

Beatitudes - Part 4

by Leonard Ravenhill

Jesus' teaching on the Sermon on the Mount sets a high standard of righteousness and emphasizes the importance of living by God's grace, recognizing one's own spiritual poverty and dependence on God, and developing a character of humility and dependence on God.

Duration: 1:11:20

Scripture: Matthew 5:1, Matthew 5:4, Luke 6:12

Topics: "Beatitudes"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the conditions and experiences of the apostle Paul as a minister of God. He highlights the various challenges and hardships that Paul faced, including afflictions, imprisonments, and distresses. The preacher emphasizes the importance of demonstrating patience, purity, knowledge, and kindness in serving God. He also mentions the power of the Holy Ghost, the word of God, and the armor of righteousness in Paul's ministry. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the joy, peace, and spiritual riches that come from knowing and serving God.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 5 Again, reminding you that this not all this teaching, but some of this teaching is I'm sure repeated in the sixth chapter of Luke Some people say that the same kind of account or the same episode or the same event in the life of Jesus and just two different people presenting their angle of it You know, you hear somebody talk and somebody says, what do you think of his opinion? Well, he meant this, oh no, he didn't mean that, he meant this Now, the word of God isn't as arbitrary as that There are distinctions between these two This one is called the Sermon on the Mount Again, I don't think that's a good title That's merely stating the location where Jesus taught It doesn't give you a clue as to the revelation that's in the sermon It's only the location, it was a sermon in the mount and it says that he sat down Now, in Luke's account, it says that he was in the plain and that he stood up Now, nobody's going to mistake a man standing up or sitting down I mean, you can't say that I'm sitting down right now, at least unless you've had too much to, well, anyhow You're seeing double I happen to be standing up Jesus, in the Sermon on the Plain, he's standing up on the Sermon on the Mount, he's sitting down The difference again, that before Jesus was teaching on the Mount we're told of a great list of miracles He seemed to demonstrate his power there whereas in the sermon, he demonstrated his wisdom You don't get the same context there in reading the account that Luke gives The account seems to suggest in Luke that there were more miracles after he had given this sermon Again, Luke says that it was after he spent a night in

prayer that he gave the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew doesn't make any reference to that at all Again, Luke gives you a list of the names of the disciples and Matthew does not give any list at all There's no contradiction, basically if you like to say, you know the skeleton of the thing or the structure of the thing is very, very much the same, and why not?

Repetition is a law of learning, wherever you go We used to have a teacher and every time he stood up now we'll recap and fellows, well I didn't bring a cap anyhow but we'll recap, recapitulate we'll go back and we'll start at the point we started at before or we'll pick up from a certain point And Jesus, to use another figure of speech he's driving the nail Scripture talks about fastening a nail in a sure place You know, as I've read and re-read and I want to thank, publicly thank Keith for asking me to do some teaching or share some thoughts because it's made me do some digging and it's made me realize again how far off center the Church of Jesus Christ really is I believe the Church today is a total embarrassment to God I really mean that And I'm embarrassed to be part of the embarrassment You see The standard of Jesus is so lofty, it's so amazing I don't wonder they put him to death I think I referred last week to the fact that somebody said if every Christian lived this all we have to do is go out in the world and live the Sermon on the Mount, you know and the sweetness will come out of us well we're not sugar, we're salt If Jesus said, you know you're the sugar of the earth, we'd all be sweet and you'd love everybody, it doesn't matter who they are That's not what Jesus said He said we're the salt of the earth And again, if a perfect example is what draws people to God well why didn't they accept Jesus and fall down and worship him?

The most perfect man that ever lived the holiest man The man whose life never had a fault or a failure What did the world give him? A crown of thorns Well do you expect any better? There are nine beautiful beatitudes here some can divide it and make more but there are basically, I think, nine beatitudes Why not ten? Why not seven? Seven is the number of perfection consistently through the word of God But there are not seven beatitudes There are not ten beatitudes because ten, again, is a sign of completion So it seems to me that God is saying that you may fully live the nine marvellous beatitudes here and yet that will not complete your life There is no completion There is no finality to the Christian life this side of eternity I don't care who the greatest saint is you know, maybe greater than your sainthood but whoever they are they still have some deficiencies You see, have you noticed God never flatters us?

He flattens us sometimes Sometimes I read a scripture and I feel somebody knocked me out and it takes me a while to recover Oh, we can exalt ourselves we don't need any help getting up I mean, boy, we're pretty good at self-esteem, aren't we? and, you know, my superiority over others Now again, in the version that Luke gives it says that Jesus looked upon his disciples and nobody on God's earth ever could or ever will live the Sermon on the Mount apart from the grace of God I believe that Jesus here is not just looking at their condition there he's looking at the fact that when he's finished tutoring them and when they've received the Holy Ghost then they'll be adequate to go out to the world and live what is in this sermon You know, the first thought that came to me was this Wouldn't it be wonderful to get up tomorrow morning and find everybody in the world living the Sermon on the Mount It would kill us No, I mean, it would be overwhelming I thought, wait a minute, let's forget the world Wouldn't it be really wonderful if every Christian in the country lived out the Sermon on the Mount during the next day You said, hmm, alright, let's narrow it down Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all lived the Sermon on the Mount every day You see, this is Jesus talks about some people who go back to establish their own righteousness and they have their own little number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, you know their own 10 commandments kind of thing and the Scripture warns against that Now, Jesus was, well, he was pretty hot against the Pharisees, wasn't he and yet he says in verse 20 of this 5th chapter I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness

of the scribes and Pharisees He didn't mock their righteousness How can right be wrong They were doing the right things but they did them in the wrong way If their righteousness was so different, Jesus would have said except your righteousness is different from the righteousness of the scribes but he didn't say that, it's as though he says here, look this is the righteousness of the Pharisees your righteousness must exceed it you've got to get beyond it You remember a man went up in the temple to pray Little boy was asked when he went home Did you listen in Sunday school His granny said yes Well, what were you taught Well, we were taught a story About who?

Two men that went up in the temple to pray One a Pharisee, the other a Republican Well, it wasn't a Republican it was a Publican What did the Pharisee do? He went up into the temple and he went up to the front and he lifted up his voice and he lifted up his arms and tried to get through to them I thank God I'm not as other men are Well, I think that's lovely I thank God I'm not as other men are I'm glad I'm not an adulterer I'm not a liar, I'm not a cheat I don't do all the lousy things I thank God I'm not as other men are But I don't thank God in any righteousness I have, I thank God that he came, worked a miracle in my life and enabled me to live the life which I now live by the grace of God But the Pharisee, I thank God I'm not as other men are Well, what did he say I'm not an extortioner You've got a lot of evangelists couldn't testify to that I'm not unjust I'm not an adulterer You've got a lot of preachers couldn't even say that I'm not like these people round about me, but it was quite right that he should have those qualities of righteousness, but again he was asserting his self-righteousness He was doing what might be right in the wrong place at the wrong time He was trying to impress God with his righteousness Now I'm sure God would rather we be righteous than filthy, and yet righteousness is as filthy rags If we think that that merits a place of priority or acceptance into the kingdom of heaven Your righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees For while it was good to a certain degree it was bad in another sense Now again Jesus Christ isn't just giving here an education in exemplary conduct This is a way of life It's not something you do in order that you may get life, it's something you do because you have life I don't think anybody defined the Christian life outside of the Bible better than Henry Schugel, he lived before John Wesley John Wesley was born about I don't know He died in 1791 and he was 88 when he died Now you think about that So somewhere in the 1600s a little man by the name of Henry Schugel in Scotland he wrote a book which he never intended to be published It was a manuscript found under a chair where he used to sit very often and he called the Christian life the Christian life the life of God in the soul of man I just go You know when people teach John 17 that amazing prayer, which is the Lord's prayer People go to church and the preacher says, now we'll recite the Lord's prayer, our Father which art in heaven That's not the Lord's prayer, that's the disciples prayer Jesus couldn't pray that prayer, the disciples couldn't pray his prayer in John 17 and you know we immediately leap up to the fact that Jesus lifted up his eyes and he begins to pray and he goes sweeping up to the high points in that prayer, like jumping on the high points of the mountain pictured over here But Jesus says he prays, what?

That they may know his Father, whom to know, that they may know thee, the only true God and that he says is life eternal Life eternal is knowing the true God not intellectually but by the spirit bearing witness with our spirit, that now we've passed from death unto life, that the work of redemption has been made really in our lives that we become new creatures I think that's a staggering word Paul, you know throws his shoulders back, little dwarf that he was but not just throwing his shoulders back physically but morally and spiritually and he says if any man now he said that to the Corinthians and in the day when Paul lived you didn't have to say about a man he's licentious, he's this, he's that he's the other, string about 50 adjectives together and make him look, you know, less than a

dog or some lousy thing you just said he's a Corinthian and immediately you know, wow he's full of sores and scabs, he's like the dirty rascal that was at the gate, you know, the poor beggar with sores and so forth and the thing is that we've got to recognize again that we have no righteousness of our own, the righteousness comes through Jesus Christ, who is able to take the beggar and lift him, the beggar from the dunghill and make him a prince unto God now Jesus is still shaping these you see, we're looking back I read a statement today that I thought was awesome where, I think it was George Ladd who said that without Jesus Christ, history is an enigma or if you want it in a simpler word history is a puzzle well not only is history but the future is a puzzle without Jesus Christ Jesus

comes into the world and he is again this sermon on the mount actually is a full length portrait of Jesus Christ he was everything that he taught well I wonder how many teachers we can say that of well he teaches it but you know do you know so and so yes he's a nice fellow, isn't he a great fellow, yes but and then oh oh there's always some little wart or something they know about him you know, lest you think he's totally sweet he's got some poison in him you know lest you think he's a straight and upright I want to tell you a dirty trick he once did there's the but, the but, the but there but there is no blemish in Jesus Christ he is perfect there's no blemish in his teaching and again the these nine beatitudes all right, seven of them well I think that the first seven of them are really

moral an active moral condition it's something that we're working out, the last two have action in them but not the action that comes from us to the world but the action of the world to us you see, the Lord makes it very clear, in the world you shall have tribulation it's a guarantee all you say if you're going to live the life that God wants you to live, a life of moral rectitude and I believe that righteousness is external rectitude, it's your moral life which is straight and correct, holiness is the inward rectitude, which makes possible the outward rectitude unless the heart is pure, you see there's everything in this as I say again, if Jesus had begun by saying, blessed are the pure we back off and say, well I'm sorry I'll have to go away, I'm far from pure but he starts anyhow you

would imagine he would start blessed are the poor in spirit you know, as I thought of this, I thought for at least sixty years I've been going to conferences and the main part of those conferences, they were holiness conferences and yet I can't remember once, in all the conferences I've been in, many parts of the world, I have never heard a series of sermons on the sermon on the mount I've heard sermons on the higher life, well that suits us, I never heard a series of sermons on the lower life did you? you get a book how to be filled with the spirit ever see a book on how to be emptied? no no no, we always strain for that which is so attractive to us what do we think about in poverty? oh poverty, oh no, you shrink from poverty poverty suggests destitution inferiority getting handouts and

other things well that's exactly what Jesus meant, but not poverty in the physical realm though he's always jaggging at riches and uncertain riches and don't trust in riches, and riches will bring a snare, you better watch he's talking about poverty of spirit blessed are the poor well we've changed that in modern translations again to happiness now are you going to say if you go to a ghetto or go to some place where everybody's shrieking with poverty, they're ill clothed, they're ill fed they look ill and their clothes are wretched and their conditions are wretched, I'm going to suggest that's a state of blessedness God doesn't set anything on poverty or riches as far as that goes, that's no blessedness poverty doesn't breed humility and gentleness, poverty seems to me breeds malice and

hatred and envy the very opposite of these treasures of the spirit, for after all what are these beautiful nine gifts here, they are gifts or fruits, what are they well I think they're the crown jewels of the soul I think

they're the things you should strive for and I should strive for every day I think they're the cosmetics of our spiritual life I think they're the very things that the world outside expect to see amongst us blessed are the poor in spirit have you noticed how often that marvellous man he was a king, he had armies, he had wealth he had everything he wanted he was number one on the charts for his songs David, never got any royalties for them yet but he's going to get them he's a kind of a superman in the world and yet he says bow down thine ear and hear me for I am poor and

needy he says this poor man cried well is he pretending no I don't have all that stuff there really you know, no no he's not saying that at all he's recognising in himself he has nothing by which he can commend himself to God except his poverty again in that old hymn nothing in my hands I bring but simply to thy cross I cling naked come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace foul I to that fountain fly wash me saviour or I die blessed are the poor in spirit poverty surely of spirit is the opposite of self assertiveness haven't you secretly somewhere in your life somebody kind of said to yourself wistfully I wish somebody could really discover me you know my hidden potential man if somebody could really just get me and shape me you know I'm really a new whatever you're

interested in in art you might say well I'm a Rembrandt I've got it all stored in there or I'm a Michelangelo or in music I'm a Schubert or in something else I've got so much hidden quality and hidden talent and oh if it could only come out it's the very opposite Jesus is looking for again he didn't go to rich men and distinguished men he didn't go to them rich socially or intellectually he went to active men fishermen he went to a tax gatherer why they said of the men after Pentecost these men are poor they're unlearned and ignorant men they weren't men of ostentation they weren't men of social standing they weren't men of already recognized ability the whole tenor of scripture says God takes the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are I used to have a friend and he

was always saying I wish we could find some are nots are nots you mean the are nots no no not the are nots the are nots well who are the are nots well that's what we want to know the are nots are because he takes the things that are not in this area actually our deficiencies are our advantages now he's not talking about poverty you know that wretched wretched modern word we use so much oh hasn't he got personality I remember somebody discussing a preacher and they said well man he preaches good stuff but you know like he doesn't have much pulpit personality what's personality got to do with it I'd rather hear a blind man with one leg and one arm and one ear and one eye that could really speak the things of God than a superman with a big toothpaste smile as doctor tells you say oozing out

personality you know and doing all this stuff what's personality got to do with it Jesus is talking here about character oh it's a horrible day of personality isn't it and personality usually strikes I mean he's a personality why because he stands a bit higher than somebody else because he shows his ability now somebody over there has far more ability I'm not talking about natural shyness shyness is not humility I'm not talking about somebody who's born naturally with what we call an inferiority complex which the apostle Paul never mentioned as far as I remember I'm not talking about that kind of thing you can have all those things and I've seen people completely turned around by the grace of God I remember a man who went to our church they said he was the shyest boy that ever entered in

that church and after he got saved and filled with the spirit he became as bold as a lion and I am because when I went to that church I was shy I always sat on the back seat you couldn't get me on the platform to say anything I wouldn't memorize anything I was too nervous I lived in a house where I just one sister just one you see scriptural no man can serve two masters and so I just one sister and she was super brilliant

oh brother could she play an organ she played a three manual pipe organ and she had a gorgeous voice and you know when any visitors came to the house I knew what it was Annie dear run and put that special ribbon on your hair I want you to play for so and so and she'd go up to the piano here's little Jack Len Horner not Jack Horner sitting in a corner and my sister struts

her stuff now play that now sing this now do that and I'd say yeah yeah yeah yeah get out of here when they're gone I'll pull your hair after this anyhow but anyhow I couldn't bear that she got so much priority and I was left behind and I was shy but I wasn't very humble oh boy I had a temper like a tiger and I'd be setting sin with one person it's pride another person it's some other secret thing another person it's anger mine was temper I had a blazing temper my sister would sit at the piano I'd say man if the visitor I'd have thrown the piano at her if I could have lifted it up I couldn't so I threw an apple or an orange or something else at her no no Jesus isn't talking about inferiority he isn't talking lack of personality he isn't talking about that shy person he isn't talking about

that person who feels that they're born inferior he's not talking about that at all you can have all that and yet be upright inside and arrogant inside a little boy said when his daddy beat him I'm still standing up inside do you still stand up inside when it looks as though you've been wiped out poverty of spirit well the whole construction of scripture works around this actually again poverty in itself does not breed humility it breeds covetousness it breeds envy often it breeds hatred hatred so he's not talking about social poverty or even physical poverty or mental poverty he's talking about blessed are the poor in spirit that they recognize that they have nothing there's an old song that says I nothing have I nothing am glory to the bleeding lamb now that doesn't mean I go in the

world and say just be careful because you mustn't hurt me I'm just a little gentle Christian and we're very breakable you know if you hurt us we bleed in every pore of our bodies and we don't sleep for weeks and we don't no that's not junk there's a poverty which is hateful and there's a poverty which is commendable and we're talking about that in this self effacing that I don't deserve priority over you because I have some gift or some ability and if I do have it it's only on this level it's not that level it's not that way with God one of the awful things one of the great showdowns I think in eternity will be what false estimations we've had of our own ability and even very often of our own ministries I've got to recognize it's all of God I've nothing but death in myself life comes from

him blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven you see if you read the first seven of the beatitudes you think well what in the world is the advantage in this but Jesus is taking a long distance view of it do you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you cannot enter through your own righteousness the only way you can enter I suppose I was about as morally good as any guy in our city of third of a million people or more than that I lived in a home where everything was righteous if there was a suspicion of a lie or duplicity my dad had you marked and measured and boy you got into trouble for it we kept the sabbath day very holy then I got two cents because cents could do something in those days I got two cents for spending money and I was expected to put one of them,

the thing that needled me wasn't that I got two I was expected to put one in the mystery box that was pretty rough I didn't know anything about giving not grudgingly or necessity, I'm sure I put it grudgingly and I put it in because it was expected of me movies belong to the devil you didn't give your money to keep harlots and sinners in Hollywood going the literature in the house was all godly literature, it was Christian magazines or life stories of famous mysteries and my heroes weren't footballers there was never a word of sport in our home it was all godliness round the table it was all healthy godly conversation and I think if

anybody could have made it to heaven under their own steam I could but I remember one night in a meeting when I was 14 and the lord began to deal with me and

man I felt the worst leper outside of heaven I began to feel there was no hope for me at all I'd been building on my own righteousness on my own goodness, on my own good works on my own kindness the fact that I loved to help people I loved to do all that I could do for others and then I found out that it was all on this level there was no relationship with god because I heard most preachers say we're all bad and I'd say under my breath forget it you used to be a drinker you used to be a fighter you used to be this well I haven't been any of those so I'm not bad and then one day I discovered I wasn't bad I discovered I was dead that didn't help me we thunder at people as though secretly you've all got a double life secretly you're all filtering something out of the cash box secretly you're

all doing this that no no no that's not god's argument with us god's first argument with us is that we're dead in trespasses and in sins these men have passed from death unto life in that sense they must have because the lord says rejoice, for what? that your names are written in heaven and yet he has to admonish them to stay poor in spirit I think it was old, what was his name now Daniel Steele, I think he was a Lutheran and he made one statement that I can remember, he said this that pride is the last thing to leave the human heart and it's the first thing to come back it's so subtle the way it gets in you see well haven't I the right to assert myself haven't I the right to have count up my own personal values no no no no not when I talk about the spiritual life I'm a debtor I'm a

debtor all my life through I'm a debtor I'm poor, I have to come everyday to god and say lord I'm poor, I bow down I'm poor, I'm needy well that's what you think that's what you think about somebody who's poor don't you, they're always looking for a handout they're always looking for a lift they're always looking for somebody to be a benefactor well that's why god loves us he loves us to see us come and ask ask ask and he'll give it to you don't assume you have it just you get up in the morning your relationship with god may be pure and lovely but lord I need your strength today I need your wisdom today Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption think again of the apostle Paul he's writing there to the he's writing in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6

and in verse 1 he says we then as workers together with him we beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of god in vain in other words don't misuse it how much do you esteem this book above every other book how much do you esteem fellowship with the father above fellowship with somebody else you see John says first our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ and with one another I think we've just turned it round our fellowship is with each other you know a short service I go to churches sometime and they say well remember after this morning's meeting we shall meet in the fellowship hall and we shall have sandwiches and this that and the other and oh brother the fellowship hall and the fellowship with each other can last two hours and they all enjoy it and what is

it it's the country club kind of sanctified it's getting round and saying so and so and so and so our fellowship is first of all with the father am I so impoverished that I say everyday Lord God of hosts I then step out into a wicked world it's the antithesis of everything you've mentioned in the sermon on the map blessed are the poor no blessed are the rich blessed are the meek no blessed are the self assertive blessed are the peacemakers no blessed are the pacemakers it's horrible when you come to realize again that in many areas of the world we have broken down heathenism and darkness with the gospel and we followed it with bottles and bullets I remember 50 years ago a man coming from central Africa and he said when he came he said the people there said look you brought us your God in

a little black book you brought us your devil in a little black bottle Madeline Murray wants to pull down the structure of the United States she wants to get rid of the gospel well any idiot can set fire to a building some boys have set fire to buildings this last two weeks burned a school down, burned part of another school down, any idiot can burn it down those three boys together couldn't put the thing up they wouldn't know where to start how to lay the foundation to prepare for the sewers where the electric current comes in and so they know nothing about it so any fool can pull it down or burn it up but who can build it I know this Madeline Murray and Carl Sagan with his sneering alluring you know you're pretty mild and meek and insane if you believe in the bible story of creation

folk like that don't ask the government they get it for two million dollars to go up the Amazon to spread their damnation why don't they go to the uncivilised there are tribes up the Amazon we know, go up the Amazon, go up the Orinoco river, take another branch off that like a tree that has all its branches and you go up the main branch of the Amazon and you get up here and there's the Orinoco river here and then when you get up on the Orinoco as though that's the Orinoco, then there's a branch here a branch there, a branch there, there are Indians there are people there, and heaven knows they've never heard the gospel it's a reflection on the fact that we haven't found something which is adequate for the life that now is as well as that which is to come to many people the Christian life

is, oh that will be glory for me, what about the glory now isn't it glory now come on has he worked a miracle in my life has he taken out the pollution, has he taken out the perversions has he shown me that while I'm poor in myself that I can be rich in God that's what Paul's talking about here but I want you to notice in verse 1 of chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians he says we then as workers together with God beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain now, what did he get here's one of the greatest souls that ever lived what were his conditions verse 4 in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses in stripes, in imprisonments in tumults, in labours, in watchings in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge

by long suffering, by kindness by the Holy Ghost, by love and fame by the word of God, by the power of God the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left by honour and dishonour, evil report and good report deceivers and yet true, unknown and yet well known, dying and behold we live chastened and not killed as sorrowful and yet rejoicing as poor and yet making many riches, having nothing and yet possessing all things now, I ask you before God do you know a preacher, do you happen to know a preacher in the little town you left, or the city you left who fits into that category somebody sent me a letter today a certain man on the broadcast on TV his wife says now if there's any man that deserves help in this country it's my husband, and he's going to be 46, and I want

everybody to send him one dollar for every birthday he's had just 46 dollars, you know and that request goes out to 2 or 3 million people, well, he'll have a bucket full if they all send him 46 dollars, won't they won't they, isn't it the opposite of this, the guy already has a jet plate his wife when she puts her hand up she'll blind you because she's got great big lumps of junk on her fingers there, and her mother sits at the side of her in the office and she's got loads but when visitors come they pull them all off and stick them in the drawer well that's hypocritical, isn't it I mean if genuinely the gift of God for our exceeding greatness, I mean we have built up his glorious kingdom I had a man that sang for me in a conference in a great church in Canada some years ago, and one

night I preached partly on Sodom had no Bible, he was furious he came to my bedroom at 2 o'clock in the morning, we were staying in the same private hotel and he thundered at the door and he says, I can't

sleep, I want to tell you something well I didn't like the look of him much any time, but I sure didn't like the look of him at 2 o'clock in the morning he weighed about 250 pounds and his face was red with fury, he said I want to tell you I almost walked on the platform tonight and knocked your head off I said, wouldn't that have made good headlines in the Canadian newspaper huh?

Evangelist's head was knocked off by his gospel singer wouldn't that sound great but you know the main thrust of his testimony always was, you know I was having an audition with this film company, I was having an audition with so and so and it was estimated out, this is when money was money, I would have made at least 30 billion dollars in the next X number of years and the Lord asked me to sacrifice it all for him well what a privilege I mean the Lord hasn't asked me to sacrifice 30 million dollars there are people who would give that to him, he's saying they're in the grave they no I don't I don't want to strut like that, what has he given up as soon as somebody says, you know what I've given up for the Lord, I think, all you've given up is hell, that's all you've given up you're not

going to persuade me no man that ever lived ever did God a favor, get that in your mind nobody ever does God a favor all the favors are from him, here is a man in stripes in imprisonment, he's in poverty he says I'm shivering in this jail and all I ask is could you please bring my coat when you come along he doesn't say can you get me out of it we'll have a night of prayer, will you appeal to Caesar he says I've learned whatever state I'm in, and man his state was usually a bad state and a poor state and an inferior state but if a man knows he has all the treasures of the kingdom inside of him what on earth is he going to worry about the outside for you can't make a spiritually rich man poor and you can't make a rich man outside who doesn't have God you can't make him truly rich think of

his statement here, a sorrowful yet always rejoicing, that's logic isn't it, a poor yet making many rich he's talking about two kinds of poverty there I'm sure, he's talking about physical poverty and he's talking about spiritual poverty if I was writing his life story I'd say do you know what, this is the greatest man that ever lived I can prove to you from scripture that the apostle Paul did everything that Jesus did except walk on the water he raised the dead he healed the sick, he cast out demons man this man's got all the spiritual wealth and I don't have to try and prove that to you, I just take his own record and you know what he wrote more epistles than anyone else 14 epistles if you give him Romans if you give him Hebrews and yet you know what he says of himself he says I am the

least of all saints the chief of sinners now if I was writing his story I'd reverse it I would say he was the least of all sinners and the chiefest of all saints he isn't putting a show on you say well was he the chief of sinners yes because he said going down that Damascus road he says in the 26th chapter of Acts there I think he's embarrassed and blushing as he said it he said when I went down that Damascus road I was breathing out threatenings he says his hobby was dividing Christians breaking up their homes, driving them into strange cities like the communists were driving the Afghan people over the borders there into Pakistan that's what Paul did, that was his hobby he expected a supersized reward in heaven because he's putting down these people who say that Jesus is greater than

Moses and the blood of Jesus Christ is greater than our weekly sacrifices and he never got over that it's like old Samuel Rutherford said that if ever anything becomes more wonderful to you than your own salvation you're in trouble I don't care who's miraculous conversion a year of Nicky Cruz here somebody has so what the greatest thing in the world is that God in infinite mercy came to this heart of mine, I don't know what was in your heart, I don't know what's in it now I know what was in my heart and when I think that he can cure the plague in the human heart as I say, as I thought about it today, God on an insane

world as maybe I referred last week, we're like a man with a check for a million dollars and we refuse to cash it and we live in a flea house every day and our clothes are

worn out and we're lousy, we'd like a bath, we'd like to go to a good bed but we're not sure if this bill is genuine you know of course it's signed by Rockefeller if he was still around and it bears this and it bears the name of the bank of the, some bank in the United States and he quibbles and quarrels about it and he's living in starvation and you've got people who are saying well if you prove this or that or the other about the Bible and they've got a million dollar check and all the time they're morally and spiritually bankrupt what an insane world they're going to build up our armaments now we've told Russia we can't do anything, we're asking them to hold the war off till 1990 because we won't have any adequate machines we won't have any adequate submarines and we won't have

anything else so will you kind of ease off a bit, don't come and blow the nation up, we want to meet you on equal terms you know please don't get any if you promise not to burn us at more than 400 degrees in the oven well we'll just promise to burn you at 400 degrees in the oven, that's what you call intelligence and wisdom the answer to all our problems is found here in the sermon on the mount, the answer to injustice, the answer to pride, the answer to covetousness you see that's often, it's not always so, there's no one statement you can throw over the rich or over the poor but very often even riches gender they foster covetousness wasn't it Rockefeller somebody asked well how many millions do you have now, oh I've nearly a hundred, well when is a rich man satisfied, he said when he

gets a bit more, see there's always something to reach after riches in themselves don't satisfy any more than poverty does again happiness depends on the outside environment blessedness depends on my relationship with God again who for the joy that was set before him Paul is in prison a stinking, stinking prison not one of these holiday inns that we call prison now where the guy says I'm not eating that, that egg isn't done, get me bring me some eggs properly done and the toast is too burned they've been objecting to they can't have coloured TV, I mean it's terrible the suffering they have in jail just black and white TV instead of colour and man they're suffering all kinds of privations they think, Paul's in the most dying destitution and he hasn't got number one thought about himself

because he says rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice I kind of think the devil had a day holiday and gave all the demons a day holiday the day that Paul died I kind of think he said you know there won't be any freak like him round about you know there was no way at all that we could embarrass that man you can tell him he's dumb, you can tell him he's he's missed his chance, you can tell him he could have been the greatest scholar in the world and you can't face him, you can lash his body and he won't squeal about it you can put all kinds of pressure on him you can tear his revival party up, that's what they did even godly men found he was too hard to handle demons hath forsaken me, Alexander's gone somewhere else he writes it all off simply in a sentence he says all men

forsook me, boy that's a great place to be in but the other half of the text finishes it, he says all men forsook me nevertheless the Lord stood by me and you know the only way to find our riches sometimes is to lose every other external thing to find out what we've got we so get caught up in false thinking and false estimates the poor in spirit, how can you rob a man who has nothing you know the great joy of having nothing, you can't lose anything I think in the print shop the other night there I saw Martin sitting on the floor and I said you remind me of the old hymn he that is low need fear nor fall you see if you've no estimate of yourself nobody can pull you down if somebody says you're a nobody you're this, you're not that and the other you say so what's new you didn't need to tell

me that, the Lord told me that and you know what, I don't want to be a somebody I want to remain a nobody that God can make me a somebody for his glory if you've read any of the books of Amy Wilson Carmichael's and you should read every one, they're just amazing books I don't know anyone over the years who's used more photography than she has, you know she's going to explain about the true vine and on one page there's a gorgeous picture of a fruit bearing tree you turn over she's going to talk about living waters and there's a waterfall coming out she's absolutely was absolutely brilliant even 50 years ago in using pictures that one day a bishop in England went through all her beautiful books and he said I was overwhelmed with the fact that while she had used hundreds of pictures there

wasn't one picture, pardon me, there wasn't one book that had a picture of herself in it well that's not like the magazine you get is it I know one magazine I get and if the fella's picture isn't on every page it was because he's sick he was sick he couldn't get photographed that day or something oh self esteem hmm I mean the Lord I don't know what the thing okay Jesus says we're not of the world forget it's standards being an idiot if need be in the idea of the world so what the only way that the believer can really live is the spirit is bearing witness with my spirit I am a spirit and his spirit bears witness with my spirit not only that I'm a child of God Paul Motherman says I call the Holy Ghost to bear witness I'll tell you how we know our poverty when in no way we're asserting

ourselves when nobody can offend us great peace have they which love thy law and nothing can offend them do you live in that is that your address hmm Psalm 119 verse 100 and I always forget whether it's 165 or 156 great peace have they which love thy law and nothing can offend them you know the devil is clever he must be he's had 6,000 years of studying human nature and yet you know what he can't hit nothing can he you can't hit nothing if there's nothing there you can't hit it if you have nothing you can't lose it if you're dead nobody can kill you but oh when you think of this that I come empty supposing I have natural ability suppose I have this that and the other that I think would really be useful in the service of God and I've got to lay it all on one side and I say Lord here I am I

want to be totally emptied of all my own ability and adequacy and self confidence and so forth and you just come in and if I'm the least of all saints and if I'm the most despised or forgotten person here or somewhere else so what does it matter wouldn't you rather be the least in the kingdom of God than the greatest in the devil's kingdom what about the day when we're known as we he knows us now and we don't know ourselves that awesome day of rewards sure history is an enigma without Jesus Christ it's a puzzle if you don't interpret scripture upon me life according to Jesus Christ but look when you think of the future without him there's no future it makes sense but if you live as it were with one eye on eternity and one eye on the king of kings and lord of lords and realize there are

people all over the world tonight who are nobodies they're just away in stinking halls they're in jails or they're not given priority as they should have it time after time young preachers come to me and say you know oh when I was before I went to seminary or before I started to study for the ministry I thought our denomination was so marvelous but when I've got into it now I discover there's politics in it and Mr.

So-and-so has been the assistant to Mr. So-and-so for twenty years and everybody said when old So-and-so goes you know So-and-so's gonna step in he knows the ropes he can run this place he does it when the president's been away for a week or a month or somebody he can step in and fill the place and Mr.

So-and-so died suddenly the other day and you know what they did they put his son-in-law in that job oh dear that's terrible well I don't think it should be I'm not saying it's right but you know it catches the other guy out who does the whimpering he fully expected he was adequate and sufficient and for some reason God didn't get in that place what is it in Proverbs where it says promotion cometh not from the east not from the west but from the Lord we were having an annual conference in a church that I pastored years ago and people came from a few countries and it wasn't big by American standards maybe we got nearly two thousand people there and I was in my office you know waiting for people to arrive usually the preachers came first and we took them off and sent them here and sent them

there and one little fella came and sat just inside the entrance of the church he is a rather weak looking man he hasn't as outstanding he's not six foot two broad shouldered handsome wavy hair all the other essentials for some important evangelist or somebody just almost a negative personality well one of the big shot preachers had been in my office and I said to him well you're staying at so and oh that's there are lovely people lovely people here beautiful home well I think I shall walk up there I won't take a bus I've been in a train all day I'll walk up there and going out he saw this little fellow and he said to him good evening good evening oh have you come to the conference yes well you're rather early aren't you I was told to come tonight oh what is your name gave his name oh

you're one of the speakers aren't you yes I believe I am oh come with me to brother Abner's office came up and he said you haven't met this brother before I said no I've heard about him a lot actually he's one of the finest teachers in the bible school of Wales which as you know was founded by who Rhys Howells he's been there at least I'm sure 30 years and never had any pay for it he's trusted God to meet his needs and so I said oh well you're staying in the same house as this brother he'll take you he wants to walk I'd be happy to walk he had a little attache case about this size that's all he had for about 6 days to stay there and when they got walking out my friend has a big stride he's an athletic fellow he went to the swimming bath everyday and swam 30 lengths of a full almost an

Olympic sized pool 30 lengths there and back never stopped and got out dried off and walked home again didn't take the bus or anything a real he-man intellectually he's brilliant spiritually he's a good guy and they're going up the road and he thought he'd give this fellow a little encouragement he talked to him about the scriptures and talked to him about the Lord and he had to show his Greek you know he said of course brother you see in the Greek it says this the Greek tense is rather complicated little fellow says yes and he said in this particular case it's in this tense you see did you hear what I said it's in this tense you know he said yes but in Matthew 5 and 24 it's in another tense hmm this guy's not as dumb as he looks um yes yes it's really an old fashioned English word though

you know yes he said but in Chinese in the Mandarin language it's what well it's this kind of word in the Welsh language we say this way in Latin oh there's a wonderful derivation in the Latin language my friend began to think boy I thought this guy didn't know anything I'd better keep quiet maybe it's me that doesn't know anything you know that little man stood up there and it was just as though you were spraying the atmosphere with fragrance other fellows got up you know since I saw you have been preaching in four different countries I guess I must have preached to about a million and a half people and I did this and that and the other and I had dinner with so and so and I had lunch with so and so big old me I I I you know he got eye trouble another little fellow never never asserted

himself at all he felt all the time he was straining to keep himself out of the way and give glory to Jesus he recognized he recognized his poverty that all I have I draw on the riches and we use that word according

to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus but you see God can't fill you if your head's full of your own ideas and your mind's full of your own things and your heart is full of your own ambitions and something else is full and your will is full God's problem is not to get us full God's problem is to get us empty his problem is not to clothe us his problem is to strip us again naked come to thee for dress and helpless look to thee for grace and foul I to that fountain fly wash me saviour or I die the final thing surely is that church of Laodicea in the other churches they've got

trouble with who the priests domineering them what's the problem in Laodicea the pew it's a democratic church we're going to run it listen you listen to us we're going to plan it this way and plan it that way and plan it the other way do you think there's any way that the church of Jesus Christ tonight can look up into the face of God and say we're poor if you take the seven phases of the churches whatever other theological battles people have they nearly all come down to Laodicea and say well that's the last church it's the seventh church seven is the number of perfection seven is at the end of the line Laodicea and that's the age in which we're living now lazy lousy if you like Laodicean church well what did it say of itself well it didn't say anything about smear and the other churches

Philadelphia it says I am rich and increased in goods I have need of nothing the exact word of that would be if you translate it literally I have made myself rich I have supplied my needs and that's what she was amongst other churches maybe the end of it I'm rich I'm increased in goods I mean what do we need I mean look at this palace that we have look at our stained glass windows that's the finest organ that is in America a German has only built two of them and we've got one of them in our church that's what they told me in the church I was in up north the organ cost three hundred thousand dollars a lady gave it to us they may as well have had a tin whistle for all I cared the woman that played it looked as though she'd four fingers in a cast she couldn't get anything out of it she was

playing something from Bach I wish she'd left it Bach in the the Bach room but anyhow she was making a struggle on the organ does God look down on her alright the guy's got a glass cathedral what is the church is the church poor today today we're rich look at our scholarship you can't be a pastor in our church now without a degree you must have so many years of training my you should see what we're producing you know we're sending our preacher's tapes to fifty nations and you wonder why you want one to pull out the other fifty nations but anyhow and we're sending this out we're sending and we're doing the other I don't find any poverty and need we're self sufficient now we teach young men the laws of homiletics and we teach them how to you know handle the crowd we teach them how to be

good business men in the church church business of course and this church struts and strides and says I've got need of nothing I'm rich I'm increased in goods and then suddenly God turns his searchlight on and says do you know what you really are you're naked and blind and wretched and poor and miserable well if that isn't devastating what is in other words you're stripped naked I see you as you are you're covering yourself with your own righteousness and your own nobility and therefore you're stagnated have we taught people to be like this that their poverty is stricken you could say poverty is I suppose poverty of spirit is a negative side of faith remember Isaiah 66 and verse 1 to this man while I look to him that is poor and contrite and trembles at my word well I wonder how many of

us this Sunday will enter the pulpit poor and contrite and trembling at the awesomeness I sometimes wonder where I've been I honestly do man when I had the most powerful church in the city the biggest congregation I was still in my twenties and people lined up on a Sunday night like a movie house to get in and my name was in the paper for this or doing that or doing something else and I thought the world was

all spinning round me and when I look at it now I say Lord I just about fed them with sawdust I sure didn't give them the things they should have needed it's true that church is still going on today and I passed it in 1934 and it's still about the best church in town and out of it while we were there about ten young people went to the mission field not just a bible school but

actually passed through and went to the mission field and it was great but oh if I had taught them some other things I can see where they would have been much richer you see I felt I was rich I felt I was adequate I felt because I was in big demand I felt because I had a certain position in our movement I was one of the founders of it I got tricked took me a long while to get out of that you know the higher you go up in your pride it's like climbing that mountain if you were up just to the first level there it would be something to fall off if you got to that top peak and fell off it's a pretty humiliating shattering thing to come tumbling down to the bottom and yet if we do not humble ourselves what will he do he'll humble us God resisteth the proud and pride is the opposite of poverty

and need he saveth such as be of a contrite spirit again he warns don't lay up treasure for yourself on earth if you've no treasures you can leave more money than the Rockefellers and you may have given a lot to missions and you may have done other things and you may have starved your relationship with God and in his sight you may now have no fruits of the spirit you may have no gentleness and no meekness you see God is a good husband man and he sure knows how to do the pruning and let you get out of line at all you'll know this he'll give you a jolt after all he lets this superman the apostle Paul be in weirdness and fastings and painfulness and tribulation and distress why for fun he proves that you can put a man into any vicissitude of life and when you get where Paul got you see

because he answered it all one day about his pride as a pharisee whoever stripped himself of more of the tribe of Benjamin of the seed of Abraham a pharisee of the pharisees that's going somewhere to be a pharisee is something to be a pharisee of a pharisee that was the greatest religious club on earth they were the most moral perfect upright bunch going in human righteousness and religious righteousness and yet he says all things that were gained to me I counted them but lost the literal word is I counted them but done they were as offensive as a pile of horse manure up there to God and I thought this was a first class religion I thought you just kept new moons and sabbaths and you bestowed what you had on the poor and did many things and all the time God says you're finding a lot of

self satisfaction self gratification self importance and that's the very opposite of humility all the self self self self has to go and so he said one day I went to the cross and he writes about it afterwards in Galatians 2.20 and he doesn't say I remember ten years ago after I'd been saved for so many years I got baptized in the Holy Ghost or I got sanctified he uses a tougher word he says I am not I was I am crucified and with this I finish I believe again the biggest challenge to the average Christian if you're really walking in the light is come down from the cross and save yourself why should you live like this they don't live like that do they no God's working on you not them do you think any man's going to be embarrassed when he gets to the throne of God that he did the will of God

in face of earth and hell and in-laws and outlaws I mean I don't know why my Mary Jane's gone to a place like last days I mean she's got ability my son's working on a computer there and he could be my goodness me he could be getting fifteen hundred dollars a month he's not even getting fourteen hundred up at last days I mean what's he doing up there isn't that how parents think usually it's amazing how many people come to me for counsel we had one not long ago well I've done so many years studying this so many years studying that and I feel God wants me to do it and dad and mum say no wait another year I'll do this

and I don't say walk out on them I say look you've got to settle this with God but you see my parents are so good and so godly maybe they are but still they're seeing men as

trees walking about again if you don't keep your eyes on the judgment seat if you get your thinking out of focus if you don't read this word and chew it and as Job says above our necessary food we've begun to rationalize in the Christian life there's so much in the Bible that doesn't make sense on the human level now it doesn't mean that you become voluntary dirty and you become and go live in a cave and you make a vow I'll never get married as long as I live and I'll never do this and I'll never do that you see the Catholic Church has done that their patron saint is Saint Francis of Assisi well I don't know whether he was humble or not well you remember he saw a beggar on the road and he was going to pass him and then he turned and kissed him and then when he got a few hundred yards up

the road he turned back and he looked and it wasn't a beggar it was Jesus well that's apocryphal I'm sure it wasn't true you see they glamorize him as a man who gave up so much nobody gives up anything for Jesus every man who gives something up is a winner he's going to receive in this life blessedness a bigger house than he had no but the blessedness that money can't buy and brains can't buy the blessedness of inward peace the internal happiness that belongs to the Christian only it's not made up of amusement it's not made up of happiness it's not made up of ideal conditions do you think that boy who was shot to death last Saturday had been living with a sword of Democles over his head and saying we'll murder you tomorrow no we're putting it off they're teasing him I'm going to suggest

that it was perfect bliss and it wasn't a nervous reaction it's a human being and that's happened to many martyrs and they've gone singing to the scaffold why did they go singing to the scaffold because as Paul said they knew in whom they had believed all you lose if you come to the cross is the penalty of death the penalty of sin the fear that sin brings and in its place comes peace and joy and two riches that you couldn't buy anywhere on God's earth or I'll put them this way the fruit of the indwelling of the spirit love, why can you buy that lust yes, love no joy, why can you buy that entertainment, happiness yes, but not joy peace, why can you buy that you can't buy it the man who really knows God has entered not only into peace with God but he has the peace of God I think it was

Thoreau who was asked once had he made his peace with God and he said I'll say again have a quarrel with him but man is a rebel against God and when he becomes a penitent sinner he has peace with God but there's something more than that, there's the peace of God Romans 5 says the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost but John goes further than that and not only says the love of God but he says perfect love casteth out all fear that will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stead on thee, he isn't going to give me something that when I've sacrificed all I have if I put too much weight on it, it's going to snap like that no man has yet trusted God to the full I need to come every day and say Lord I'm starting out, not on the victories of yesterday, I thank you Father

not with strength to go forward today I need the anointing of your spirit, today I need wisdom more than I needed it yesterday, I got over yesterday, I haven't got through today, I need patience I need meekness I'm going to a world that's totally antagonistic to all I believe and I want to live pure in an impure world I want to live righteous in an unrighteous world, I want to live holy in an unholy world and again Jesus is not giving us an education how to just be exemplary before the world, he's telling us a life, and Paul I like it when he says in Galatians 2.20 the life which I now live even in this flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, it's not a resolution to follow a standard of theology but his life because I was dead in trespass, his life has come in and again if it's joy,

and not just joy, but it's joy unspeakable it has no boundaries, it's not only peace, it's peace that passeth understanding and he says there it's life, but also it's life abundantly abundantly this is, this is the walk that Jesus Christ wants us to have this is his standard and I say again we need to, we need to read it read it, read it constantly, read it every day of your life whatever else you read, read the sermon on the mount, and say Lord I want to be a living epistle, read and known of all men because for sure the men outside aren't reading the bible, but they sure read us, you can make all the excuses you say, like people do well I'm still carnal, I'm still this that, but I'll tell you what, in the office where you work, or wherever else you work they won't accept any alibi from

you I'm just mortal and frail I'm sinful and this, well they won't accept it, they'll say you're making excuses which is true we're supposed to live in the world as Jesus himself would live but we should no longer serve the flesh no longer serve self but our lives should be hid with Christ in God and it's possible only as he has cleansed us and has indwelt us by his spirit Father tonight we thank you for the possibilities of grace and we do ask that we should be ever expanding in our knowledge, but not only that in our practice, in our exercise of the things of holiness, because the Holy Spirit indwells us Father we thank you for the provision you give us in a wicked and perverse generation to be as different from it as it's possible for human beings to be and finally we have, even now we

have our reward we have a reward because we're not haunted by our sins, we're not haunted by the footfall of the policemen, we're not afraid of some threat upon us, that's all been dissolved and away our desire now is that we may walk in newness of life and climb the heights of spirituality and do the will of God, and we thank you for the possibility and thank you for the adequate provision that you've made for us, through Jesus our Lord Amen

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