

The Blessed Life
Poor in Spirit
Matthew 5:3

God, Be Merciful to Me, A Sinner!

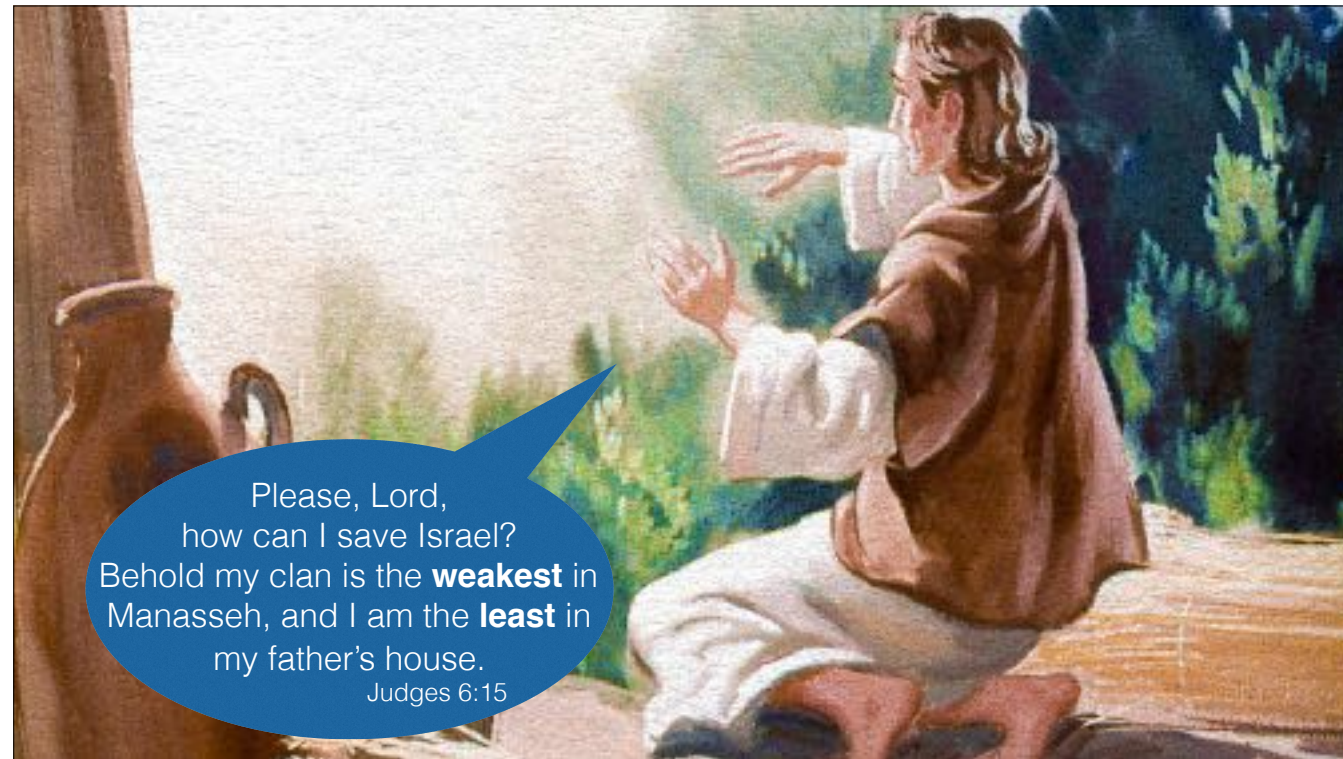
God, Be Merciful to Me, A Sinner



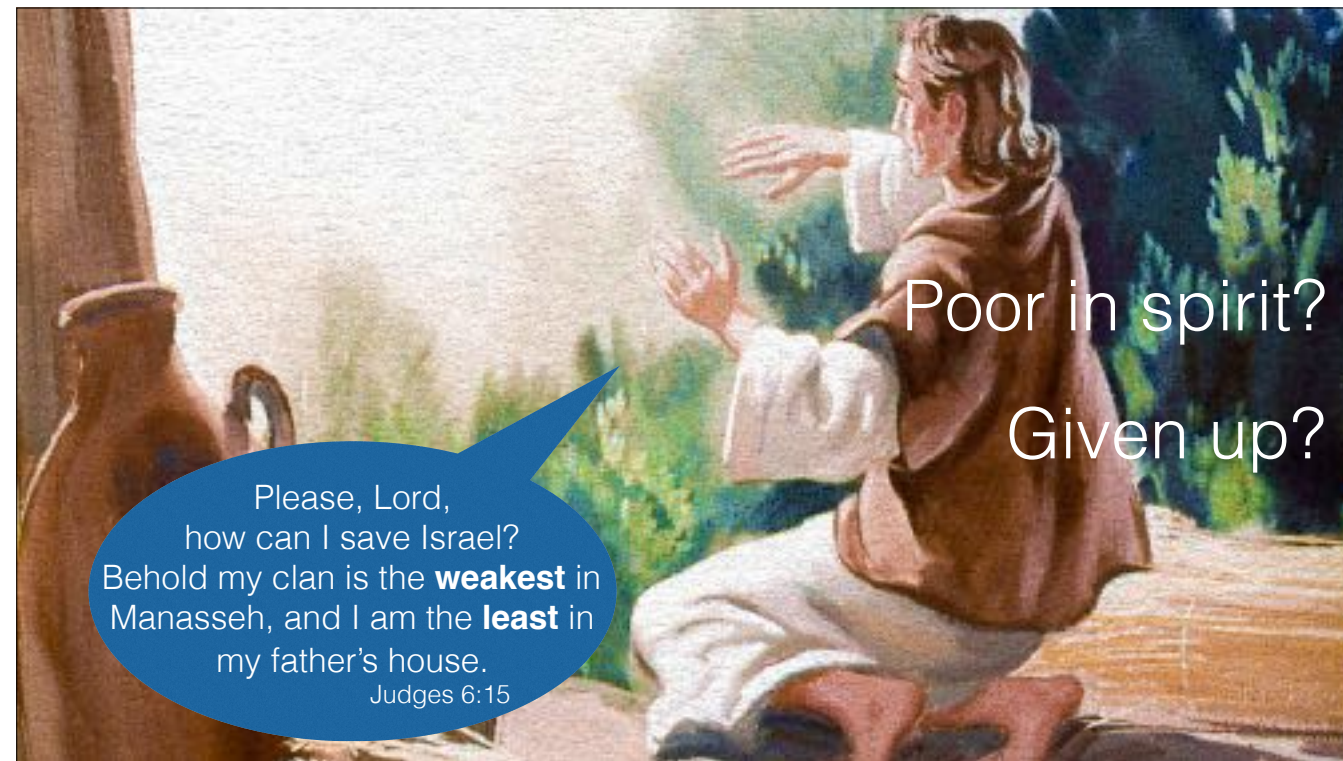
- The Angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon and said: "Jehovah is with you, O mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12).
- Gideon's response to this appellation betrays the deep distress the people of Israel were facing.



- Having turned away from Jehovah, the people had been oppressed for 7 years by the Midianites. Israel was "brought very low" (6), hiding in caves and mountain dens (2).
- So it's not surprising that Gideon questioned the presence of God among Israel (13).



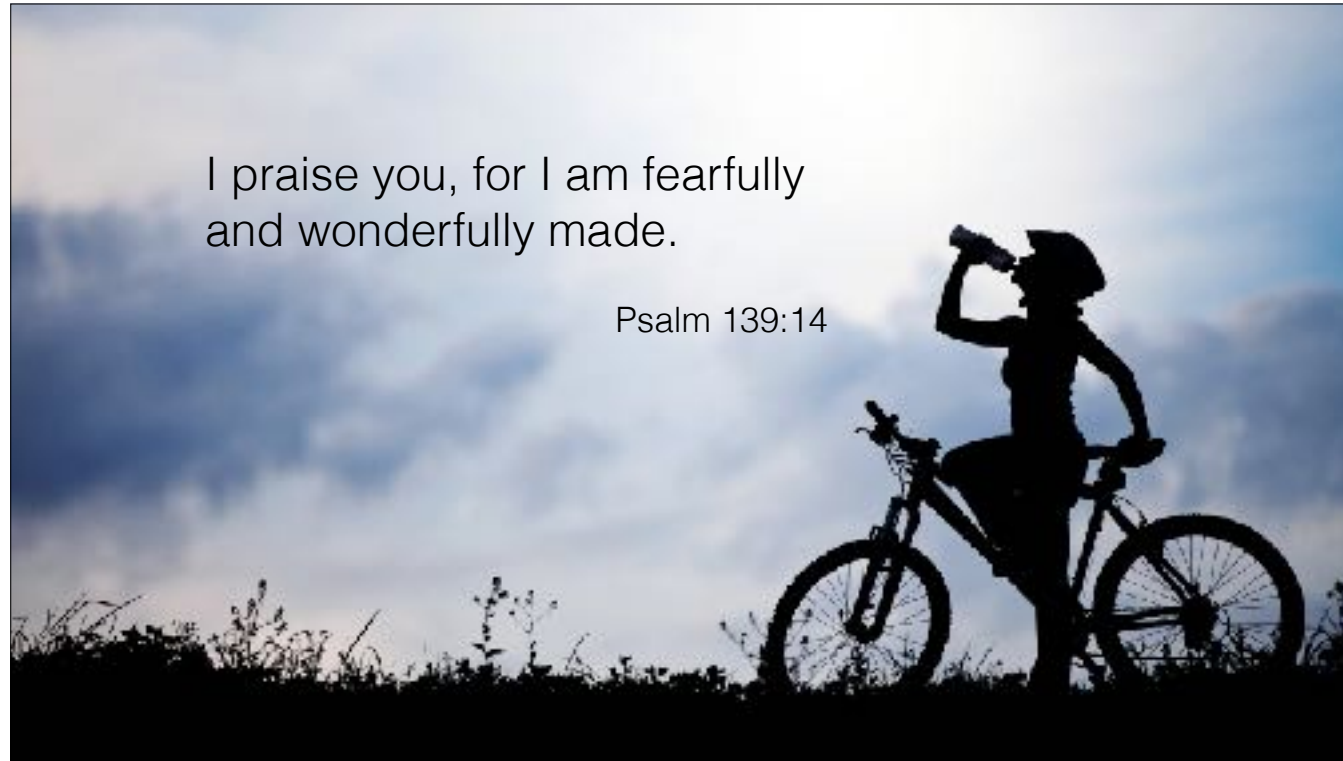
- The Angel of Jehovah told Gideon to use his might and save Israel (14),
- but Gideon couldn't conceive of himself as one who could accomplish this mission: "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (15).



- Is Gideon poor in spirit? humble?
- Or are these the words of a man who had given up?

I praise you, for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.

Psalm 139:14

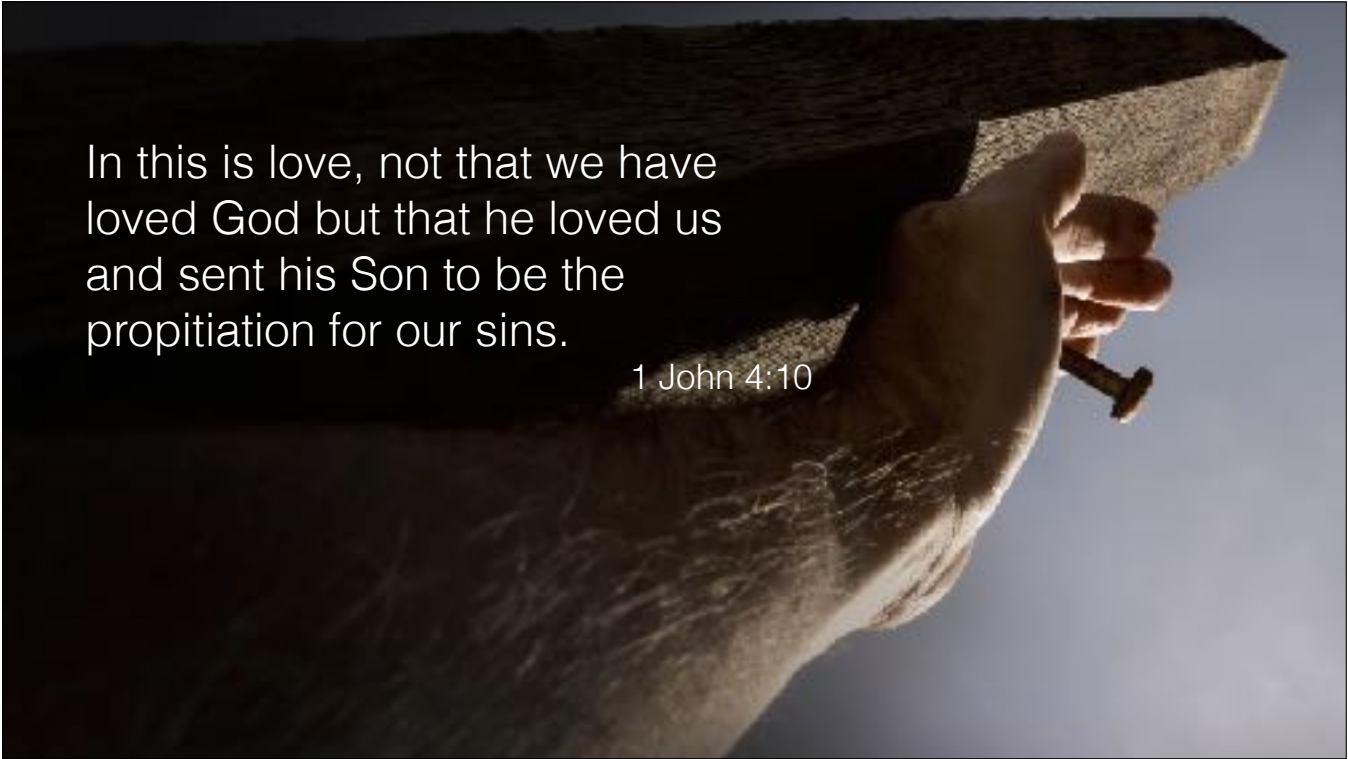


Sometimes when I consider Gideon's words I think that maybe he's forgotten just how special he is in God's eyes. The Psalmist praises Jehovah "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), reminding us that we are created by God, and have inherent worth.



Jesus emphasizes our worth in God's eyes saying that we are "of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7),

Luke 12:5-7: But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden cross against a bright sky. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with fingers wrapped around the cross. The cross is made of light-colored wood and is held horizontally. The background is a clear, bright sky, creating a strong contrast with the dark wood and the hand. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin of the hand.

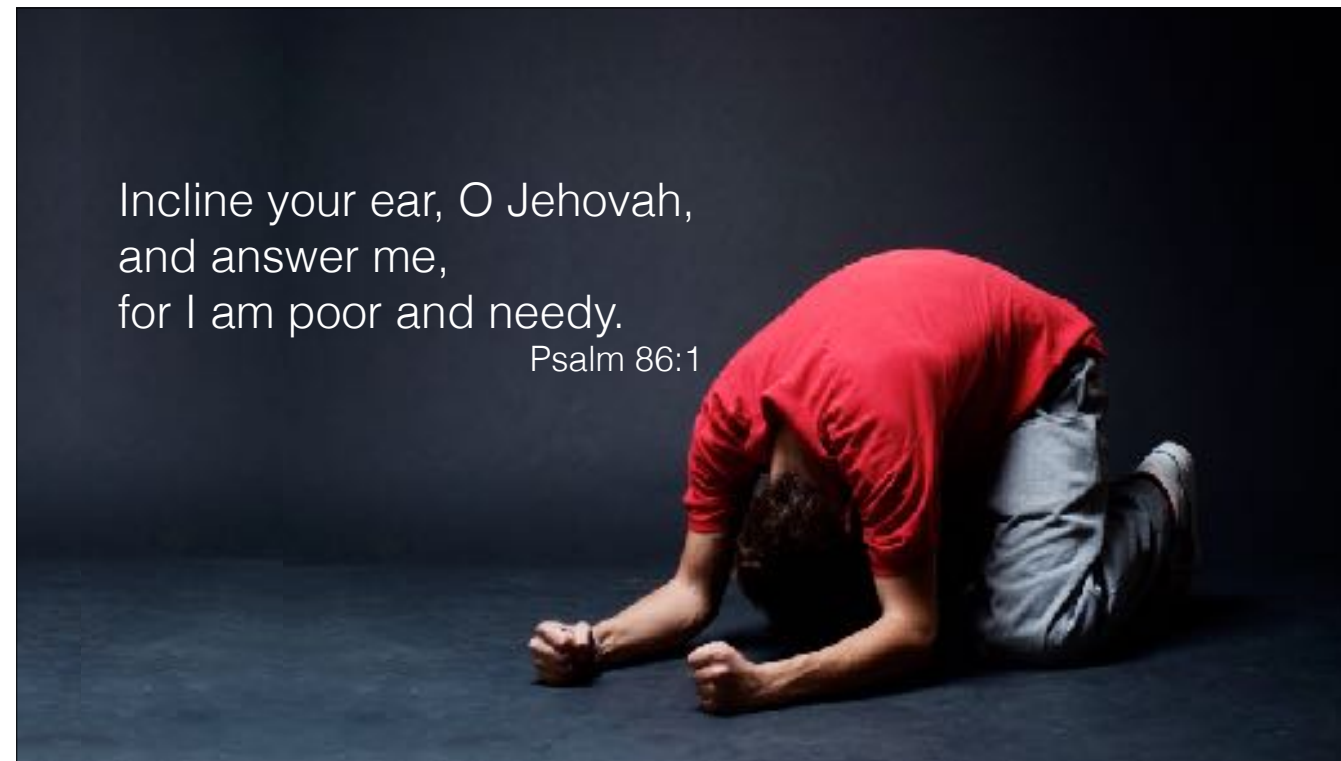
In this is love, not that we have
loved God but that he loved us
and sent his Son to be the
propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:10

and then demonstrating the Father's love by dying on the cross for us (1 John 4:10; Romans 5:6-10).

How great is his love! How much he must value each of us to give his one and only son to save us.

1 John 4:10: In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.



Incline your ear, O Jehovah,
and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
Psalm 86:1

At other times, though the Psalmist cried out to Jehovah: "Incline your ear, O Jehovah, and answer me, for I am poor and needy" (Psalm 86:1).

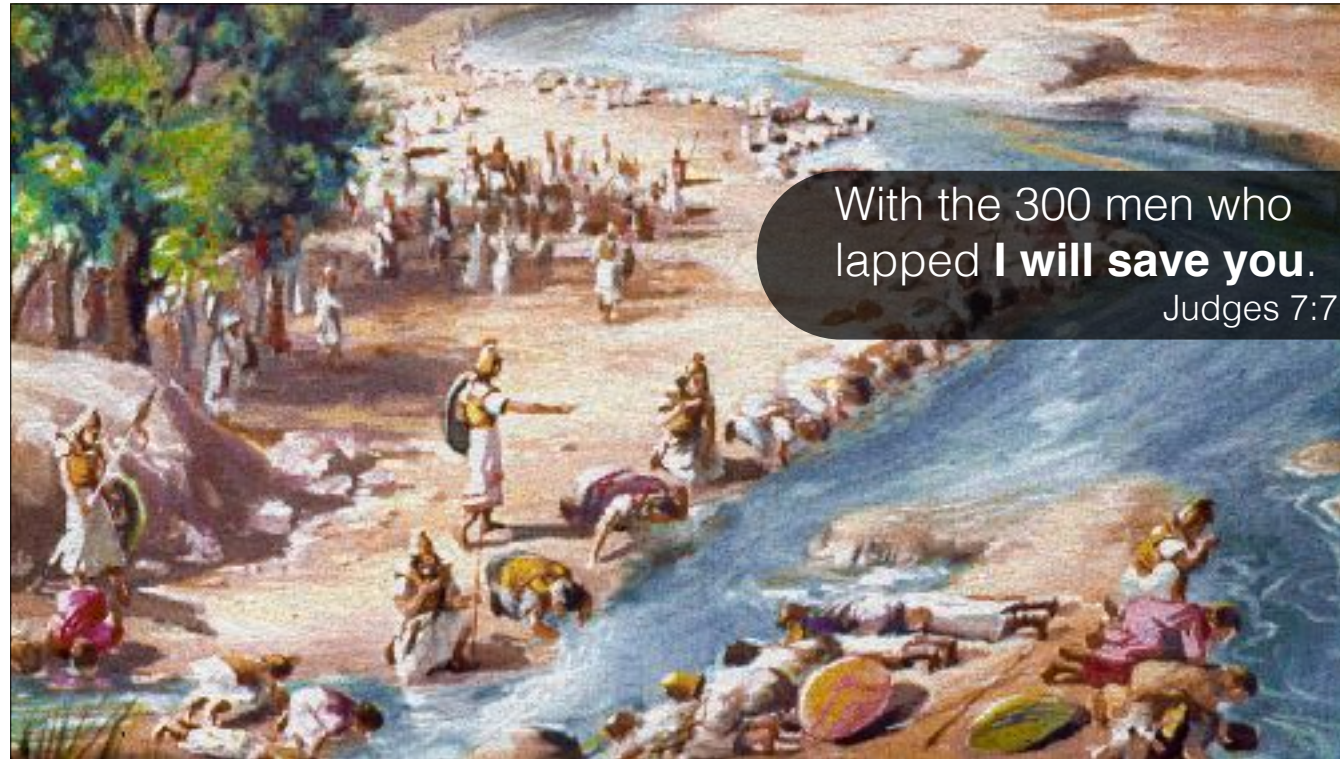
There are times in our lives when our circumstances overwhelm our knowledge of our worth in God's eyes and we can only turn to Him for help. Gideon (and much of Israel) seem to have reached that point.



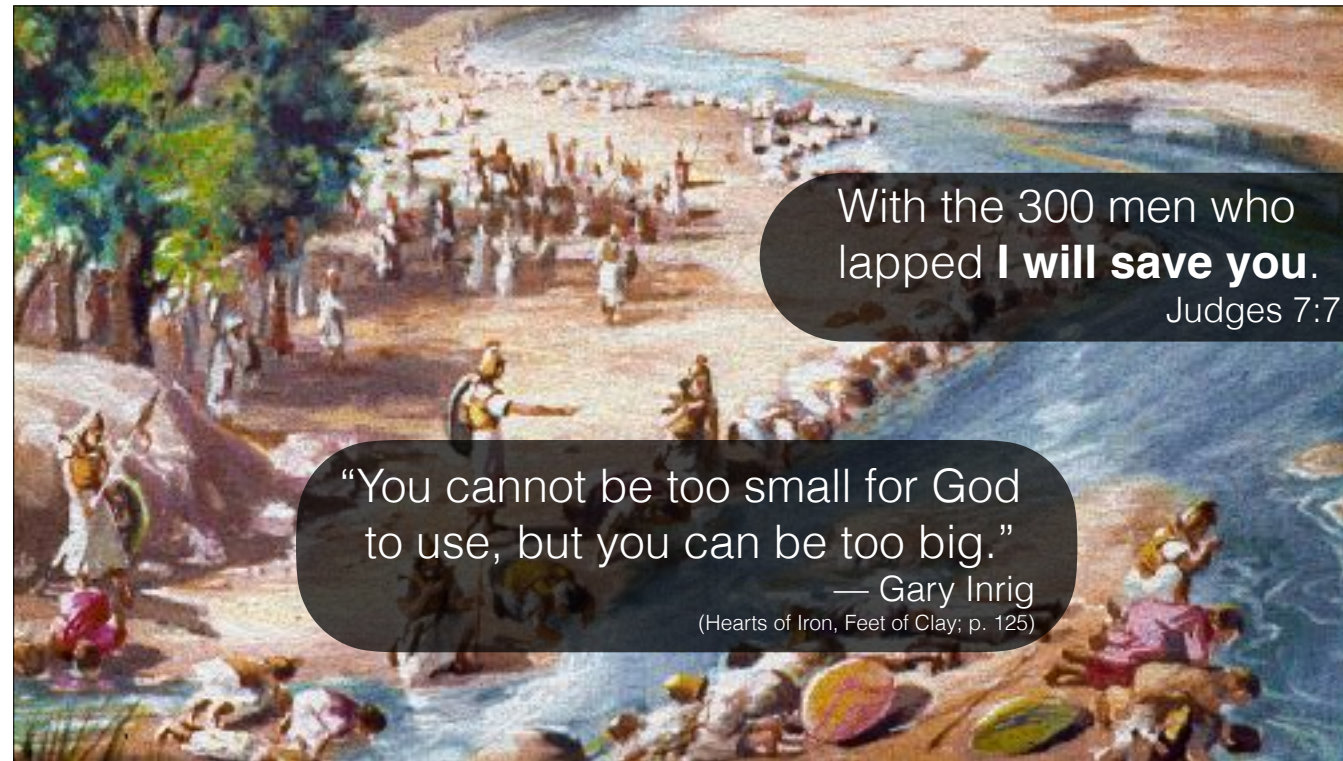
- When it was time for Gideon to save Israel, he was able to gather 32,000 Israelites to go to the battle against the innumerable hosts of Midian.
- But Jehovah declared that was too many people because Israel would boast that they had saved themselves (7:2), so those who were afraid were told to go home.
- That left 10,000. Two-thirds of the Israelite army left!



- But our Father knows our character so well, and told Gideon that the army was still too large, and the army was reduced to a mere 300 men.



- And Jehovah said to Gideon "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you" (7:7).
- Jehovah made sure that when the Midianite army was defeated, everyone would know that it was not Israel's might or wisdom that lead to victory but only the power of Jehovah.



- Gary Inrig said of this "You cannot be too small for God to use, but you can be too big."**

Blessed are the
poor in spirit:
for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.



Blessed are the poor in Spirit

"blessed"

> Happy

= Approved by God



Blessed = to be congratulated, approved by God

Blessed are the
poor in spirit:
for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.



Poor in Spirit



Poor =having nothing

Thayer:

- 1) reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms
- 2) destitute of wealth, influence, position, honour
- 3) lacking in anything



Lenski: cringing, crouching like a beggar. It is stronger than “poor,” it is cringingly, beggarly poor.”

Not just a condition (forced on one?), but an attitude of the soul, a willing submission.



This is more than just realizing your wallet is empty...

wallet is empty, bank accounts are empty, possessions are all gone.

NOTHING.



And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

Luke 16:20-21

Luke 16:20-21: And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, [21] who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

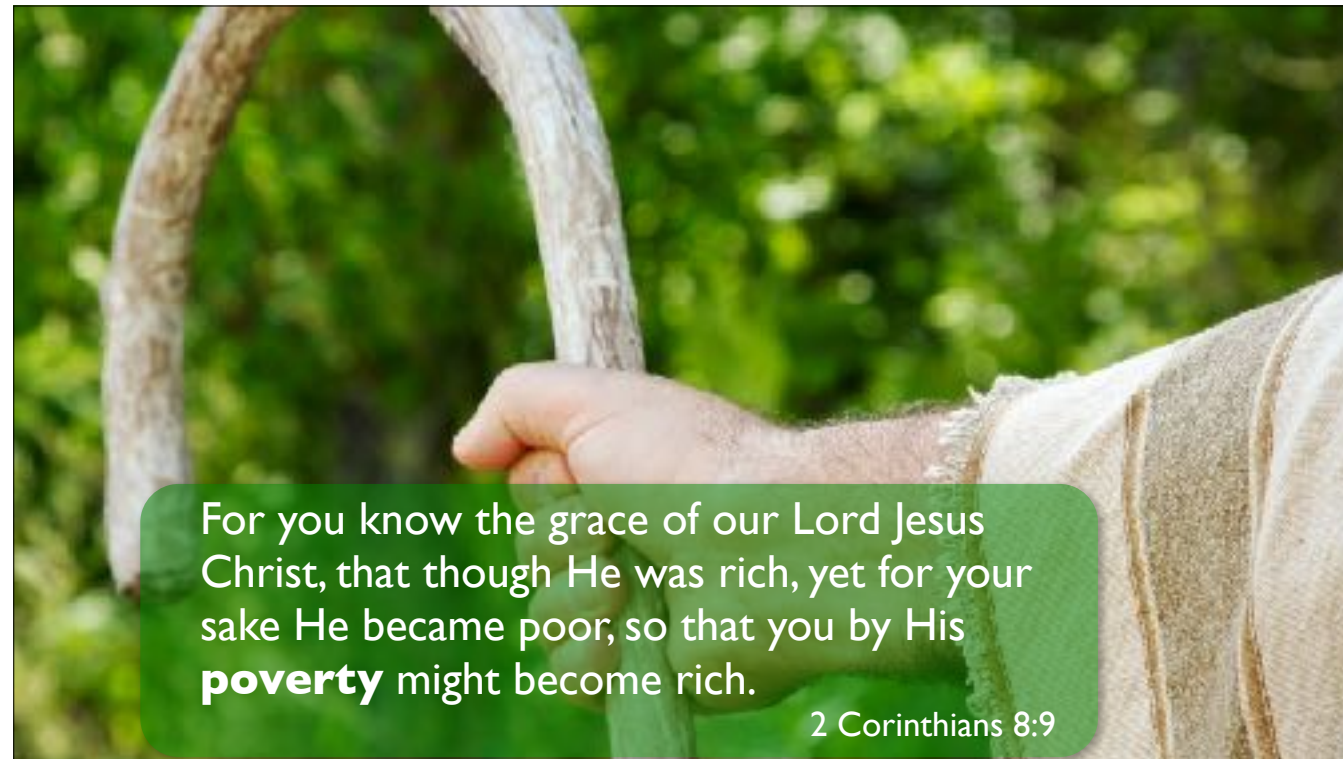


Here it is applied to the sinful emptiness of an absolute spiritual bankruptcy in which a person is compelled to plead for that which he is powerless to obtain (Jer 10.23) and to which he has no right (Luke 15.18– 19; 18.13), but without which he cannot live.

Earnhart, Paul (2012-04-27). Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution (Kindle Locations 249-250). DeWard Publishing Company. Kindle Edition.



The example of Jesus...



2 Corinthians 8:9: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.



but **emptied** Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

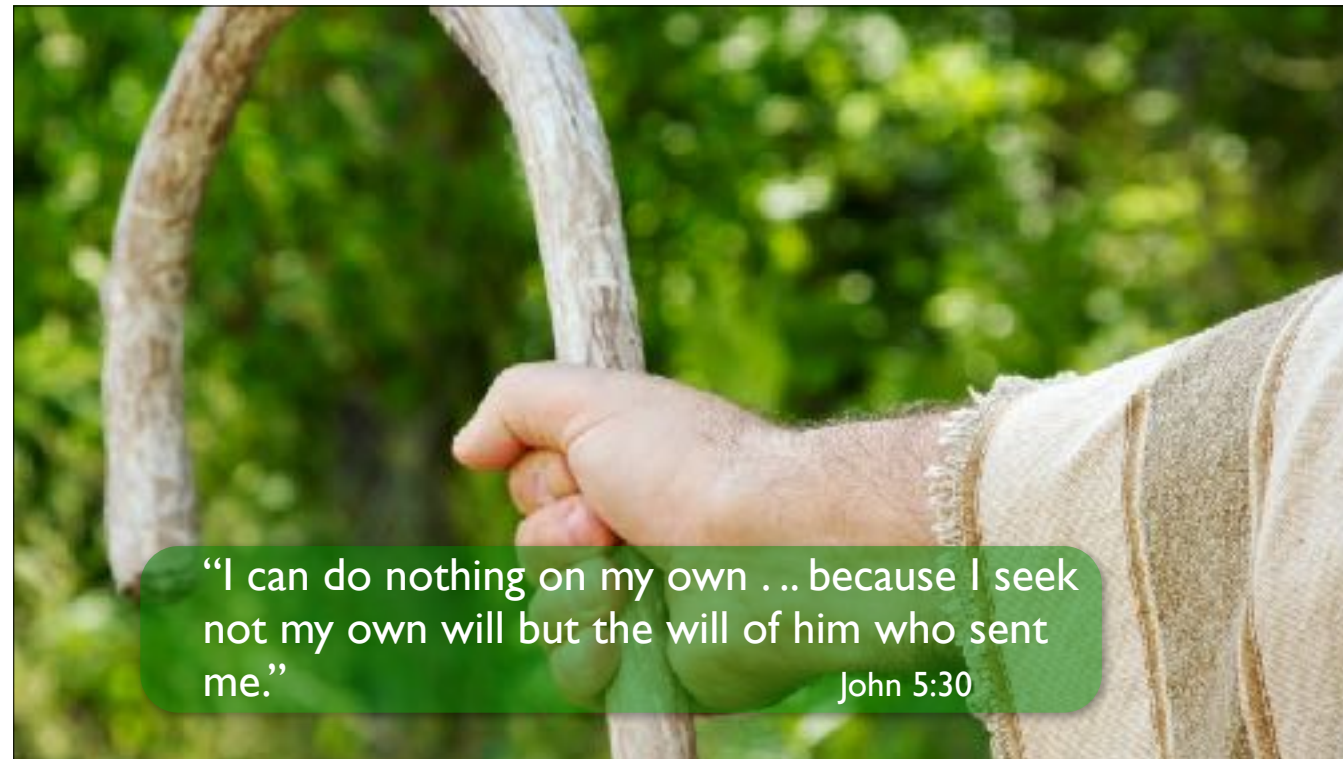
Philippians 2:7

Philippians 2:7: but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Not just a “change of place” (heaven to earth),

but emptied self!

This is about WHO HE IS!



“I can do nothing on my own . . . because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

John 5:30

John 5:30: “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.



Tax Collector and Pharisee: Luke 18.9-13

- Note attitude of Pharisee to both God and others

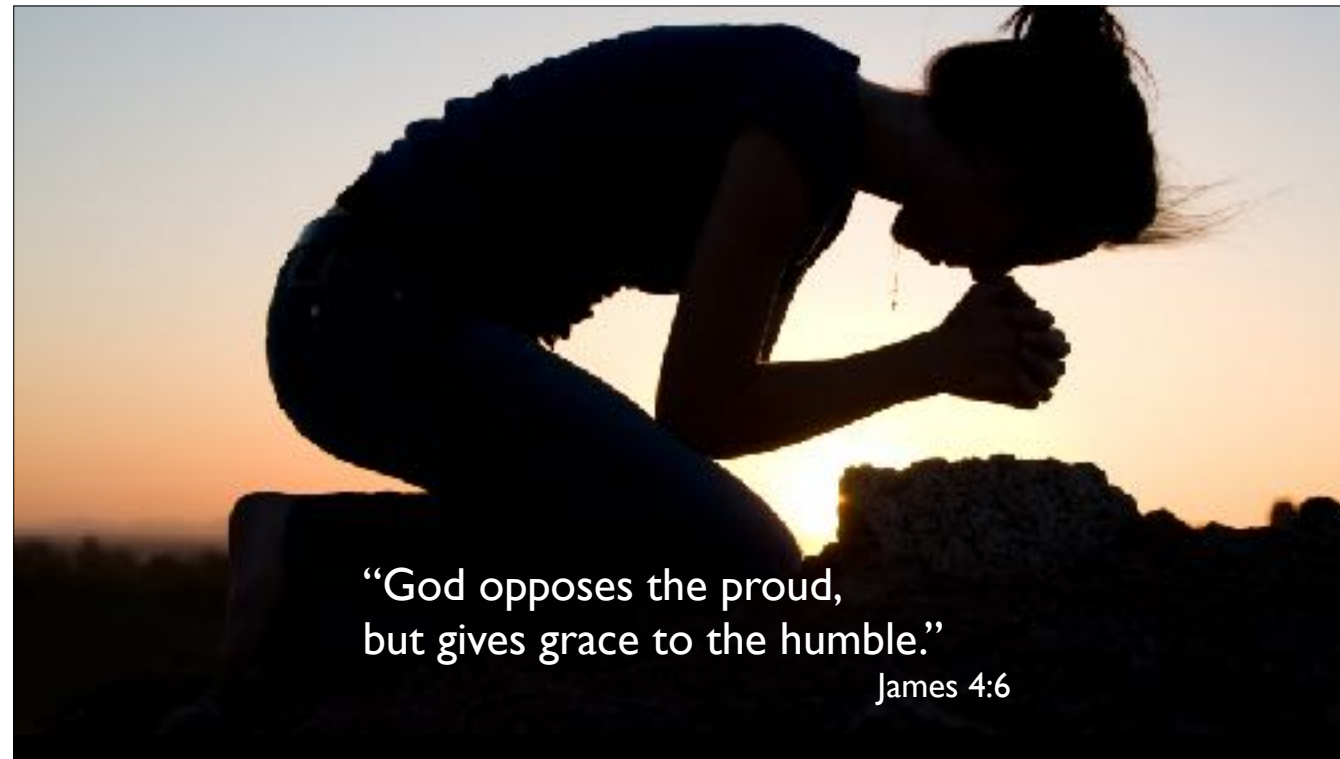
Pharisee thinks he has something to offer God... 1) his righteousness / purity; 2) his service

He is “rich in spirit”



- Tax collector is poor in Spirit before God, not concerned about others around him like Pharisee
- He knows he has nothing to offer God of his own...
- What he needs is mercy from God.

“There is no room in the kingdom of Christ for the ego of the self-righteous.”



James 4:6: But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

James 4:10: Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.



Clothe yourselves, all of you, with
humility toward one another.

1 Peter 5.5

1 Peter 5:5-7: Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

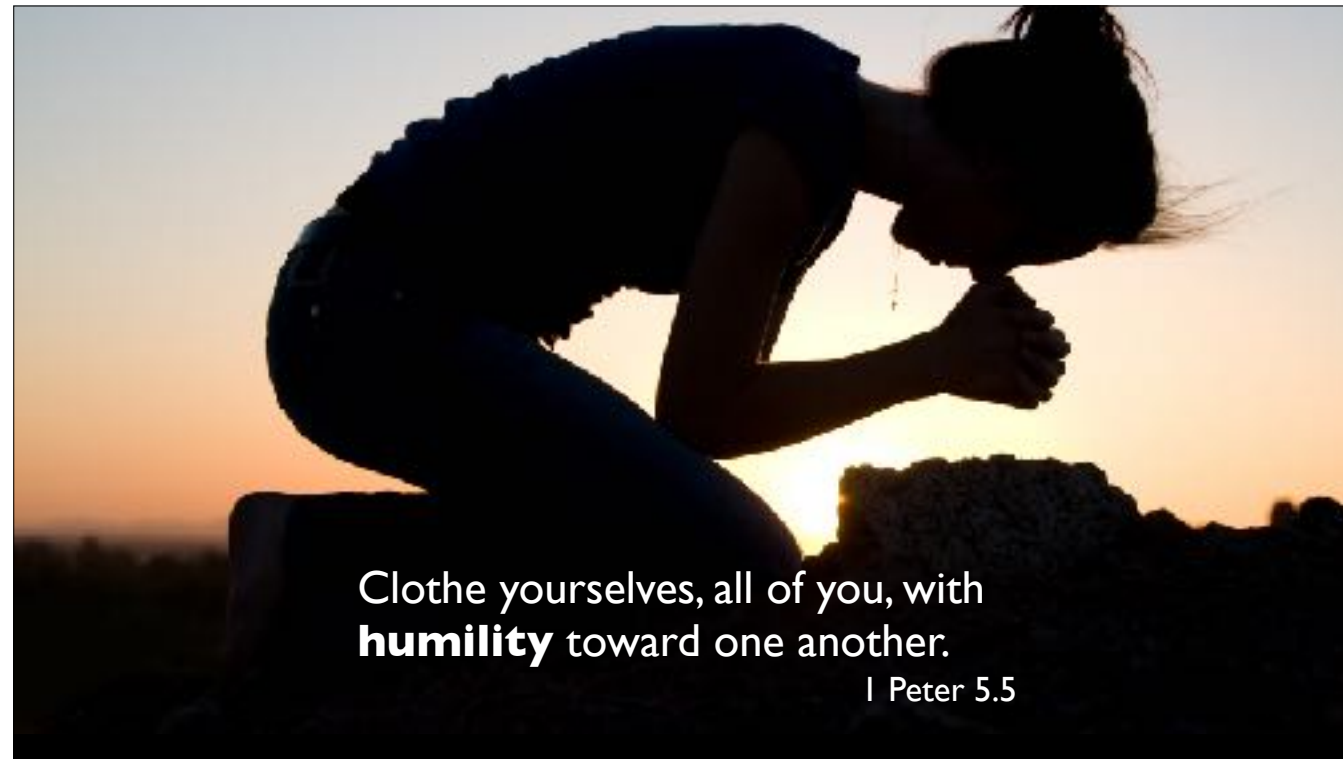


Clothe yourselves, all of you, with
humility toward one another.
I Peter 5.5

What is the difference between poverty of spirit, and humility?

These are so alike that they have been taken one for the other.

They differ as the cause and the effect.



Clothe yourselves, all of you, with
humility toward one another.
I Peter 5.5

I think that poverty of spirit is the cause of humility,
when a man sees his need of Christ — this makes him humble.
Humility is the sweet spice which grows from poverty of spirit.

Thomas Watson, 1660 (<http://www.gracegems.org/Watson/beatitudes2.htm>)



2 Corinthians 12:7-10: So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."



2 Corinthians 12:7-10: So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."



For when I am **weak**,
then I am **strong**.
2 Corinthians 12.10

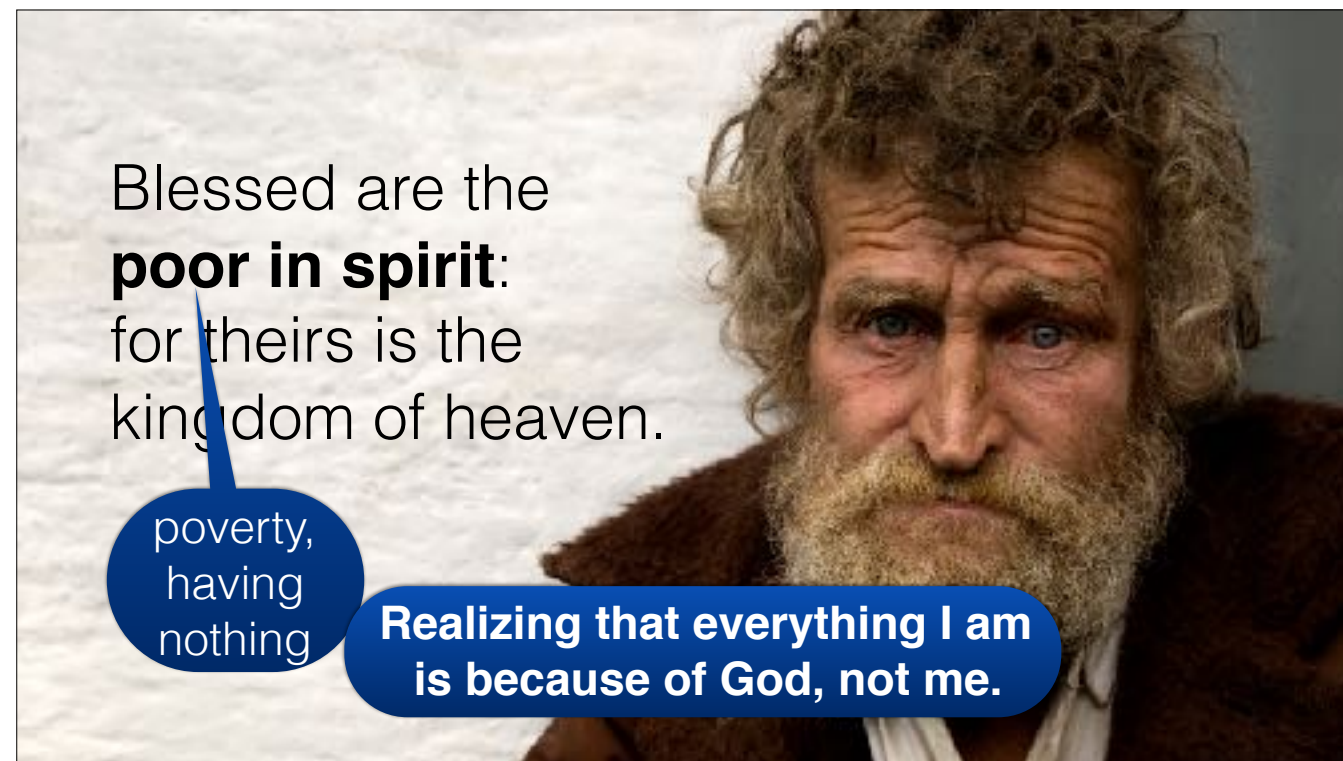
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



World emphasizes self-reliance, self-confidence and self-expression.

We live in a world where it's all about me. Putting myself first. Putting myself on a pedestal.

Jeremiah 10:23: I know, O Jehovah, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

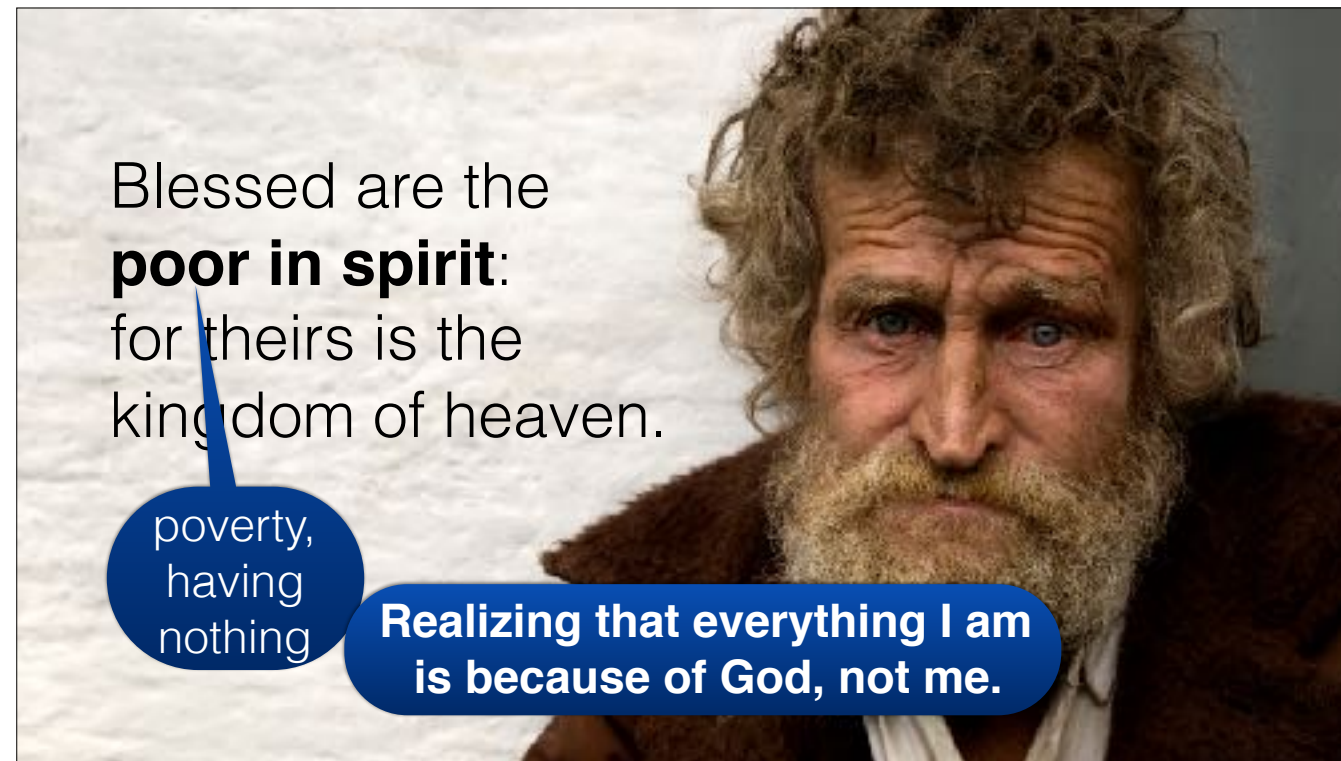


Blessed are the
poor in spirit:
for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.

poverty,
having
nothing

**Realizing that everything I am
is because of God, not me.**

Realizing that everything I am is because of God, not me.



Jesus is saying that those who are poor in spirit are most fortunate and are to be congratulated.

The world would disagree.



- Peter was a fisherman. We're not told how good of a fisherman he was, but he at least thought he knew his business.
- When Jesus told Peter to go out to the deep and put out the nets, Peter demurred, averring that they had been doing that all night and caught nothing.
- "But," he says, "at your word I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5).



- There's a lot to be said for Peter's attitude up to this point.
- With a little objection, he still chooses to obey Jesus, and that's commendable.
- It's as if he's saying to Jesus, "I know better than you what will happen, but I'll do it anyway."



- In the water in which they had caught nothing, they catch so many fish that the nets are breaking and the boats are sinking.
- In the middle of this crisis, Peter falls to his knees and says to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (8)
- At that moment, Peter was truly poor in spirit.



- He knew that all that he thought he knew and all that he thought of himself was nothing compared to Jesus.
- He recognized his own sinfulness and Jesus' holiness.



- It's not surprising that this incident ends with Peter and the other fisherman leaving everything (11).
- At that moment, they knew deeply that they had nothing of value and that only in Jesus could they find true wealth.
- So they followed Jesus. Peter learned to catch men.



- Ah, but even in that it did not come easily nor completely to Peter.
- Just as it does not come easily nor completely to us.
- It would be so much easier if poor in spirit were a quality that once achieved, in that one defining moment, we could tick the box off of our to do list and move on.
- But poor in spirit requires constant vigilance of our hearts and minds.



- After Peter's wonderful confession that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; he has the temerity to rebuke Jesus for saying that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer, and die (Matthew 16:22) Rebuking Jesus does not comport with being poor in spirit.



- When Jesus was washing the feet of the disciples, it was Peter who boldly stated "You shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8).
- And this after Jesus telling him he doesn't understand now, but will later.
- Would you refuse to have Jesus wash your feet?
- Peter's refusal does not comport with being poor in spirit.



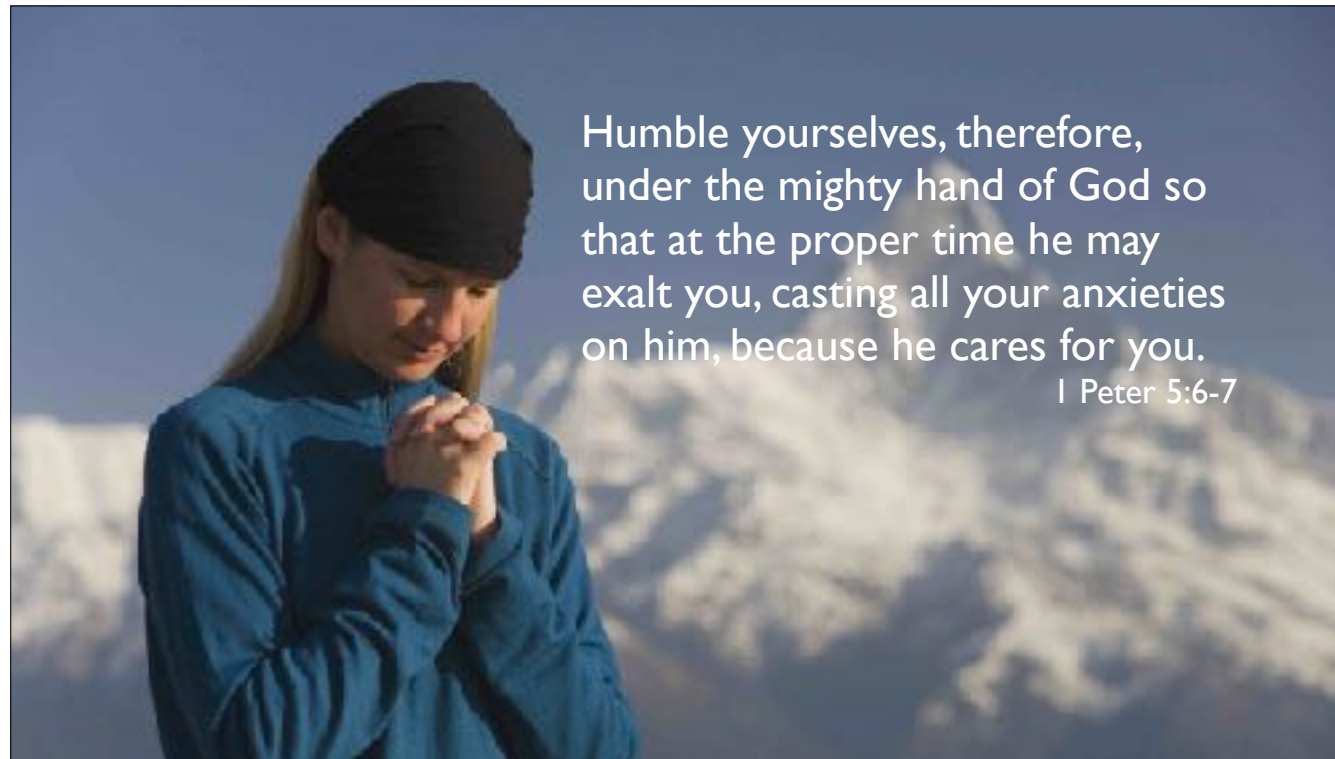
- When Peter received a vision from heaven(!) that commanded him to kill and eat unclean animals, he strongly repudiated the command: "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (Acts 10.14).



- Peter's thoughts about his own plans and purposes and understandings failed not just to honor Jesus but actively rebelled against his Lord.
- “Get behind me, Satan”



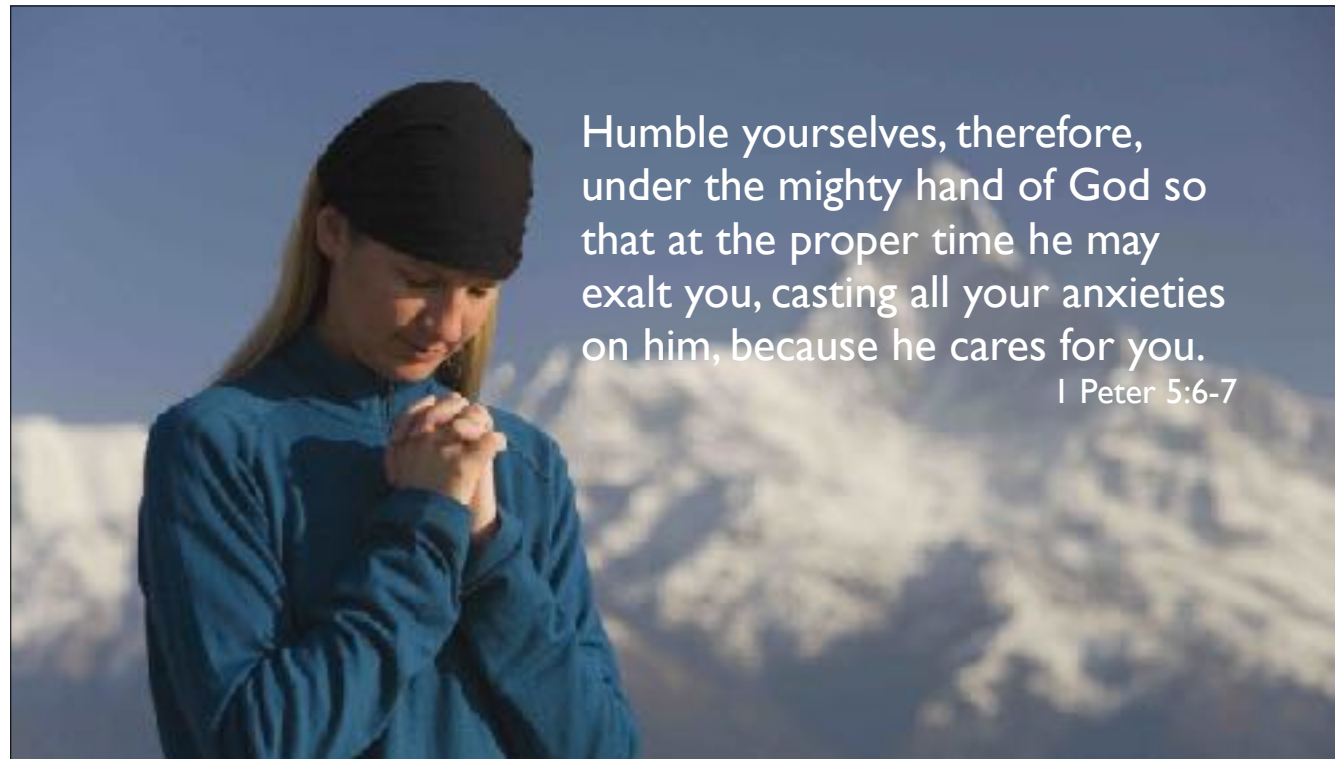
- Poor in spirit is a constant battle of my self, my will, and my wisdom against the recognition that all wisdom and all power are in my Savior.



Humble yourselves, therefore,
under the mighty hand of God so
that at the proper time he may
exalt you, casting all your anxieties
on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

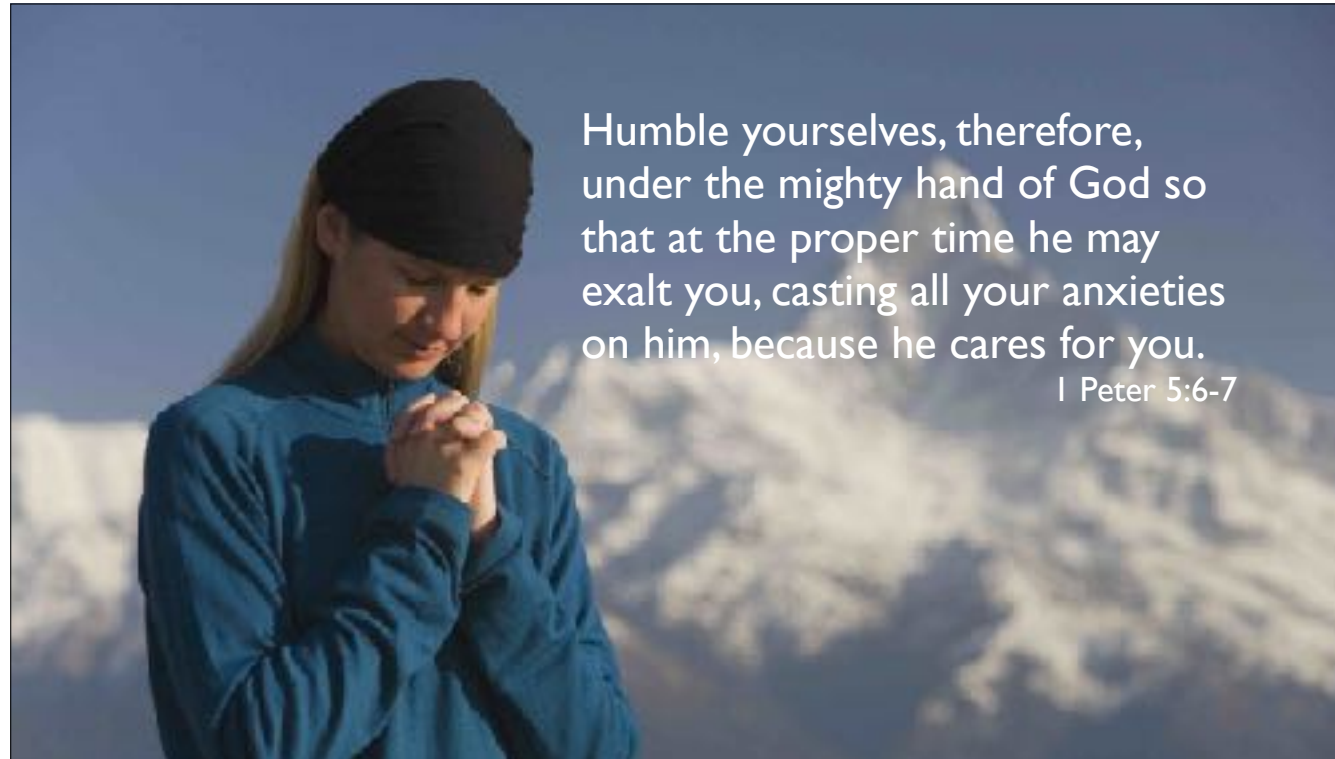
- 1 Peter 5:6-11: Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.



Humble yourselves, therefore,
under the mighty hand of God so
that at the proper time he may
exalt you, casting all your anxieties
on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

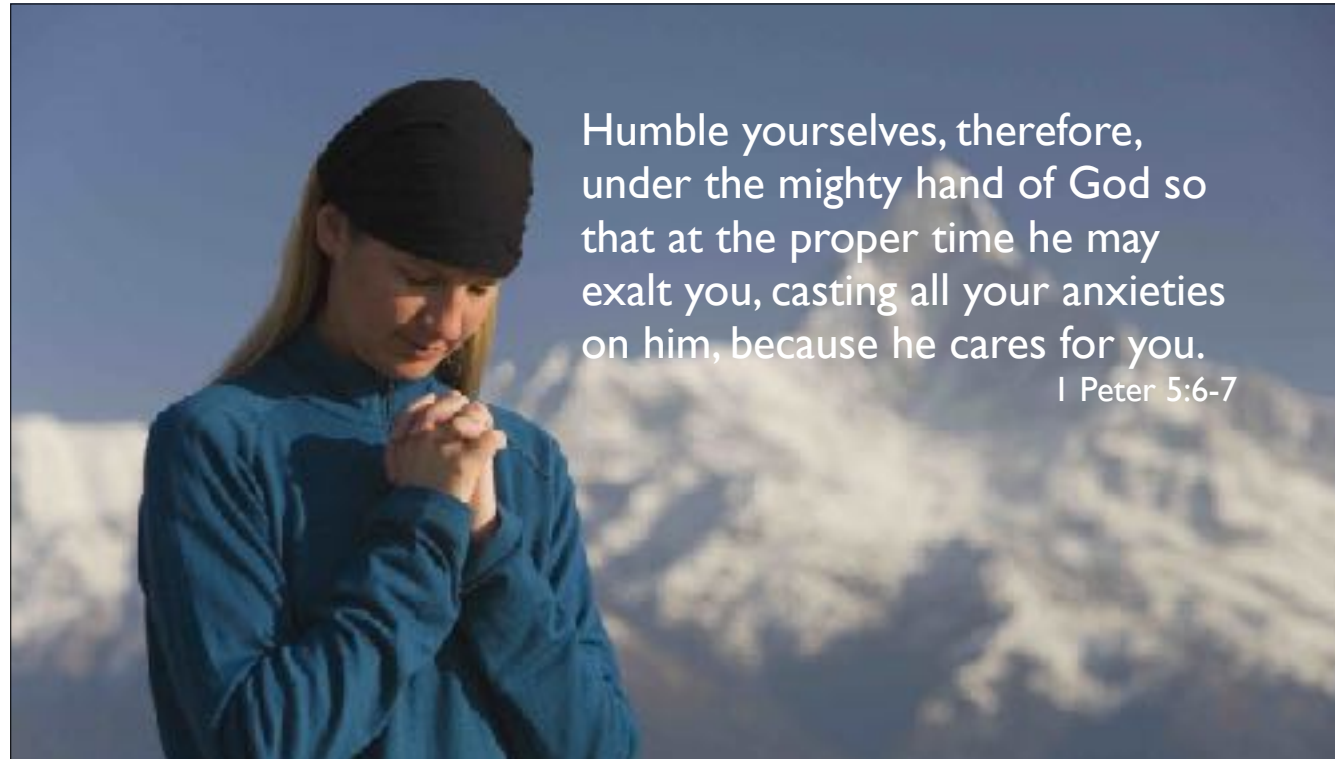
- In the context of a struggle to be poor in spirit, this instruction reflects on the wisdom Peter has learned from Jesus.
- At the root of our struggles are our own anxieties (trusting in myself instead of God) and the temptations of Satan who is constantly seeking to turn us away from our Lord (just as he did with Eve).



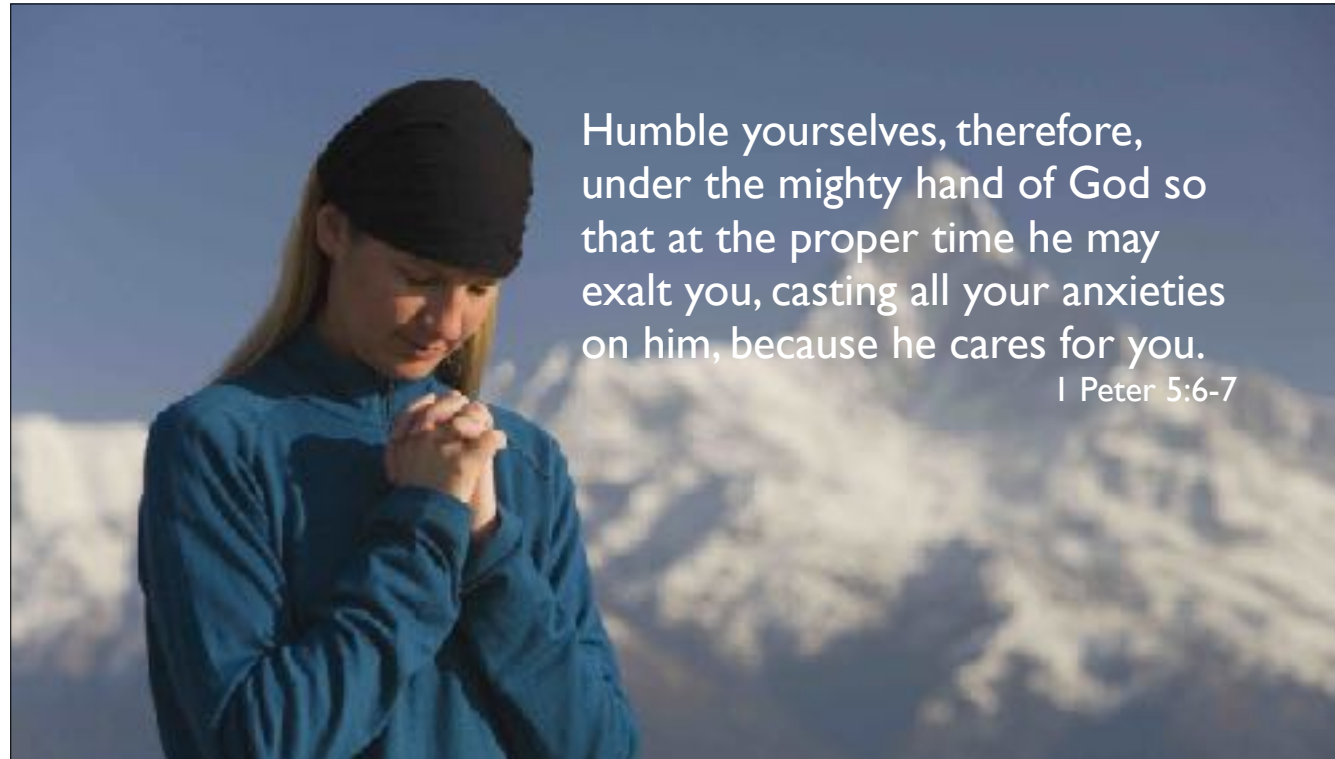
Humble yourselves, therefore,
under the mighty hand of God so
that at the proper time he may
exalt you, casting all your anxieties
on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

- But he concludes with a powerful turning of our attention away from ourselves and Satan to looking at our God.
- The God of all grace -- and when I have his favor what do I need in myself?
- The God who called us to glory -- so that I don't have to seek my own glory that will fade quickly.



- The God who restores, confirms, strengthens and establishes me.
- It's all about our gracious and loving God who wants us to find all our wisdom, our strength, and our riches in Him, and Him alone.



Humble yourselves, therefore,
under the mighty hand of God so
that at the proper time he may
exalt you, casting all your anxieties
on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

- Perhaps being poor in spirit is something that I'll always struggle with, but Peter helps me to see that I can grow in his grace and knowledge and more often than not truly be the one who depends wholly on my Lord and Savior.



What does poor in spirit have to do with righteousness?

The Pharisee had developed and followed a righteousness of his own devising and judged **himself** and **all others** by **his standard**.

Romans 10:3: For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.



So for this man he looked at others and saw their sins; yet he didn't make time to see his own sins... like judging the hearts of others. (Was collecting taxes a sin?)

And when he looked at himself, he saw that he was doing all these things that he thought God should think was important (fast, tithe).



He defined sin in others that was not sin (collecting taxes), or presuming sinfulness (all tax collectors must be greedy; taking extra; cheating).

He failed to do what God really wanted... do justice, love kindness and walk humbly (Micah 6:8).



The Tax Collector, recognized his own sin. And plead for mercy.

Most of us, most of the time, are much more like the Pharisee than the tax collector.

While we wouldn't pray to God such words; by our thoughts, attitudes and actions we often fall into the same trap as the Pharisee.



We judge others by our own standards of righteousness: we look at them and decide that we are much better than them because we are not them.

Have you ever done this with someone from a denominational group? Even if you don't know if they've ever heard the pure gospel?



No Christian can be a used car salesman; or lawyer; democrat or republican.

That person doesn't dress right; look right; too many piercings; hair is wrong; tattoos



That attitude of self-congratulations, that says I'm glad I'm not like them; but fails utterly to look honestly at one's self and see the sin in my life: judging, gossip, lack of hospitality, lack of generosity



Then, we decide for God what he means by “faithful”... (fasting, tithing); for us it’s often about attending assemblies, giving, stands on certain issues. We pick the things that we’re good at.

Not saying these are unimportant... but are they at the essence of who God would want us to be?



Galatians 5:13-15: For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.



Real point, however, is that we implicitly are saying to God that we have something to offer God.

God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

We'd be much better off today saying "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14



123rf.com: 9673438

Photo Credits:

All photos from [istockphoto.com](#), [crestock.com](#), [bigstock.com](#), [dreamtime.com](#), [thinkstock.com](#), and [shutterstock.com](#) are copyright protected. They are used by permission. Please do not reuse without permission.)

Smiling girl: iStock_000009494535
Thumbs up: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2c/Thumbs_up.jpg
Old Man: iStock_000002601859
Shepherd: iStock_000007264337
Thorn: <http://joesprimal scream.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/thorn.jpg>
Earth: Keynote Images
Gates: iStock_000010130148
No symbol: Keynote Jam
Cross Crown: https://www.ernestanglev.org/images/made/uploads/wallpapers/vp_cross_crown_4x3_1024_768.jpg
Woman bowed down: iStock_000006055584
Pharisee and Tax Collector: http://distantshores.org/images/rg/42/42_Lk_18_03_RG.jpg
Lazarus: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/Fedor_Bronnikov_007.jpg
Self-king: iStock_000007044942
Girl on Bike: iStock_000020177455
Sparrow: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/92/White-crowned-Sparrow.jpg/1280px-White-crowned-Sparrow.jpg>
Cross: iStock_000008640632
Empty Wallet Girl: iStock_000008538351
Girl praying: 123rf.com: 7208376
Pointing Fingers: <https://pixabay.com/en/pointing-accusation-accuse-blame-1991215/>
Pointing Finger: <https://pixabay.com/en/index-finger-pointing-you-hand-me-315754/>
Baby Mirror: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/60/Mirror_baby.jpg



CONTRIBUTED BY



These images are the copyright of Moody Publishers and made freely available for teaching purposes only.
All other rights reserved.

FreeBibleImages would like to thank How Fees for his work on this contribution.

www.freebibleimages.org

Pictures courtesy of Big Book Media

**© All Rights Reserved.
www.bigbookmedia.com**





THE WORD IN PICTURES

www.freebibleimages.org

Are You Broke?

Matthew 5:4

Synopsis: One who is poor in spirit realizes that they have nothing, they are nothing, except what God gives them and makes them. Jesus demonstrates being poor in spirit to us when he left heaven and came to earth.

"Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

“Let all that you do be done with love.”