

Having sought to explain wherein poverty of spirit consists, I want to attempt this afternoon to apply our text by way of three questions...

- I. What is the nature of this kingdom?
- II. Why is the kingdom given to the poor?
- III. How is poverty of spirit to be maintained?

I. What is the nature of this kingdom?

1. If you recall this morning we learned that the nature [or reason] of the saint's blessedness lies in the fact that they are heirs of the kingdom of heaven...
2. In other words to be an heir of the kingdom is the very essence of blessedness—to be a part of His kingdom is to be blessed...
3. Notice several reasons—[1] because it is a present and spiritual kingdom—it concerns the present and spiritual rule of Christ within the hearts of His people...
4. Mk.1:14-15—“now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel [cp. Acts 20:24-25; 28:23, 30-31]...”
5. Notice a few things—[a] the gospel and kingdom are one, v14—“the gospel of the kingdom of God.”—the good news of a king and His kingdom...
6. Notice [b] the kingdom is at hand—“the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand...”—it has come near or close by...
7. The kingdom was near them because the King was before them—in other words, wherever the King goes so does His kingdom...
8. Notice [c] the kingdom is entered by repentance and faith—“repent, and believe in the gospel...”—that is, throw down your weapons and pay homage to the King...
9. Thus the first reason behind the saint's blessedness is the fact that they have presently entered the kingdom and are now ruled by a righteous King...
10. Lk.17:20-21—“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, See here! Or See there! For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you...”
11. Here our Savior describes the basic character or nature of His Kingdom—it is not a physical or visible kingdom...
12. “It does not come with observation”—it is not seen with the eyes—it can not be defined by physical realm or territory...
13. “For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you...”—that is, it is an inward kingdom—the kingdom of God is a spiritual reign...
14. Thus the kingdom that our Savior promises is not something that is merely or purely future—but is a present and spiritual kingdom...
15. But we must be quick to clarify that while it is a spiritual kingdom it remains a real and actual kingdom—Christ sits as king within the hearts of His people...
16. Historically the distinction is made between the kingdom of grace and power—the kingdom of grace concerns God's people and the kingdom of power the entire world...
17. There is a sense in which Christ presently rules over every square inch of this earth, yet this reign is not recognized or submitted to...
18. But the kingdom of grace concerns the people of God, for they and they only are submitting to the rule and reign of Christ...
19. They have been made willing in the day of His power—and they are willingly and joyfully bowing the knee to the King of grace...
20. Thus Christians are blessed because they are presently partakers of Christ' kingdom—they are presently under His kingdom of grace...

21. Prov.29:2—“when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan...”
22. What a blessing it is to be ruled or governed by such a righteous king—this is the very essence of true happiness or blessedness...
23. By nature we are all born into the kingdom of Satan and darkness—we are governed and ruled by the devil...
24. But by grace, we are conquered by King Jesus who takes up residency on the throne of our heart, establishing His kingdom within us...
25. Col.1:13—“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...”
26. Thus in the first place the blessedness associated with the kingdom of heaven is that it is presently established within their souls...
27. Shorter Catechism—Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies...”
28. Notice [2] because it is a joyful and abundant kingdom—that is, as it is ruled by a gracious and benevolent king, it is characterized by joy, peace, and plenty...
29. If the happiness of the people were contingent upon the bounty of the king—how happy are the subjects of the kingdom of heaven...
30. V3—“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...”—they are blessed because they are presently a part of filled with bounty joy...
31. Rom.14:16-17—“therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...”
32. V16 is the practical conclusion to the subject of liberty of conscience begun back in v1—the apostle has been teaching the need to give preference to weak brothers in matters of conscience...
33. V14—“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died...”
34. V16—“therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil...”—that is, don’t insist on your rights so as to bring shame or reproach upon the gospel...
35. V17—“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...”
36. In other words—the kingdom has higher concerns than meat and drink, but is characterized by —“righteousness, peace, and joy...”
37. Oh my dear brethren what a wondrous kingdom is our Savior’s—truly blessed is that man who is a partaker of it...
38. Notice [3] because it is a future and eternal kingdom—here is another reason behind the saints’ blessedness—the kingdom in which he becomes a partaker never ends...
39. Now while I have been jealous to underscore the present and spiritual aspect of the kingdom, we must not overlook its future and spacial aspects...
40. Thus Peter in 2Pet.1:11 spoke about future—“entrance...into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”
41. In theological terms this has been referred to as the kingdom of glory—the eternal reign of Christ within His people in the new heaven and earth...
42. Matt.25:34—“then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...’”
43. Here our Savior is obviously speaking about the future aspect of the kingdom, a kingdom that is both inward and outward...
44. A kingdom where there shall be no enemies whatsoever, neither within our without—a kingdom where everything will be brought beneath the lordship of Christ...

## II. Why is the kingdom given to the poor?

I trust it's apparent that God's ways are not man's ways—for who would bestow a kingdom upon the poor—who would count the poor in spirit blessed—thus let me suggest three reasons why, the kingdom is given to the poor...

A. Only the poor will look elsewhere for riches

1. By nature we are all proud and self-righteous—if the poor in spirit are blessed, we are all born rich in spirit...
2. Rev.3:17—“because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...”—to be rich is to have no need...
3. A proud man will never beg nor will a rich sinner ever seek divine charity—until we are convinced that we have and are nothing, we will think ourselves too good to beg...
4. Watson—“Till we are poor in spirit we are not capable of receiving grace. He who is swollen with an opinion of self-excellency and self-sufficiency, is not fit for Christ. He is full already. If the hand be full of pebbles, it cannot receive gold...”
5. Thus the first thing that the gospel does is make a rich, self-sufficient sinner poor—it turns him upside down—emptying him of his own merit...
6. Let me illustrate—think of a young wealthy man who has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars—thus all of his needs were abundantly met...
7. He had a new big house, two new cars, a very sizable savings and very prosperous business—and thus he had need of nothing...
8. Let's say for the sake of our illustration, that this particular man was also haughty and arrogant—he despised the poor and needy around him...
9. But then one day the economy crashed and he lost all of his investments, savings, property, and business, and was reduced to a poor beggar...
10. Thus he was driven out of his self-sufficiency, and was forced to rely upon the charity and gifts of another...
11. So too, Christ does to a self-righteous and rich sinner—He takes or strips away all of his native merit and worth...
12. Lk.15:11-16—“then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. 12 'And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me.*' So he divided to them *his* livelihood. 13 'And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 'But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 'Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 'And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything...*”
13. Let me finish this point with two inferences—[1] poverty of spirit is necessary to make entrance into the kingdom of God...
14. Matt.18:3—“assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of God...”
15. Notice [2] poverty of spirit is necessary to make progress in the kingdom of God, Matt.18:4—“therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven...”

B. Only in the poverty of spirit does grace shine

1. Why does Christ give His kingdom to poor sinners—but because in such as these His grace shines the brighter...
2. Let me illustrate—lets say there existed a gracious king who ruled over a great kingdom.—and wanting to make known his graciousness he selects one of his subjects to be the target of his royal kindness...
3. In order for his benevolence to be most prominent, would he chose someone who was already rich—lets say perhaps someone already a member of his royal court...
4. No, but instead he would go out into his kingdom and find the poorest, dirtiest and vilest of people—in order that the contrast would magnify his grace all the more...

5. And so too, God has brought in from the highways and along the hedges the poor, crippled, blind and lame—to sit and feast upon the crucified Lamb—to dine upon the fine china of His grace and to drink from the golden goblet of His Spirit...
6. Lk.14:16-24—“then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 "But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' 22 "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper...'”

### C. Only in poverty of spirit is the kingdom adorned

1. By this I mean only the poor in spirit properly represent the King and His kingdom—who are characterized by lowliness and meekness...
2. We shall see in upcoming weeks and months that kingdom dwells are meek, merciful, peaceable, and willing to endure persecution for righteousness' sake...
3. They will be called upon the turn the other cheek and go the extra mile—to forgive those who trespass against them...
4. In short they will be expected to act as did their king before them, who when he was reviled did not revile in turn...
5. Thus if a person is to do all these and more, he must first be emptied of himself—he must no longer be a promoter of his own cause and interest...
6. Do you remember that invitation of our Savior—“come unto me all who weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart...”
7. To enter the kingdom is become a disciple of the King—we are to learn of Him, to imitate Him, who is gentle [meek] and lowly in heart...”
8. Thus a proud and haughty sinner is passed over as a kingdom dweller simply because he is not suited as properly adorning or represent the kingdom...

### III. How is poverty of spirit to be maintained?

1. While all of Christ's subjects are poor in spirit, they also possess the need to increase and maintain their poverty...
2. If the poor in spirit are blessed, then the more they are conscience of their poverty the most blessed they will be...
3. Now I don't think I have to mention that we live at a time when poverty of spirit has all but been neglected in the church...
4. We live in an era where self-esteem and feel good doctrine dominates most pulpits—poverty of spirit is no longer a virtue or asset...
5. Furthermore, we have within us a remaining principle that attempts to convince us of our great worth and merit...
6. Perhaps some of you have heard the voice of this principle this morning when I was opening up the meaning of our text...
7. Thus it becomes necessary for us to be proactive in fighting this evil principle and promoting the grace or virtue of poverty of spirit...
8. Let me briefly suggest a few helps, notice [1] think long and often upon your native poverty—that is, your own native emptiness, guilt, and unworthiness...

9. Think back to an earlier illustration—think of a young orphan boy who was the recipient of a wealthy man’s benevolence...
10. By birth he was a filthy, homeless, orphan, but now he has become a son and heir of a great estate with many riches...
11. How important is it that he never forgets his humble pedigree—for by birth he is no more than a poor beggar, a fact that will never change...
12. All that he has is unmerited—he did nothing to warrant it or get it—he simply received it as a gracious gift...
13. Notice [2] think long and often upon your present riches—to contrast what we are by nature and by grace will do much to humble us...
14. In fact the more we understand what we have been given, the more we will be humbled in the dust as a result...
15. When I consider what I am by nature—a fact that does not change by grace—grace does not change the fact that I am by nature an empty, guilty, and worthless sinner...
16. When we contrast this with what we have in Christ—this I suggest, will be powerful means to foster a poverty of spirit...