

# The Blessing of New Covenant Is the Nearness of God

by Santosh Poonen

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**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3, Isaiah 57:15, Philippians 2:15, James 1:2

**Topics:** "Experiencing God's Presence", "Spiritual Growth and Character Development"

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## Description

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## Transcript

What do you think that memory verse we have for this week? Is it an Old Testament command, an Old Covenant command, or a New Covenant command? What do you think? It is in the Old Testament, but it's very much the heart of God. Let's turn there, Ecclesiastes chapter 12. I hope you know where Ecclesiastes is, even if you have difficulty pronouncing the name.

Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and then Song of Solomon. So right after Proverbs. Ecclesiastes is a, I think, a difficult book to understand or to fully know, but I believe it was written towards the end of Solomon's life, when he had walked away from God, and yet had a little bit of the fear of God in him, perhaps.

Quite a different book from Proverbs that Solomon wrote earlier, when he sought for wisdom. But even then, you see that he says the very last verse, or the last two verses, of the book of Ecclesiastes, after all that uncertainty and doubt or wondering, feeling like his life was empty and futile, he says the conclusion, verse 13, when all has been heard, after you've heard everything that everybody has to say about something, is this fear God, keep His commandments, and as the New American says, because this

applies to every person. This applies to every person.

Because God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. Notice there, even in the Old Testament, he says, I'm going to bring to light everything that is hidden. Now you turn to the very last page of the Bible, Revelation 22, and you see the same thing.

We hear much about the love of God, and Christendom loves to speak about the love of God, and we will always proclaim the love of God. But the conclusion when all has been heard is this, fear Him. Yes, love Him.

Yes, He loves you, but fear Him. And I found in my own life, I've said this before, it's worth saying again, I'm thankful that I was taught the fear of God first, so that I knew the boundaries of His love. Yes, His love is an ocean, His love is limitless, but His love never condones sin.

His love is never contrary to His nature, who He is. And a lot of people who have a misunderstanding of the love of God, try to reason and rationalize the love of God with their own human minds, come up with ideas like, how could a loving God allow for a place like hell? How could a loving God allow suffering in this world? And all those rational questions that human beings have. And I found that it's because I was taught from a young age the fear of God.

Proverbs 9 verse 10 teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It doesn't say that the love of God is the beginning of wisdom. It's the fear of the Lord that's the beginning of wisdom.

And it's because I have a foundation in the fear of God, that I understand His love more. And there was a point in my life where I would say, if I was to look back, that I wandered away from that foundation of the fear of God, and tried to understand His love, listening to a lot of psychological Christendom, Christian preachers who teach more psychology than the Word of God, and as a result I ended up with a false definition, a false understanding of the love of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it's when you lay that as the boundary, that you understand the love of God more deeply.

It's because I understood my own sin, that I understood God's love more. Without an understanding of sin, and how wretched sin is, I could never have understood why Jesus had to come and die. Why did it take God Himself coming in the flesh? Couldn't God have made it so that after all those bad things I did, if I did enough good things, somehow He could make up the difference and accept me? No, it took God Himself forsaking Himself, as it were, the Father forsaking the Son.

And I wouldn't have understood that depth of the love of God if it hadn't been for the fear of God, which taught me to see sin and hate sin. So the end of the matter is this, if you read Revelation 22, he starts by saying, I mean read the whole chapter sometime, he talks about the very last page of the Bible. If you think that the fear of God is only an Old Testament thing, I want to tell you you're mistaken.

The fear of God is written all over the New Covenant. Yes, we're shown His love as a father, but the fear of God is there. He says, verse 14, these are the last few sentences of the Bible.

Verse 14, Revelation 22, blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city. But there's a boundary outside. Is there an outside to your understanding of God's love, or is it everything's inside? Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, those who have idols, whether it's your career, your money, or your relationships that you have, and everyone who loves and practices lying outside of

the love of God.

Verse 17, the Spirit and the bride say, come, and let this the one who hears say, come, come inside, come inside. Don't imagine that you can stay outside and pretend that you have the love of God. Come inside.

Let the one who is thirsty come, let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. Here again you see the fear of God being taught.

If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the Holy City which are written in this book. I'm coming quickly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen. So the fear of God is the end of the matter, the conclusion of the matters.

Fear God, keep His commandments, but He's given you grace to do it. That's the New Covenant. The standard is even higher in the New Covenant than it was in the Old Covenant, but the grace of the Lord Jesus will be with you to help you, to fear Him.

Thank God that because we grow in the fear of God, we know sin is worse. We see things that we didn't think of as sin now as sin. That the grace of God may be more manifest in our lives.

Look back on the last week, dear friends, dear brothers, dear sisters. Has the Lord convicted you about something in the last, okay, maybe let's not say week, last month. Is there some area of sin in your life that God's shown you in the last month? If not, I want to tell you, you're not growing spiritually and you're not going to know the grace of God is even more.

So thank God for His grace. And speaking about the New Covenant, I would like us to turn to Hebrews chapter 8. I was thinking in the last few weeks that the essence of the New Covenant is essentially this, that God says, I will be near you. If you look at the Old Covenant, the picture you're given in Hebrews 12 later on is Sinai versus Zion.

Sinai versus Zion. Sinai is characterized by this, that God was over there and the people were some distance away and they dare not come close to it. In fact, He said if you come close to even the base of the mountain and touch it, you will die in an instant.

So of course they stayed far away. The Ark later on, the Ark of the Covenant, some people thought they could get close to it and peek inside and God struck them down immediately. What you see, even though this wasn't God's intent all along, that God was a faraway God.

He couldn't come near them because they were full of sin. They could clean up the outside by avoiding adultery and avoiding murder and not telling lies with their mouths. Even if the inside of the cup was still filthy, at least they could clean the outside of the cup and be a good testimony to the Amorites and the Amalekites and all the otherites that were there, the Philistines and all that they could see, man, these are a holy people on the outside.

But God still couldn't come near them and be among them and dwell in them because the inside was still filthy. And the essence of the New Covenant is this. God says, I will be a near God.

I'll be near you. We see this in Hebrews 8 verse 10. For this is the covenant, now this is a quotation from the Old Testament, and God's saying, I will make a new covenant.

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, after the days of the Old Covenant are past. Here's a new covenant I will make. I will put my laws into their minds.

What was the purpose of all of this? Saying, I'll put my law in your mind, I will give you a new heart, a clean heart, a heart of flesh, not a heart of stone. What was the purpose of all of that? It's just so that God could still be far away saying, oh look at that clean person over there. No.

It was so that God could now come and be close to you. He says, I can come close to you. You're clean.

I can come and put myself inside you, because you're clean. I will put my laws into their minds. I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

They won't have to teach everybody, no. The Lord goes on to say, all will know me. You will know me.

You'll be intimate with me. It's kind of like a father who wrote lots of letters to his children, because he was far away in a far country, and one day he says, listen, I'm coming. I'm coming back.

One day I'm gonna come, and I'm gonna live in your house, and I'll be your dad. Think about, you know, sometimes you meet children whose fathers have to work maybe in the oil fields or in a far-off country, and they live there for six months or long period of time, and they're like, yeah, I have a dad. He's over there somewhere, and he teaches.

He tells me, hey, remember, obey. Obey mom. I'm not there to check up on you, but you better obey me, and better obey all these little things.

Do this. Do that. He writes letters to his children.

He's a faraway God, faraway father, and this was what God said. He said, listen, I'm gonna come close to you. I'm gonna come and dwell in you.

Jesus is gonna come first, and he's gonna open up a way so that I can be yours. You can be mine. If you go back to 2nd Corinthians 6, he uses similar words, also quoting from that same passage.

2nd Corinthians 6, and he talks here about why it's so important for us to live wholly. He says, don't be bound with unbelievers. What partnership, verse 14, 2nd Corinthians 6, verse 14, what partnership does unrighteousness, what does righteousness and lawlessness have with each other? What fellowship is light with darkness? What agreement, verse 16, has the temple of God with idols? You are the temple of God.

What agreement can you have with idols? How can you have a place in your heart for a little bit more of your own self, if God is to make that his home? We are the temple of the living God, just as God has said. I will dwell in them and walk among them. Here is again that new covenant.

And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord, because I want to be a near God. Why does God want you to be holy? It's not because he's angry at you.

It's not because he wants to be a killjoy, a spoiled sport. I remember in my teenage years, I was tempted with this thought. Well, all the fun things in the world, it seems like God says, no, you're not allowed to do that.

Seems like the world could always do this and do that, do that other thing. And when it came to us Christian kids, we weren't allowed to do this and weren't allowed to do that. We didn't have a TV in our house.

We couldn't watch movies, and we couldn't be a part of all their conversations. It seemed like, no, you can't do that. You can't do that.

You can't do that other thing. Oh, one other thing on the list. And the devil wanted me to have that idea that God is just in the business of saying, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Maybe some of you children feel like that. You feel like God is always saying, no, you can't do this, no, you can't do that. You know why? He wants to be near you.

He wants to come and be close to you. And sin is such a filthy, repulsive thing, hateful, filthy, horrible, horrible thing, that he says, I want to clean that up so that I can come close to you. I want to give you a hug.

Let me shower you first and I'll give you a hug, and I'll hold you, and I'll keep you close to me. That's why he says, avoid those things, young boys, young girls, adults, perhaps we need to hear that, too. Why does God want you to be free from the love of money? Why? Because He wants to hug you.

He wants to give you an embrace. He wants to keep you close to Him, and He can't do that if the love of money is still in your heart. Psalm 73 is a psalm that speaks about worship.

As you know, let's turn there. Psalm 73, this wonderful passage that talks about Asaph looking at the people in the world who are chasing after these things, chasing after money, chasing after health, chasing after success, whether you do it in the name of Jesus or in the name of some other God. It's another Jesus.

If you're promoting self, if you're looking for something that will make your own success, give you your own success, and he saw all of them and saw that they seemed to have a comfortable life, but the ones who really wanted to make God their true God, the ones who really wanted to honor Christ, for them life was difficult. And he says, my foot was almost gonna stumble, and then he says, verse 21, when my heart was embittered. Has your heart ever been embittered when you look at how other people seem to have a comfortable life and all the bad things that could possibly happen seem to be happening to you? Why is it that the godly seem to have all kinds of things, one after the other, just when you feel like, okay, I got through that, now something else got thrown at me.

Why? He says, my heart was embittered, Psalm 73, verse 21, and then he came to the place of worship. This is true worship. You will hear many other definitions of New Covenant worship, and they're all, you know, if they're truly biblical, they're correct.

But here's one. Worship is that even when all else is failing, as long as God is near me, everything is well. I want to show you that in this passage.

Verse 25, when whom have I in heaven but you? And besides you, I desire nothing on earth, not even that you'll fix this problem, or that you'll heal, or you'll, even more than victory over sin. Does that sound like a shock? There's something God wants even more than giving you victory over sin today, is that He'll be near you. We'll talk about that here in a little bit.

Now, sin is horrible. I've already said that. God wants you to overcome sin, but not at the expense of Him being far away from you while you have overcome sin.

He wants you to overcome sin, but it'll take some time, and He'll work with you, and He'll keep you humble and broken, so that the thing that you value even more than the fact that you have overcome sin is that God is near you. This is worship. And besides you, I desire nothing on earth, Psalm 73, verse 25.

Verse 26, my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Verse 28, as for me, the nearness of God is my good. This is worship for me.

I just want to be near God. That's it. I don't have to sing.

I don't have to have instruments. I don't have to feel like this or feel like that. Who else is there? Doesn't matter.

Is God near me? Then I can worship. The first time you read about worship is in Genesis 22. There was a man, an altar, and that which was closest to him, Abraham.

A man, an altar, and that which was dearest to him. All by himself. He couldn't even take his wife with him.

You know, so often today we're looking for churches where, who goes to that church? Do I have friends in the church? Will my children have friends in that church? Will my this and that? People are picking churches based on that. I tell you, I hope, you've heard this before, I hope you'll hear it again. I hope that you're here simply to know how to worship God.

And if one day you show up and there's nobody else here except you, you say, Lord, I'm here to worship you. For some reason, everybody else is sick. Nobody else is here in this building.

The door happens to be open. I'm just here to come here and build an altar for you in my heart and say, Lord, I want to worship you. What is it? Why did you bring me here to Mount Moriah this morning? So that I can offer that which is dearest to you.

Now, praise God that there are others here with us. But I hope that even as during the time that we were singing this morning, and during every part of our meetings, that it's you and God and an altar on which lies that which is closest to you. What is it that you're holding on to? What is it that you want most? If you can sit here all by yourself, even though there are people around you, and it's you with your eyes closed.

That's why often when I sing, I have to close my eyes. I say, Lord, I want to picture this altar. What is it that you're laying on my heart before me this morning for this week? There's something that's dear to me that is hindering my relationship with you.

Something that I'm holding on to. Something that has embittered my soul. I want to lay it on the altar before you.

It's become easier for me to sing now, when I pray that way. When I sing that way. I see myself before God.

Everything naked and bare before Him, with whom I have to do. And I lay on that altar afresh, that which is nearest, dearest to me. So, the nearness of God.

This is the new covenant, that God can be near us. Now I'd like us to turn to Matthew chapter 5, where Jesus, in the first teaching that we hear Him giving us about the new covenant, Matthew chapter 5. You know, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, in a sense, are the inauguration of the new covenant. He's showing us what does the new covenant really mean.

He compares the old covenant with the new covenant. How the old covenant people prayed, and how we should pray now. How the old covenant people could get away with lusting with their eyes, as long as they didn't commit adultery.

But that was never God's heart all along. They could get away with anger, as long as they didn't commit murder. All those things you read about it later on.

But at the very beginning, He starts by what we have known quite well, in Matthew chapter 5, verses 3 through 12. And I don't know about you, but I was convicted a couple weeks ago, which is where the thoughts that I'm sharing this morning have come from. I've been just thinking about them for a couple of weeks now.

I tended, when I read Matthew 5, verses 3 through 12, because I think I memorized this when I was a kid, if I remember correctly. I've known these verses for many years. I still do.

I could almost recite them in order perfectly. But I always tended to look at the latter part of the verse as the goal. For example, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And I tended to immediately jump to the kingdom of heaven. That's what I want. Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted.

Lord, I want to be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, they shall inherit the earth. Lord, I'd love to inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, because they shall be satisfied. And my selfish, self-centered mind immediately jumped to what I could get as a result of being something. So it's sort of this bargain.

Okay, like, you know, like Santa Claus, where it's like, okay, I'll be good if you'll give me that thing that I really want. Now, for people in the world, it could be money, could be earthly things, it could be success. But do you want comfort? Do you want inheriting the earth? Do you want satisfaction? Do you want all these other things that he says you'll get that, come over getting God himself, the presence of God.

And that's what Asaph realized that, Lord, I don't need anything else. I don't need, because the other people in Psalm 73, if you read the whole psalm, you realize they are the ones that seem to be comforted, they seem to be satisfied, they never seem to be hungry. And Asaph realized something in the Old Testament, that his eyes were fixed on the wrong thing.

Even he was, even though he was in the Old Covenant, where God promised earthly blessing, he says, I've been missing something. I've been focused on, Lord, I want that blessing. I want that comfort.

I want to be satisfied. I don't want to be hungry anymore. I don't want to be thirsty anymore.

Help me to have a little bit more money. Please heal. Please do this.

Please do that other thing. Then he comes to the place where he realized, whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is nothing, not even the blessings, the earthly blessings of God, that I desire above Thee. I desire You.

I desire Your presence. And I started to read this passage a little bit differently. Who does it say are blessed in Matthew 5 verse 3? Is it those who have the kingdom of heaven? Does it say blessed are those who have the kingdom of heaven? No.

It says blessed are the poor in spirit. This is the blessing of the New Covenant, that you can be poor in spirit, not for the blessing that you'll get on top of that. Yes, you will still get the kingdom of heaven, but God is near those who are poor in spirit.

This is the New Covenant. God wants to be near you. God wants to be near you.

And if you have been content and seen the glory and how amazing it is to be poor in spirit because God is near you, then you say, Lord, You'll take care of the kingdom of heaven parts. I'm not fixing myself on where the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven. Yes, what is the kingdom of heaven? God is near me.

Blessed are those whom God is near to. I would say is the summary of Matthew 5 verses 3 through 12. Blessed.

Are you blessed today, dear brother, dear sister? I know that in Christendom, sadly, we're tuned to think that, oh, that's a blessed person. I'm blessed today. Why? Well, God gave me a promotion, or I finally got a job, or this, I have a little bit of money, or God healed.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. And the reason this is important, and I hope I'm not trying to split hairs here, but it was for me a revelation and something that's helping me now that I'm not, because the tendency for me was that I was like, okay, Lord, I've been poor in spirit for a couple of years now. When am I going to get the kingdom of heaven? My eye is on that thing that I'm going to get out of being poor in spirit, because that's the blessing I'm looking for, and I missed it.

He says, the blessing is that you can be poor in spirit today until the end of your life. You'll get the kingdom of heaven. God will give it to you.

Don't worry about it. Just be poor in spirit. And I found in my own flesh that I was looking for a way to be done with being poor in spirit.

Lord, I'm measuring, Lord, I've been poor in spirit for so long, and God was near me while I was poor in spirit. Oh, He was. I can think of some of the times when they're that were the hardest times in my life that caused me to be poor in spirit, and God was near.

And the regret I have, to some extent, I'll say I don't feel any guilt, no guilt, no condemnation, but the regret I have is that that time, in those times when God was near me, while I was being crushed and squeezed, and while I was poor in spirit, my eye was on that thing that I was gonna get when I got out of this squeezing, when I didn't have to be poor in spirit anymore, because I'm not being crushed, not being

squeezed. And I said, Lord, I missed it. I missed worship.

Abraham got it. What do you think it was like when he was taking Isaac up? Every step was a dagger to his heart. Dagger to his heart.

Dagger to his heart. But he experienced worship in the Old Covenant that many New Covenant Christians have missed out on. Why? God was near him.

God was near him. And that was the thing that was precious to Abraham to the extent that he could. And let's not miss it, brothers and sisters.

God wants to be near you. This is the New Covenant. And if it means that he wants to crush you and squeeze you until the last day of your life, you look back and in turn he says, God, you were near me through it all.

Thank you that I woke up one morning, even if it is today, December 17, 2023, and realized I've been looking at the wrong thing. Those who are poor in spirit are blessed, because God is near them. They'll inherit the earth.

Absolutely. That'll happen. When it happens, that's up to God.

They'll inherit the kingdom of heaven. Sorry, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Verse 3. Isaiah chapter 57.

I read a phrase a few weeks ago which I shared with you all as a church before. I'll share it again. God has two thrones.

One in the highest heaven and the other in the lowliest hearts. He has two thrones. One in the highest heaven and other in the lowliest hearts.

And this is right from Isaiah 57 verse 14. It will be said, build up, build up, prepare the way. Build up, build up, build a church, prepare the way, remove every obstacle out of the way of my people, because thus says the high and exalted one who lives forever, whose name is holy, I dwell on a high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Do you want revival in your heart? There are many people in Christendom who are asking for revival and praying for revival. It's very clear. It couldn't be more clear.

If you need revival in your heart, there's only one way to do it. It's not having 24-7 prayer and 24-7 singing or anything like that. It's very simple.

Be contrite and lowly of spirit. God will revive you. So blessed, go back to Matthew 5, blessed are the poor in spirit, because God is near them.

God is near the poor in spirit. And I pray for my own life. This has become the prayer of my heart.

Lord, I want to remain poor in spirit for the end of my life, even if Matthew 5 verse 3b was not written. You know how there's 3a and 3b, right? Matthew 5, 3a is blessed are the poor in spirit. Matthew 5, 3b says theirs is the kingdom of, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Even if Matthew 5, 3b was not in my Bible, would you want to be poor in spirit? Because God says you'll be blessed. I will be near you. I will make my throne there with you.

Blessed are you poor in spirit. It doesn't matter if you get nothing else out of it. Thank God that He says I will give you the kingdom of heaven, but blessed are the poor in spirit.

How about this week, you just pause at blessed are the poor in spirit, and just stop there for this week, and say Lord, it's your job to give me the kingdom of heaven. He doesn't say that you'll have to do this or do that. I will give it to you.

It's yours. You will have the kingdom of heaven. Just be poor in spirit.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Memorize Matthew 5, 3a this week. That's the essence of what I'm saying this morning.

Blessed are the poor in spirit because God is near them. And that takes away so much of the what I want God to do for me mentality that we tend to bring into our Christian lives. Okay, let's keep going.

Matthew 5 verse 4a. Blessed are those who mourn. Pause there for a moment.

Blessed are those who mourn. Because the danger is, I want to be done with mourning. Lord, I've been mourning.

I wet my pillow with tears every night. I wake up and crying. It's like, when will this season of mourning be done? Is that what you want? You're blessed because you're mourning.

You wake up every morning and you find that the pillow has been wet because of your tears. You had one of the blessed, most blessed nights you could have had. Not waiting for the answer.

Are you waiting to be done with that season of mourning, brothers and sisters? I know I was. That's that's where this burden is coming from. There were times when I was mourning.

I was like, Lord, I can't wait for the season of joy. And I missed it. I missed the presence of God in the night of mourning.

Yes, He's there when there's joy as well. And His joy is my strength through the night. But in that night of mourning, blessed are those who mourn.

Blessed are those who mourn. You will receive the comforter. You know, I believe that one of the reasons, you know, it says they shall be comforted.

What is it? Is it some false feeling of comfort? Oh, I feel better today. Cried it out, as it were. Is that what you're looking for? You cry it out enough and somehow you feel better the next morning? No.

What is it that I want? I want the comforter. He's a person. That when I'm crying, I can feel comfort even though the tears have not stopped.

Jesus wants to be with you. The Holy Spirit wants to be with you through the night. And I'm not waiting for the circumstance to change so that I can be done crying and then somehow receive some comfort.

No, I want the comforter who will be with me through the night. Do you know the Holy Spirit in the middle of the night while the tears are still flowing? He says, blessed are those who mourn. I'm near you when you're mourning.

You see how each one of these things is kind of a lowly place. Poor in spirit down there. Somebody that you would feel sorry for.

We drive by, every time we come into town or even drive here on Sunday morning, I drive by that House of Neighborly Services and I see those people who don't have homes, who are experiencing homelessness now, and my heart goes out to them. I wish I could do something to help them in some way. If the Lord gives me the opportunity, I will.

I have a burden for those people. But it's a picture for me. It says, Santos, are you coming to my house, to RLCF today that way? Like, I'm poor in spirit.

Lord, I'm needy. I'll stand here. I mean, they wait there in the cold.

Doesn't matter if it's 10 degrees. They're there. They're bundled up.

But they're like, this place has something that'll help me. That's why I'm here. That's why they're there.

That's why I'm here this morning. It's a good reminder. God allows me to.

Maybe some of you should drive that way to come to RLCF every morning. Say, Lord, I'm not coming here full. I'm coming here needy.

I'm coming here desperate. I want to be poor in spirit. I want to come with a place that people who really look at me almost kind of feel sorry for me.

It's like, oh man, I feel sorry for that person. You want to feel sorry for the poor in spirit. Do you want that place in the church? Then God will be near you.

God, I would paraphrase it this way, God is near those whom others feel sorry for. Feel pity on. You want to be that person in the church? The one that everybody else at RLCF feels sorry for.

Oh man, feel bad for that person. Look at what they're going through. God is near you, brother.

God is near you, sister. That's the place we should all be coveting. Blessed are those who mourn.

You ever see somebody crying, tears streaming down their face? You feel sorry for them. It's like, man, they must be going through something really hard. Why is it just weeping, weeping, weeping, weeping, weeping? You know, that's the most blessed person.

Perhaps you're crying inside your heart today. You're mourning. Don't seek to get out of that circumstance, brother, sister.

Stay in Matthew 5, 4a. Blessed are those who mourn. You're blessed if you're mourning.

God will take care of giving you the comfort. Verse 5, Matthew 5, 5. Blessed are the gentle, the humble, the meek. The literal word there from the Greek, if I understand correctly, is the word tamed.

Blessed are the tamed. You ever see these wild horses? Or maybe you only see them in movies. You don't see them that much anymore.

These wild mustangs that are free and running around and open pasture and all that. And then you see one that used to be one of those, but now is tamed. It's got a bridle on its head and it's got a saddle on it and there's reins.

Which one do you feel sorry for? I think you'd want to feel sorry for the tamed mustang. It's got a boundary drawn around it. It used to be that wild, free running, free range mustang that didn't have anybody to tell him where to go and what to do.

Just go wherever you want. Open. Go wherever you want.

And then it became tamed. Which one are you, brother, sister? Are you the wild mustang? I can do whatever I want, accountable to nobody. Just come and go whenever you wish.

I'm my own master. You missed the blessing of God. Blessed are the tamed.

God is near them. God can use them. Children, why is it that it's so important that you obey your parents? As long as you're in the home, you must obey your parents.

You must honor them. You must respect them. Treat them as more important than you.

Respect them, honor them, obey them. Why? God's trying to tame you. And you look at society and you see what's happening with the children and the young people and those young people who are becoming adults now because they weren't able to be tamed when they were in their homes even if those homes weren't godly homes.

God was trying to tame those children through their time at home and they missed it. Now you've got an untamed society. You'll be useful to God.

You'll be useful even in the world. You'll be useful in your jobs. You'll be useful in your homes as fathers, as mothers.

If God can tame you first, don't miss out on the opportunity to be tamed. What do you think it's like for that wild mustang that's used to being able to do whatever they want and now to be whipped and to beaten to be told what to do and say no you can't go outside this fence. This is your corral.

Stay in here. And it looks at all the other mustangs that seem to be able to do whatever they want. It can see in the distance oh there's that my friends they seem to be able to do whatever they want.

Their parents are not as strict as mine are. Oh that you will learn to value the time of taming that God wants to do in your life children. And that's true for us adults.

Let's not think adults that because we don't have parents anymore that we have to obey because God has established our own homes that God doesn't still want to tame us. I met so many people. Why do we believe in membership and commitment to a local church? It's because this long range of mentality which is like I'm committed to nobody, answerable only to the Lord, never learned submission.

That's not God's will. He wants to tame you. And I hope you know that the reason we preach submission and spiritual authority in the home in the church as well is simply because God wants to tame you.

And I want to tell you my testimony. Perhaps you've heard it before. What God brought me to this town of Loveland for was not because of who was here.

I knew nobody here. I just kind of met them once or twice. None of them are here today.

So clearly it wasn't for them that God brought me here. God brought me to Loveland to tame me. I want to tell you that plain and simple.

I came here looking for spiritual authority to submit to. There were other elders at that church at that time and God said just come and submit to them. I don't know them Lord.

What are they going to be like? I didn't have to test the waters to find out. I simply knew God you want me to be tamed and this is where this is the corral that you've put me in and the life that I anticipated it looking like. Megan you'll testify to that.

We thought was going to be just squeezing and limiting and but we said Lord that's what we want. We want to be tamed. I want to learn to submit to spiritual authority so that I can have spiritual authority.

What does spiritual authority look like for you? Husbands, wives, fathers, mothers. God has placed you as those to whom he wants to give spiritual authority over your children but what is it like for you? Are you a tamed mustang father? Are you really a tamed mustang that God has authority over? That God has the reins over you and he's sitting on that saddle and he's controlling your life. You're fully surrendered to him.

You can't just do whatever you want. Your life is fully under his control as a tamed mustang. Then you can teach your children to be tamed but if you're not tamed it's not going to bear fruit in the life of your children either no matter how much you might insist on it.

Blessed are the tamed. Blessed are the tamed. God is near them.

God is near you when you are being tamed and you'll find you know it says they shall inherit the earth. What does that mean? All my earthly needs will be met. Are you uncertain about what how God will meet your earthly needs? Let him tame you first.

Do you think that mustang ever that tamed mustang will ever go hungry? I tell you this the wild mustangs probably go hungry sometimes because they don't have somebody who cares for them who's providing for them but the tamed mustang does. The tamed mustang has a master who says I know it's been difficult for you while I've been taming you but you'll never have any need at all. You'll never have to fend for yourself.

I will provide everything you need. You'll inherit the earth you tamed child of God but if you're untamed unaccountable to anybody there's no guarantee what that would be like. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Pause there for a moment. Now please understand I'm not saying that the promise of God is not true but our tendency is to immediately run to the end of it but to miss the blessing of the new covenant which is very simply blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and to know the blessing of being hungry and thirsty. You ever seen a picture of a hungry thirsty person? Sometimes you see pictures of children in far countries where there's famine.

There's not enough food and usually people use that to share those pictures to move the hearts of people. When you see a skinny famished little boy a little girl that doesn't have enough food with tears drowning on his face and an empty bowl what do you think? He says oh I wish I could go there right now and give that person some food. You feel sorry for the hungry.

You feel sorry for the thirsty. Are you coming here this morning that way dear brother dear sister? You're so hungry and so thirsty that if somebody could look into your soul and see the hunger and thirst that's within you'd be like man I feel sorry for Santos. He's really hungry.

It's like he hasn't eaten in a long time. Oh but we come here well fed. I've come to see this hunger and thirst this way.

I really believe you know we speak often about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and coveting for it saying Lord send another Pentecost here pour out your Holy Spirit upon upon us Lord we pray. What was it about Pentecost that caused the Holy Spirit to fall in that room that upper room? You know what it was? It was a hunger and thirst that they had. You see that principle throughout the new covenant even in the old covenant and that hunger and thirst you can describe it like that.

I don't know if you children understand the principle of vacuum. You know when you if you have a straw that that has liquid here you know water can never go upwards. Water can never go upwards but if you have this suction if you have a suction when you drink liquid juice or water out of a straw what you're creating and I probably should have brought a straw to show it to you but I hope you can picture it.

What you're creating when you suck into that straw is a vacuum in here and that vacuum causes the water to come up into your mouth. It's the same thing with a vacuum cleaner. What happens when there's dust on the ground and paper on the ground there's a motor inside that vacuum cleaner that creates an emptiness.

Vacuum is the absence of anything. You know you think the air is empty. The air is not really empty.

It's got air. Air itself is matter right but vacuum is the absence of any matter. It's completely empty not even air in there and that emptiness where not even air is there causes everything else to get sucked into that.

I've come to see hunger and thirst like that creation of a vacuum in my heart and it's not that God doesn't want to pour the Holy Spirit. Oh he's got an abundance of his spirit that he longs to pour out on even our children our young people but the vacuum is missing. I'm full of stuff perhaps even air.

You know air is something and you know I think well Lord I'm pretty empty. I don't have much. Oh but you're full of air hot air high thoughts about yourself.

God says I'm waiting for that vacuum. I'm waiting for you. I'm going to use circumstances in your life.

I'm going to use unanswered prayer in your life. I'm going to use squeezing circumstances in your life to create the vacuum where once that's there oh the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will come because the vacuum is there. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Blessed are those in whom there's a vacuum. You ever thought about sucking the Holy Spirit's power into your life not by our own strength but because God has emptied out me where there's absolute vacuum in there. I want to ask you dear brothers and sisters we have we've been praying and speaking about the

baptism of the Holy Spirit for years in this church.

Years. Is it your experience? I'm not here to condemn you any more than when I was younger and lacking the fullness of the Holy Spirit in my life. I thank God that people that the teachers that I listened to didn't just leave me saying oh I guess you're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

Go be well be fed like James says. No don't just go down to the with whatever food we're going to eat here in a few later on this afternoon thinking yeah at least I'll get a good meal. Is there a hunger and thirst? Is there such a hunger and thirst and a desperation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life that you don't mind skipping the lunch? What's more important than an empty stomach is a vacuum in your heart that will draw the power of the Holy Spirit into you.

This is the longing of my heart brothers sisters children. I want there to be such a vacuum and if there's if the Holy Spirit hasn't come and filled me yet I know there's only one reason the vacuum is still not there. Don't let go of God.

Say Lord for some reason the vacuum's been missing in my life. There's still something in here. Yeah you've emptied out a lot.

Yeah it feels kind of empty but it's not vacuum. There's still something in there that's preventing and we've been reading story after story in those biographies in our monthly prayer meetings of these men and women of God who were useful to God. They could preach good sermons.

They were good upstanding members in the church till they realized they were honest with themselves. Say Lord what the early church received on the day of Pentecost is not my experience. What's wrong? And God was able to create a vacuum in their lives that drew the Holy Spirit in.

God is near you when you are hungry and thirsty. Verse 7. Blessed are the merciful. Are you being merciful because of some reason? Because you want to be merciful? Because you want to receive mercy? Yes you will receive mercy.

Yes but you know that you're blessed when you're just being merciful? What if Matthew 5, 7 simply read blessed are the merciful? Because that's what God's like. God is near you when you're being merciful to others. I believe we all know that God is near us when he's showing us mercy.

Right? Oh thank you Lord that you're near me. I felt your mercy so good. Your mercies are new every morning.

Do you know that God is near you when you show mercies to somebody else? Can your wife say to you, husband your mercies are new to me every morning? Can your husband say to your wife your mercies are new to me every morning? Then God's near you. If you're only experiencing the mercies of God in your life every morning and your wife well you're kind of stingy with the mercy that you give her. I want to tell you God's not near you.

He might be showing mercy but it's a far away mercy. Here go ahead have some mercy. I'll toss it to you over there.

I can't come near you because you're not merciful to others. You want the mercy of God where he takes you in his lap, puts his arms around you and says I'm going to show you mercy, close mercy. Why?

Because you're being merciful to others.

Blessed are you when you're being merciful to others because God is near you. That's it. You will experience his mercy.

You will. That goes without saying. You don't have to try.

You don't have to try. You will experience a mercy that comes out of your being merciful to others. Oh that we will set that as our goal this week.

That our spouses will know. That our spouses will come to expect mercy new in the morning. Not a hardness oh you did that again or you brought that up again or you like this you're always like that.

That's the world. Blessed are the merciful. They're like God.

God is near them. You know I thought about like this that God wakes up in the morning. He doesn't sleep.

You know that right? But when I when he when he sees me wake up it's like how can I be merciful to Santos? His mercies are new every morning. He's just like I gotta find some way to show him some mercy today. Think about waking up in bed husbands and wives or waking up with your children or even if you're a single brother single brother or sister.

Say Lord how can I be merciful to somebody? Children. In a few days or weeks you'll go back to school or maybe you're still in school. Think about waking up this morning.

Lord how can I be merciful to somebody? Who is it that you're going to bring across my path where I can lavish mercy on them? Why? Because I want you to be near me. Is it going to be somebody that you'll allow to cut me off on the road when I'm driving so that I can be merciful to them? Yes Lord I want you to be near me more than my own comforts and luxuries. I don't want to have a smooth path all green lights.

No let them cut me off Lord if that means that you'll be near me. Oh that I can be merciful this morning. What a different way to wake up.

How different our homes will be. Surely children what did you memorize this week? Surely what? Goodness and mercy will what? Follow me. It means wherever you go you leave a little trail of mercy.

Oh there's mercy here. Santosh must have been here recently. Now that's not yet true in my mind but I hope you'll set that as a goal.

Say Lord wherever you wherever you take me they ought to have known that I was here because there's a little bit of mercy left here. You know that's what it was like with Jesus. You know if Jesus comes into your home and then goes away the smell the aroma like a perfume will be left behind.

What is that? Mercy. Can you go and spend an evening in somebody else's home and yeah I know you'll all say thanks. You know we teach our children if you go to visit somebody's home and you leave say thank you.

Thank you for having us over. What will you leave behind? Will it be like an aroma a perfume? Well the punins must have been here or so-and-so must have been here. Why? Because there's mercy in our home left behind.

A trail of mercy. This is God. This is how you know that you're near God.

It's when you've been merciful to others. Verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart. You know that God is near you when your heart is pure.

Now he's not talking about purity with the eyes or purity of the flesh. A pure heart that means your motive. That's what purity of heart is.

Your motive in what you're doing is pure. That means you can clean the toilets or vacuum the floor or do whatever it is not hoping. I hope somebody sees that yeah yeah I'm doing my doing the thing even if it wasn't your job to do.

Motive. Motive is pure. You know that God is near you when your heart is pure.

Verse 9. Blessed are the peacemakers because God is near them. They shall be called sons of God. Sons and daughters of God.

He saw that in 2nd Philippians 6. They will be my sons and daughters. Blessed are the peacemakers. Always seek to be a peacemaker in every situation.

Blessed are the peacemakers. You know God is near you because you're a peacemaker. You come into a situation and the peace of Christ is there.

You bring peace. You bring peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Now you know I've gone through them quickly but I hope you meditate on and say Lord I want to experience the blessing of the new covenant which is the nearest of God. Blessed are those. Here's the last one.

Blessed are you when you are persecuted and insulted. 10 and 11. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you.

Have you ever had a time in your life where people insult you, persecute you, speak about you behind their back? There's been times in my past when that's happened and you know what I was always waiting for. I can't wait for Lord you deal with them. That's the Old Testament answer.

Lord deal with my enemies. Make them stop. I've made it my goal Lord.

In the midst of that insult and that persecution you're there and here I am waiting for the insult to end and the persecution to end and my eye is fixed on something else. Lord see how they're treating me. See how they're doing this and they're saying that and they're scheming against me.

It says but I was with you and those times when nobody was insulting you and persecuting you I was a far away God and then I allowed you to go through insult. I allowed you to go through persecution so that I could come close and the nearness of God wasn't enough for you because it came with insult and persecution. Oh that the nearness of God would be our passion.

We speak about the presence of God. What does that? How does God manifest his presence? I hope you've seen here. It's through being poor in spirit.

It's through mourning. It's through being tamed. It's through having a hunger and thirst.

It's through being merciful to others. It's through having pure motives. It's through being a peacemaker.

It's through insult and persecution. That's how we experience the presence of God and his nearness and may we always be such a church that experienced the nearness of God and then what does he say 13 and 14. You're the salt.

You're the light. Not by what your preaching is like and what your church is like is that here's a people that when they're being insulted and persecuted they're not looking to get out of that. Why? Because God is with them.

Here are three Israelite men who are actually quite happy to be in the furnace because God is with them. Here's a group of people that can go singing to their grave, singing to the cross, singing to the to the boiling pot like so many of those martyrs did. Why? Because God is in the midst of that fire.

Consider it all joy my brethren when you face fiery trials because God is with you. He's near you. Amen.

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