

The Poor in Spirit Possess God's Kingdom

by Zac Poonen

The key to possessing the kingdom of heaven is being poor in spirit, living from day to day, dependent on God, and always praying, like breathing.

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Scripture: Job 42:6, Proverbs 8:34, Matthew 5:3, Luke 17:10, Luke 18:1, John 3:17, 1 Corinthians 10:10

Topics: "Spiritual Humility", "True Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being poor in spirit, highlighting how true holiness comes with brokenness and humility. It contrasts legalism with genuine compassion and the need to focus on personal transformation rather than condemning others. The speaker draws insights from the story of Job, showcasing the significance of repentance, humility, and a deep encounter with God in spiritual growth.

Transcript

We've been talking about how God's thoughts are as different from ours as heaven is above the earth and how in the new covenant it's the kingdom of heaven that we seek to pursue after and seek with all of our hearts. So in that connection I want you to turn to a verse in Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5 and verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those are the very first words that Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount.

And if you think of the kingdom of heaven like a vast treasure house, many rooms full of treasures, here is the master key that opens every door, being poor in spirit. You can't possess all of the kingdom of heaven in a moment, but if you have this master key, as you progress in your Christian life you will be possessing more and more of the kingdom of heaven and the result of that will be that your life becomes more heavenly every year. The spirit of heaven becomes the aroma of your life, the purity, the joy, like I said yesterday, the freedom from depression and discouragement and complaining and murmuring.

Think of living a life like that, think of a home like that where there's never a word of accusation, accusing one another or accusing anybody else and no murmuring or complaining. Even if 101 things go wrong, as they will in this evil world, there is no complaint, there is no questioning, there is an acceptance. Whatever may happen, we're never discouraged, we're always rejoicing in the Lord, even when we go through sorrow and difficulty and trial and there's no storm that Jesus cannot still, there's no problem that Jesus cannot solve.

That is the life of heaven on earth. It's not that we won't face problems. If you walked with Jesus in the days when he was on earth, you find he was constantly facing problems.

If he got into a boat, there'd be a storm. If there were people around, there wasn't enough food for them. If he went to a marriage, the wine ran out.

He was constantly facing problems. So what do you mean, what does it mean to walk with Jesus? You will constantly face problems. It says in Psalm 34, many are the afflictions of the righteous.

But that's not the end of the sentence. But the Lord delivers out of all of them. So the more wholehearted we are, the more we become targets of Satan.

But we will overcome. Whenever I hear, you know, I hear lots of believers saying, Oh, Brother Zach, the devil's doing this and the devil's doing that and the devil's doing the other thing. And I say, when the devil's doing all this, what is Jesus doing? Nothing.

So many believers make the devil so big. He's doing everything. If the electricity goes off, the devil did it.

It's not the devil. It is just poor maintenance. Don't blame the devil for all types of things that we are careless about.

No. I say, what does it matter who did it? Jesus is triumphant. The Lord is on the throne.

And I never see Jesus ever facing a situation that was too much for him to handle. How can you say that Jesus is with you? Well, if he's with you, you'll be able to handle any situation because his promise is that he'll never allow us to be tested beyond our ability. But we have to be poor in spirit.

Then we possess the kingdom. And if we have not become more heavenly in our life and in our home, there is only one reason and we must face up to it. We are not poor in spirit.

Perhaps we haven't even understood what it means to be poor in spirit. The best illustration I have found in trying to understand poor in spirit is, you know, Jesus used human illustrations to explain spiritual truths. He spoke about a treasure hidden in a field.

He spoke about a sower sowing the seed. He spoke about tares in the midst of a field full of wheat and many illustrations like that. A landlord, I mean a man employing laborers in his vineyard.

They were all earthly illustrations to teach heavenly truths. So to understand poor in spirit, think of someone who is poor in body. A beggar.

That's how I understood it. A poor beggar. And you know if you lived in Bangalore, you see beggars all the time.

Beggars can come to your gate and ask for something. They usually ask for some money or food or something. And if you tell them, what happened to what I gave you yesterday? That was just enough for yesterday.

That's what they say. And they're right. Beggars live from day to day.

I've seen some beggars in the streets of Bangalore still there twenty years later. They live from day to day because they just get by. They wait for somebody to give them some money.

The traffic lights and the road sides. They're always in need. And I apply that to poor in spirit.

I say, Lord, that's how I must be in relation to God. I don't go to human beings with my need. Then I'm a beggar on earth.

No. In my relationship with God, I'm like that. I say, Lord, yesterday's grace was enough only for yesterday.

Like that beggar says, the money you gave me yesterday was finished yesterday. The food you gave me yesterday was finished yesterday. I need something more today.

I need to go to God like that perpetually. This is the life of dependence upon God. It's a life of faith.

Life of faith is a life of perpetual dependence upon God. The sin that Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden. It wasn't just a simple thing of eating a fruit.

It wasn't like an orange, don't eat oranges or don't eat mangoes. It wasn't like that. There's a spiritual meaning to that.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil spoke of a life where I have the knowledge of good and evil inside me and I don't need to consult God anymore because I know myself what is good and evil. A lot of believers live like that. They don't need to seek God and is it right or wrong? They have that knowledge of good and evil which they got from their forefather Adam and they decide themselves, this is right, this is wrong.

They don't need to consult God. And it's a life of independence of God and that's what the devil was telling them. If you eat this, you yourself will know good and evil.

Whereas the other tree, the tree of life was where you, when you wanted to know something, you need to go to God and say, God is it right or wrong to do this? Should I do this or not? I don't decide myself. I wait upon God. I'm not saying that for every little thing I do, you know, verbally ask God, but it's a life of dependence.

True prayer is a life of dependence and the person who can pray best is the one who is poor in spirit. Have you read these books? Have you ever read these stories of people who pray for four hours a day and six hours a day? And some great men of God that never, I was reading the other day of somebody who would spend six hours a day in prayer. It only discourages me.

It doesn't challenge me. I find it very difficult to spend six hours a day in prayer. How many of you spend six hours a day in prayer? These things, these type of testimonies only discourage you and they condemn you.

I never preached that. Have you ever heard me talking about that? A lot of these things only condemn people. There's a lot of condemnation in Christian circles.

I refuse to be condemned. I go to the word of God. And where in the Bible do I read how many hours Jesus spent in prayer? Never.

Where do I read how many hours Paul has spent in prayer or Peter or anybody else? The wonderful thing about all these people, the ways of God, Jesus said, don't let anybody know how much time you spent in

prayer. I ask about all these men of God, how did other people discover? Do any of you who have known me for 35 years, do you know how many times I fasted? Do you know how many times I prayed or how long I spent in prayer? Do you know how much I give? Fasting, praying and giving. Jesus said, don't let anybody know it.

And if nobody knows how much you fast, how much you pray, how much you give, you have obeyed Jesus. That's God's way. But Christendom is not like that.

You read the biographies of these great men of God. I'm not here to criticize them. I'm just saying they are not my example.

My example is Jesus. The book I follow is God's word. But so many of us, you can listen, oh this is a great man of God.

And I tell you, without knowing it, you're not following Jesus Christ. You're following a man of God who is not doing what Jesus said you should do. That is, don't tell anybody how much you pray.

What did Jesus say about prayer? One word. Luke 18.1. Men must pray always. If you don't know the meaning of always, look up a dictionary and see whether it means six hours or ten hours.

What do you think always means? To me it has only one meaning. Whether it's rejoice always or pray always. Or always bearing in our body the dying of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4.10. Always. It's 24-7. I have to rejoice 24-7.

I have to pray 24-7. I have to bear in my body the dying of Jesus, dying to myself 24-7. It means there are certain things I have to do constantly.

And then we may say, oh how can I live like that? My life will be always in tension. No it won't. What is it that you do constantly without even knowing and thinking about it? Breathing.

How many of you find breathing to be a tension? Well you need to go and see a doctor then. Something's wrong with you. Normal healthy people don't find breathing to be a tension.

People who have asthma or some sickness like that find it, but normal healthy people don't find breathing to be a tension. You've been breathing for so many years and it wasn't a tension for you. When prayer becomes like that, you've understood what prayer is.

Otherwise you will listen to some great man of God, read his biography and follow that guy. I praise God for those men when I say I follow Jesus. And I'll follow every man who follows Jesus, who can show it to me from scripture that I should pray six hours a day or two hours a day or five minutes a day.

But I'm not going to follow somebody's testimony. Years ago I decided I will not follow a man if I don't find him showing me in scripture why I should do that. I don't care how great a man of God he is.

I don't care who he is. And when you are poor in spirit, you will pray always. Your life will be one of constant dependence upon God.

In the Old Testament we read this verse, Proverbs chapter 8. You see why is this important? Because we read it's only such people who possess the kingdom of heaven. That's how we can get heaven into our

lives. And I've been desperate for years to have heaven in my life.

I say Lord I want your will to be done in my life like it is done in heaven. I want the atmosphere of heaven to permeate and flood my being more and more and more as each year goes by. I want to be more at rest every year.

I want to have greater joy next year than I had this year. I want to have greater peace and total freedom from discouragement, total freedom from condemnation, total freedom from depression. It's amazing whenever I've spoken words like this, there are always people who say, ah but it is not possible.

Brother Zach have you heard of clinical depression and all these excuses. They are always trying to find some way out of disobeying God's word which says rejoice in the Lord always. I say I don't care what sickness you have.

Will a sickness prevent you from obeying God's word? That's my question. Then we have to make an exception. Paul should have said rejoice in the Lord always except those who have clinical depression.

Well you can add that to the word of God if you like but I'm not going to do it. According to your faith be it unto you. If you feel that's the level you're going to live, live there brother, sister.

I will not live there. I believe in a great big almighty God, not a wee teeny weeny God who can't help me with little problems in life. Many believers, I'll tell you honestly, they believe in a huge devil who's doing this and doing that and causing confusion, everything the devil's doing and they believe in a teeny weeny Jesus who's sitting around helplessly wondering what to do.

That's why our life is so defeated and depressed and gloomy. That's why we think there are problems he cannot solve. Stop thinking of a great big devil.

And there are some people I've met also believers always saying get away Satan, get away Satan, get away Satan. Do you see Jesus always saying get away Satan, get away Satan? He's said it only twice in his life. Once to the devil and once to somebody who voiced the devil's words.

Don't think it's very spiritual to keep on saying get behind me Satan, get behind me Satan. I don't waste my time doing that. Then you make the devil very big.

Instead of wasting time talking to the devil, talk to God. And you'll find that if you really walk with God, God will allow the devil to test you. He allowed the devil even to test Jesus.

I'm not saying he won't attack you, but you won't be concentrating on him. It's not we run the race looking at the devil, we run the race looking unto Jesus. So remember that.

In Proverbs chapter 8 it says, verse 34, blessed is the man who listens to me like a beggar at the gates of our houses, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my door posts, and waiting at my door posts. For such a person finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. I want to be one of those blessed men who wait on the Lord, poor in spirit.

Lord, I can't live without you. I need you right from the time I get up. It's like that prayer I heard somebody say, Lord, for the last eight hours I have not sinned in thought, word, or deed.

But now I'm waking up, Lord, and I need help every moment. From the time we wake up, every moment we need help. Lord, keep me, keep me.

I'm waiting at your gate. The message Bible says, blessed is the man who listens to me, awake and ready for me each morning, alert and responsive as I start my day's work. This is the man who is poor in spirit.

The man who is poor in spirit doesn't say, oh, I'm so busy, brother. I don't have time to read the Bible. I don't have time to listen to God, because life is such a rush.

It's not because it's such a rush. It's because you're not poor in spirit, that's all. You feel that you can handle everything yourself.

Why do you need God? You don't need to listen to God. You're a smart, clever fellow. You've got a lot of intelligence.

Well, all the best, brother. You're going to be one of those people who get depression, clinical or otherwise. But if you listen to God and depend on him, because you say, Lord, I'm so helpless.

I'm dependent on you. I need you every moment. Every moment, I need you, Lord.

It becomes, after a while, in the beginning, it can be a strain to develop. It's like learning to swim. You see, the person who is just learning to swim today is struggling.

But after some time, you see the guy swimming across, it's almost effortless. If a guy lies on his back as if the gravity is not even pulling him down. He's learned how to be at rest in a swimming pool, where everybody else is drowning.

This guy is at rest. That's how our life will be. But in the beginning, it will be a struggle.

And the earlier you start as a Christian learning this, the better. I mean, I'll tell you, it's much easier to learn swimming when you're 4 years old than when you're 40 years old. And it's much easier to enter into this life in the early stages of your Christian life than much later, after we have developed so many bad habits.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. It's one of the first, it's the very first sentence in the Sermon on the Mount. It should have been the very first thing your teachers taught you when you were born again.

I remember when we started our church in our home 35 years ago, we went frequently into the Sermon on the Mount, for one reason. Because at the end of the Sermon, Jesus said, if you listen to these words of mine and do them, your life will be built on an unshakable rock. Your home will be built on an unshakable rock.

Your church will be built on an unshakable rock. We wanted that. We didn't want a shakable life and a shakable home and a shakable church.

So we said, okay, we'll start learning. And what does it mean to be poor in spirit? We can possess the kingdom. And I can tell you honestly, it's been a wonderful experience to possess more and more of heaven, of the spirit and the atmosphere of heaven.

It is your birthright. Jesus died on the cross that you might have that, that you might live in peace at home with your wife and your husband and with your brothers and sisters in the church. And there's only one

reason why it doesn't happen.

Either one or both people are not poor in spirit. What is the most important requirement for fellowship? You may say it's love. But one will say, I love, but the other fellow doesn't love me.

You say it's holiness. One person says, I'm holy, but the other person is not holy. You may say humility.

That also one person says, I am humble, brother, but the other fellow is not humble. But poor in spirit. The moment a man says, I'm poor in spirit, but he is not, he's not poor in spirit.

Because a person who's poor in spirit doesn't check up whether other people are poor in spirit. The humble person can try and think, yeah, I'm humble. He's got a false humility there.

He's checking up whether other people are humble. Poor in spirit means I'm aware of my own need. Haven't you seen the beggars who come to your house? Are they begging for somebody else? No, they're begging for themselves.

That's how we are to go to God. Lord, I'm the needy person. I'm not here to find out whether somebody else is needy.

I'm the needy person. I'll never forget the story I heard of a God-fearing sister who had an unconverted husband who would trouble her, trouble her, trouble her frequently. And one day he gave her a yelling and I don't know what else and banged the door and went out of the house.

And he knew that his wife would always pray, pray whenever she faced a problem and she had the habit of praying aloud. So what he did, he sneaked around the house to the bedroom window to listen to his wife praying. What do you think his wife was praying? She was praying aloud and he heard it.

Not convert my husband, but Lord, show me where I have failed as a wife that my husband is like this. Show me how I can be a better wife. And that broke him.

It broke him. He got converted. God uses the weak and the helpless, not the strong-armed.

I've seen many wives who preach to their husbands and I tell them, your husband will never be converted in a hundred years because you're a preacher. You don't have a meek and a quiet spirit. If you're lucky, he may be converted on his deathbed after living a useless life.

But if you had been a better wife, 1 Peter 3, 1 says, you could convert your husband without speaking a word. That's amazing, a wife who can convert her husband without speaking a word. You read that in 1 Peter chapter 3. She's not a preacher.

She's got a meek and a quiet spirit. But many people don't understand that. Do you know what it means to be poor in spirit? That's why we don't have more of heaven in our life.

That's why we complain, all complaining, murmuring, grumbling, which are not God's will, those are not God's ways. If you want to know how angry God was with such things in the Old Testament, let me show you 1 Corinthians chapter 10. In the Old Testament, a lot of things, okay, God overlooked.

But it says here in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, there are certain sins mentioned here. Verse 7, do not be idolaters. Do you understand that? Sure.

Do not be idolaters. Comparing, you know, he's talking about the people who came out of Egypt, who came through the Red Sea. You read in verse 2, 3 onwards.

And, but with many of them, verse 5, God was not well pleased and they were destroyed in the wilderness. And that's written as an example for us. What is that? Some of them were idolaters.

Don't be that. Some of them acted immorally, verse 8. Don't do that. We can understand all that.

Don't tempt the Lord, like they did, verse 9. And then, verse 10, don't grumble. That has happened to them as an example. God destroyed them because they grumbled.

Saying, why doesn't God give us this? As if we have a right. The only thing we have a right to get from God is to be sent to hell. Once you realize that, you'll see that everything else is God's mercy.

I think, you know, the trouble with a lot of believers I've found is they have not been deeply convinced right at the beginning of their life that they are the worst of all sinners and deserve to go to hell. I thank God for the time in my life when God showed me that my heart was corrupt and filthy, even though externally my life may have been good, it was absolutely, totally corrupt till I could see myself, honestly I could see myself as the filthiest sinner of all. I can understand how Paul spontaneously said, I am the chiefest of all sinners.

I want to ask you my brothers and sisters, many of you have been believers for a long time. Has there ever, ever, ever once been a time in your life, once, when you felt you were the greatest sinner in the whole world? If you have never felt like that, I say you are probably a million miles away from God. You are not anywhere near God.

Don't fool yourself. You are religious, yes. You know a lot of the Bible.

You are very zealous for a lot of doctrines, but you don't know God. I'll tell you straight to your face, you don't know God, because you have never felt you are the greatest sinner of all. I'll stand before God today and say, I have felt like that numerous times in my life, and not in the ancient past, even recently.

The closer you get to God, the more you realize what tremendous corruption there is in your heart. It's the man who is far away from God who thinks he is pure. I can understand why Paul said, Christ Jesus came to the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.

He did not say, I was the chief of sinners 30 years ago. He said, I am. And it's when people are aware of that, that they really become holy, because they are broken.

A holiness without brokenness will make you a legalist. Remember that. A holiness without brokenness will make you a legalist.

You will be religious. You will not be holy. True holiness always brings brokenness.

Such brokenness, because you see the corruption in your heart as you come close to God. And you are poor in spirit, and you say, Lord, I am the needy person. I wait before you because I am in such terrific need.

And one mark of it will be, you will be tremendously compassionate to other people who fail. I know the days when I was a legalist. I am not throwing stones at anybody.

I am not qualified to throw stones at legalists, because I was a legalist myself for many years. And Jesus said, he who is without sin, throw the first stone. I don't qualify.

I cannot pick up a stone. But I'll tell you from my own experience, I was a legalist in the days when I never saw the corruption of my own heart. But when I began to see it, when I could say like Paul, in my flesh dwells nothing good.

In my flesh dwells nothing good. I was a legalist in the days when I was a legalist. When you've seen that, not quoting a verse.

Paul was not quoting a verse. We quote a verse. Ah, that is Romans 7.18. Paul was not quoting Romans 7.18. He was giving his testimony.

In my flesh dwells nothing good. And when that becomes your testimony, because you've seen it, not because you read it in Romans 7. Supposing it was not written in Romans 7. Would you say it? I would say it. If it was never written anywhere in scripture, I would say, Lord, I see very clearly in my life, dwells nothing good in me.

But it was not like that in the early days. I thought there was a lot of good in me. Till I saw in my flesh there dwells nothing good.

And that's when I began to understand true holiness. That's when I began to understand heavenliness in our life. That is to be poor in spirit.

God has to reduce us to zero before he can do something. And with many people he has not succeeded in reducing them to zero. And that's why he's not able to give them more of heaven.

And one mark of that, as I said, is one mark of a legalistic person. He's very judgmental of others. Very quick to criticize and find fault in other people.

I know sisters in our church in CFC. Some new lady comes to the meeting and they'll immediately ask, why are you wearing ornaments sister? These are the biggest legalists of all. Why are you still going to the Catholic church? Why do you worship Mary? These are all legalists.

Do you think such people have seen the corruption of their own heart? No. They are here to find fault with others. They are the great holy people.

They never bring one person to Christ. They'll make more people religious like them. They'll never make people holy.

Does it mean I endorse the worship of Mary or worship of idols? No, I don't. But I say I'm interested in saving this person, not in condemning this person. How did Jesus deal with the woman caught in adultery? Did he say, tell me all the people you committed adultery with? Was he interested in all that? No.

How did Jesus deal with the woman who had been divorced five times in Samaria? And he was the holiest of all. There was no corruption in his flesh. How do we deal with, supposing you met a woman who was divorced five times and now sleeping with a man who is not even her husband.

How would you deal with her? We who are so full of corruption, we have no right to pick up a stone and throw it at anybody. We're full of stones in our hands. I'm ashamed of the brothers and sisters who got

stones in their hands in CFC.

I say to them, you need to find another church. You need to get out of CFC and don't spoil CFC's name anymore with your legalism and your religiosity and the stones in your hand. Go and join some other church and corrupt that church if you like.

This is not the place for you. CFC is a place for people who have seen their own need and not those who have got big eyes to see the need of other people. Imagining yourself to be some prophet, a prophetess.

You're a prophetess alright, but a false prophetess, a Jezebel. Blessed are the poor in spirit. They are the ones who lead people to genuine holiness.

We're not quick to accuse like the devil, but quick to pray and have compassion. That's what Jesus once said to the Pharisees. Turn to this verse in Matthew's Gospel.

We need to take these words seriously. Matthew's Gospel and Chapter 9. The Pharisees asked his disciples, verse 11, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? Why are you friendly with your unconverted relatives? Why do you go and visit the homes of your unconverted relatives? Don't you know they are sinners? Don't you know they are idolaters? Don't you know they've got so many wrong doctrines? Jesus said, verse 13, go and learn the meaning of this verse in your Bible. I desire compassion, not all your sacrifices.

I desire compassion. There are thousands of believers who need to hear that word from Jesus. Go and learn the meaning of I desire compassion.

It'll come automatically when you're poor in spirit. Poor in spirit doesn't mean we tolerate sin. We never tolerate sin.

And if there's a church that preaches against sin, we do it more than anybody else. But a hardness of heart is one of the worst sins of all. We have to become poor in spirit.

You've often heard me say that the first book that God wrote in the Bible was the book of Job. It's the only book in all the 66 books of the Bible which has no reference to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Job had no connection with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

All the other 65 books have some connection with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the way to Revelation, except Job. Because Job lived before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And since Moses wrote Genesis, that is, for 500 years after Abraham, Job lived before Moses.

So which was the first book of the Bible written? Job. I believe he wrote it himself. The reason I say that is, you read it and you see all those detailed conversations.

Can you remember a conversation you had with somebody even one year ago? I can't. Can somebody else remember? I can't. I can't remember.

I can't remember. It was Job himself who wrote it, except perhaps the last few verses, completed by somebody else after he died, but otherwise he wrote that. And when you see that the first book of the Bible, which God wrote, was about a man, a man who feared God, a man who brought up his children properly, who had ten children, who prayed for them regularly, a man who was attacked by Satan, a man who was criticized by legalistic preachers.

This is the first book man wrote, that God wrote. A man who was attacked by the devil with sickness, and God allowed it. God allowed it.

A man about whom God could boast to the devil. I learn a lot from the book of Job. I say, Lord, I see how interested you are in me from the first book you wrote, that you want me to be a man whom you can boast about to the devil.

He wants you to be that. The devil says there, I've been going around all the world, and then God says, that's fine, you've been going around the world, but have you seen this person? That's what God wants to say about you and me to the devil. Not that this person belongs to this church.

Many of us boast that, I belong to this church, we preach holiness. It's no use brother, sister. Can God boast about you by name? Not which church you go to, not who is your leader, but you.

Can God pick up your name and tell the devil, okay, you've seen so many hypocrites among the believers, but have you seen that girl? Have you seen that boy? Have you seen that young man? Have you seen that young woman? They are different. I learn that from Job. And then the devil says, yeah, but Job is doing all that because you have blessed him in so many ways.

And God says, okay, take it all away, take away his wealth, take away his children, finally even take away his health. Why did God allow all that? I remember a preacher once, I don't know who it was, I read somewhere speaking about this. He says, in those days, the devil said, take away all those, take away his wealth and let's see whether he follows you.

But he says in this 21st century, the devil's become a little cleverer and says to God, Lord, these believers are following you because they are poor. They have a lot of need, but increase their salary, give them good jobs, give them 40,000, 50, 60,000 rupees a month, then let's see whether they follow you. Give them houses and cars and everything else, then let's see whether they are wholehearted.

No, they'll start watching movies then. They won't pray as much. And I tell you, it's true.

Is it true in your life that when you had little, you sought God, but now the devil says, give him more, give him more, give her more, give her plenty. And the devil's been proved right that when you got plenty, you drifted away from God. Why did God allow Job to go through all those things? Because with all the good qualities he had, there was one thing he lacked.

If you turn to the book of Job, I want to show you something there in Job chapter 29 and 31. What an amazing life this man lived. In Old Testament times, without a Bible, without any knowledge of Jesus, without any fellowship, without any conferences, all by himself.

Some of you may be like that in a lonely place and say, oh brother, some people complain, brother, you don't know brother Zach, the church in our place is pretty dead. The elder is boring. How can I grow spiritually? Job didn't even have such a church.

He didn't have an elder. He didn't have any meetings. How did he become spiritual? You know, it's very easy to excuse your carnality by blaming your elder, who preaches boring sermons, by blaming your church.

Say, oh, if I were in a church where everybody is wholehearted and listens to fine sermons every Sunday, I'd be spiritual. It's not true. Come and sit in CFC a few years and see.

You'll find everybody here is not spiritual. Far from it. Job was all alone.

No fellowship, no church, no Bible, no Holy Spirit, but look at his life. He says this, verse Job chapter 29, I delivered the poor who cried for help, the orphan who had no helper. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.

Verse 15, I was a father to the needy. Verse 16, 29, 16, and so on. See chapter 31, verse 1, I made a covenant with my eyes that I would not gaze at a virgin.

Remember, Job is a grandfather when he's saying this. He's not some young man. Even when he was young, he made a covenant with his eyes.

I'm not supposed to look at other women. I'm supposed to look at my wife. He didn't read Matthew chapter 5. He didn't even have a Bible.

The first mention of lusting with the eyes is in the first book of the Bible by a man who didn't have a Bible. Today we have Christians who got their Bible in so many languages and still don't do what Job did. It's because even though we have the Bible, we don't have the fear of God.

We're not poor in spirit. We don't have a sense of need saying, Lord, I need your help every day. How can I gaze at a virgin? And he says, verse 9, if my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, then may my wife be exploited by another person.

He says, every man who's fooling around or looking at other women, would you be able to say, Lord, if I'm lusting after women, let my wife be exploited by some other man. Would you want that? Here's a man. If I've despised, verse 13, the claim of my slaves, and forget that God sees everything.

Many things. It's a wonderful life this man lived, but there was one thing he lacked. He was not poor in spirit.

He was proud of his righteousness. And I fear, my brothers and sisters, that many who are pursuing holiness are proud of what they have attained. They are proud of, I brought up my children right.

They are not wayward like that fellow's children. I belong to a good church. I'm living a godly life.

It's all good. But your pride ruins the whole thing. Like I say, it's like making a beautiful chicken curry, and then putting a dead lizard inside it.

Spoils the whole thing. Your wonderful holy life, and then you're proud of it. That's like putting a dead lizard inside a chicken curry.

That's what most people who are holy do. Job was like that. He had a wonderful holy life.

He cared for the poor. He didn't lust with his eyes. He was faithful to his wife.

Later on he says, I didn't make gold, my God. I didn't pursue after money. Wonderful man in every possible area, but he was proud of it.

And that's the one thing that God wanted to break down in him. And God succeeded, finally. In chapter 40, Job finally says, you know the whole book is full of Job's argument.

I'm like this, I'm like this, I'm like this. How can you not allow, how can you allow all these things to happen to me when I've lived such a godly life? Do you ever have an argument like that? Lord, I've lived such a godly life. How can you allow this problem to come into my life? How can you allow this problem to come into my family? If I were a wayward sinner or something, I can experience this, but I've been such a godly holy person.

How can you allow this financial problem to come into my home? How can you allow this sickness to come to my home? Such a holy person like me. You're like Job. That's exactly what he said.

How can you allow me to be sick? I'm not like these other fellows. I'm a holy man. And you don't see your lack of holiness there.

But finally God succeeded in breaking Job and he shut his mouth and he said, Job 40 verse 4, Lord I'm insignificant. I will lay my hand on my mouth. I've spoken once and twice.

I have nothing more to say. You can do whatever you like. I will not question.

That is the man who was poor in spirit. You know the man who says, Jesus said, when you have done every single thing that you have been commanded, Luke 17, at the end of it say, I'm an unprofitable servant. I want to ask you a question, brothers, sisters.

Many of us have been related to CFC churches for a long, long time. And I believe that many of us have kept God's commandments. Many commandments which you did not keep when you first came to CFC.

Some of your sisters are pretty proud that you have removed your ornaments, obeyed God, not to wear any gold. You veil your heads like God-fearing sisters. Many good things.

You don't watch dirty movies. You don't watch bad television programs. You could make a list like Job chapter 29 and chapter 31.

But at the end of it all, it's all good. I'm not saying it's bad. It's all good.

You've got a wonderful righteousness in every area. But at the end of it, what do you say? Luke 17 and verse 10. It's an amazing verse.

Jesus himself said, when you have done every single thing that I commanded, when you have done every single thing that I've commanded, say, we are unworthy slaves. We are unprofitable servants. We have only done what we should have done.

We have not done anything extra. So, I don't deserve anything, but I'm an unprofitable, unworthy slave. I want to ask you an honest question, my brothers and sisters.

Is that really your attitude today? Do you find in your heart a feeling, I'm an unworthy slave? Do you look at other people like an unworthy slave of Jesus Christ, who's getting mercy upon mercy upon mercy, which I don't deserve? That's the place to which God wants to bring us. That's to be poor in spirit. The kingdom of heaven is yours.

Your life will become heavenly. That's the place to which God wanted to bring Job, and he succeeded. Because Job went on to say, in chapter 42, he says, Lord, I take back everything I said.

Job 42, I only heard about you by all these preachers till now. That was a problem. He heard about God from the preachers, and that did not bring him to repentance.

Verse 5, but now I see you. It's when we see the Lord that we repent, not when we hear preachers. Now I see you, and I retract.

I retract means, Lord, all those things that I said, I take it all back. I repent in dust and ashes, and the Lord restored the fortunes of Job. But the Lord is angry with those preachers, and if you read what the preacher said, the preacher said many right things about God, but he said, you have not spoken about me what is right.

Verse 8, I want you to read the scripture carefully. When the Lord told Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, you have not spoken about me what is right. Let me give you a little homework.

Go back to the book of Job and read all the things that these three people said. You will not find one thing wrong. What did God mean when he said, you have not spoken about me what is right? Try and find what they spoke wrong about God.

Their spirit was not right. That's what God is trying to see in you and me. It's not whether you've got your doctrines right and you're preaching the right thing.

Your spirit is not right. Your spirit is that of a critic and an accuser, even when you're saying the right thing, and that's the spirit of Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz. Whereas Job, who said so many wrong things, in one sentence he took it all out, and God says, verse 8, my servant Job has spoken the right thing.

You know who speaks the right thing? The one who says, Lord, I'm insignificant. I repent in dust and ashes. That's the person who speaks the right thing, and the person who gives the big lectures about God, like these other three preachers.

He will say to you, man or woman, you have not spoken about me the right thing. Do you know the ways of God? You think because you speak the right thing, God is very proud of you. He's ashamed of you, because even though you speak the right thing, you don't have the right spirit of compassion and humility.

You have the spirit of the accuser. A person who is poor in spirit is quick to see his own fault. He's reluctant to pass an opinion about another person.

If we expose the wrong teaching, it's not because we compare that preacher with ourselves, we compare that preacher with Jesus, and say Jesus wouldn't do that. Jesus wouldn't do what that television preacher is doing. That's against the word of God.

We're not comparing them with us or our church, comparing them with scripture. But these three preachers are accusing Job, you're not like this, you're not like this. Be careful, my brothers and sisters, that we don't have that spirit.

That may be the reason why all these years, despite all the messages you heard, despite all the conviction you felt you had, you haven't possessed more of heaven. Ask your wife whether she has seen more of heavenliness in your conduct at home. Ask your husband whether he has seen more of heavenliness in

your conduct at home.

It's not what you appear in church, that's all whitewash. But what's underneath that whitewash, your wife will tell you, your son will tell you, your daughter will tell you, your maidservant will tell you, better than anybody else, how much heavenliness there is in your life. It's true, the Bible says in the book of Proverbs, that if you have those who care for animals, even their animals will know if there's heavenliness in a person, their master.

It's an amazing verse. When heavenliness comes into your life, even the animals say, hey, what happened to my master? Your maidservant, your son, your daughter, your wife, your husband will all sense something is happening. This person is changing, because he's become poor in spirit.

Those are God's ways. Holiness without brokenness will make you a legalist. Don't ever forget that, brothers and sisters.

Make sure that the holiness we pursue after is a holiness with brokenness. May God deal with us as he dealt with Job, where we come to the place where we say, Lord, I'm insignificant. I'm nobody.

The Bible says if anybody thinks he's a somebody when he's a nobody, he's deceiving himself. And then even when we have to correct somebody, we will do it graciously and in humility, seeking not to condemn that person, but to lift that person higher to a more godly life. I feel there's a lot of evangelism and witnessing.

Here's a tract, here's a tract. Okay, now your blood is not on my hands. That's not the spirit of Christ.

Jesus didn't come to the earth and say, okay, I'll preach to you. Now, fellas, if you go to hell, it's your responsibility. That's how a lot of evangelism and witnessing is done by a lot of people today.

I don't want to be responsible for this person's blood, this person's blood. Here you are. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world.

And if you want to find out, ask yourself this question. How many people have you brought to Christ with all your preaching? Hardly anybody. How many people have joined your church because of you? Zero? I'll tell you why.

You go around condemning people, not saving them. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save them. And you condemn people because you're not poor in spirit yourself.

But this is the time to change. May God help us. It's Bob before God.

A message will not change you. A message can stir you. A message and any change will only be temporary for a few hours or a few days.

But if you see Jesus, you will be changed. Job said, I heard about you with my ear, but now I see you and I repent. Don't be satisfied with hearing a message.

Say, Lord, I want to see you. I want to see how you lived on earth and I want to be like that. Thank you, Father, for giving us an example in Jesus.

Help us to have our eyes filled with seeing him. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ux3OdkD8Sag.mp4>
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