. They bother Jesus Christ.

You've learned to live with them. You've made peace with your sin. You've made peace with the devil.

Are you a new creature in Christ? Now if the old things haven't passed away and by the old things is meant those things which dominate the lives of men in the world. That's what they are. You say, Mr. Cowell, I have to earn a living.

Earn a living for Jesus Christ and you're on the right track. Make money for Jesus Christ and you've got the right motive. If that's not your motive, put a big question mark against what you say you are.

You see, the word of God is very searching. It's no use thinking you can have your pie here and pie in the sky by and by too. It's pie there, not here.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It does not matter what he says.

He does not know God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Now here our Lord speaks of a courageous loyalty, a loyalty to him such as was evidenced by Daniel when he was cast into the den of lions. He knew what was happening all he had to do was compromise a little bit and he could save his neck.

But no, he went to the window and he prayed. Daniel is one of the great characters of Scripture. He's one of the great characters of Scripture because right throughout his life we find there was never the slightest compromise whatsoever with Daniel, never the slightest compromise.

There is not one critical word in the Scripture as far as Daniel's concerned, not one word of censure not one word against Daniel, a beautiful character. He was a beautiful character because he was willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake. He would not in any wise turn from that course which meant for him suffering and even death.

But there are times when it's convenient just to align yourself a little bit with those whom if you align yourselves with them you might be able to influence them influence them for Jesus Christ. I tell you once you compromise the Spirit of God is going one way and you're going the other. This matter of denying ourselves biblical principles in order to identify ourselves with men who do not believe as we believe does not have one verse of Scripture in the Word of God to support it.

It has always been a little flock and will always be a little flock. Blessed are they persecuted for righteousness sake, a courageous loyalty to Jesus Christ. How do we stand up to this test? They are the words of our Lord, they are searching, they are solemn.

I am increasingly convinced that we do not have much longer to go before the coming of the Lord or before some terrible thing happening on this earth. There's seldom a day that this is not brought home to my heart by the Lord. I do not think we have long to go.

And you may not have long to go to close in with God's offer of salvation. If you cannot come up to the standards here to some considerable degree, if these desires are not in your heart and dominating your life then you must seriously ask yourself, are you saved? If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. You are not the man you once were, you are a new man and you are a totally new man.

Now shall we pray? O Lord, thy Son came into the world to save sinners it would be a terrible thing if those who hear the word in this place and others refused to submit themselves in all that they are absolutely to Jesus Christ and were lost. Father, it must be a terrible thing to be cast from thy presence forever into that place of torment forever and ever simply because there was a desire to have what the world offered in security and fame and reputation and pleasure and not what Jesus Christ would give knowing what we needed. O Lord, where there has not been that complete renunciation will thou not give grace to that one tonight to renounce himself to renounce his way of life and for the first time make Jesus Christ truly Lord lest he never again have the opportunity so to do.

And as we are bowed in the presence of the Lord I am going to do what I seldom do but I believe the Spirit wants me to do it tonight. In the light of the word of God forget about any decision you have made or any profession you have made or any membership you may have or any office you may have filled, forget it. In the light of the standard of the word of God.

You are not the new creature the word of God reveals the man in Christ is. But you want to be and this night man or woman, boy or girl you are going to submit yourself absolutely to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You are going to turn your back on all that you are and all that you have and you are going to have one ambition in life to know Jesus Christ and to follow him.

If that's your decision as in his presence would you raise your hand that I might pray for you. Raise it high. Yes.

Yes. Many hands. Others.

Yes. Thank God. Even if it was only one hand from one heart it would be worth my four years here in Greenville.

From one heart that really means it. Ah but my dear dear friends if I could weep for you I would weep. If I could decide for you I would decide but I can't.

You want your will and you want God's will. You want your security in yourself and in your possessions and in your way of life in what pleases you and you want what Jesus Christ has to offer you can't have them both. Will you die to yourself this night that you might live unto Jesus Christ.

Will you do it? If so will you raise your hand wherever you are. Yes. Thank God.

Yes. Others. Yes.

Yes. Thank God. Others.

Yes. Others. Oh Lord tonight thank you.

I accept the implications of the cross. The sentence of death upon me and upon mine. Lord be merciful to me a sinner.

I've been a hypocritical sinner but I'm coming tonight and I mean it with all my heart. Will you raise your hand just where you are. Others.

Many have raised their hands. Thank God. But there are some who still should.

Some who still should. If Jesus Christ would come tonight and you know he would come tonight what would you do? Would you raise your hand? Will you go back home to your own way, to your own desires, your own ambitions, your own security without Jesus Christ? Or will you go back home a new creature in Jesus Christ? You're making the decision and Jesus Christ knows your heart and Jesus Christ will be your judge. Will you raise your hand as we are bowed in prayer? Heavenly Father we commit to thee those who have signified this desire from their hearts to be new creatures in Christ and to accept the implications of the cross as it places its sentence of death upon all that they are and all that they have in this life.

Oh Lord we commit them to thee and we pray that thou wilt not permit the devil to snatch away the seed that's been sown in their hearts and we pray that thou wilt thyself lead them into all the truth and bless them and make them a blessing. And Lord for those who have resisted let them not sleep the sleep of the just this night but Lord awaken them we pray and disturb them in their souls and if it is necessary show them the terrors of hell and what it means to be lost forever, cut off forever from a merciful God when they could have been saved and experienced the bliss of eternal joy in the same presence of that same God. Oh Lord let them not escape the mighty conviction of thy spirit and the truth of thy word for we pray in Jesus name, Amen

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