

The Broadmoor Bulletin

A Monthly Publication for the Christians at Broadmoor

October 2009

Emptiness

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

Matthew 5:3

There is no place in God's kingdom for those who refuse to recognize their spiritual poverty. Although we can't see the depth of our need as fully as God sees it, we certainly can see something of it, if we will open our eyes. The kingdom is for the honest. If we pretend to be full even though we are truly empty, our seeking of God will come to no good end.

As individual human beings, we are desperate to believe two things: (1) that we are worth something, and (2) that we are going to have what we need. Larry Crabb has helpfully described these as our needs for *significance* and *security*. We simply do not have any deeper needs. On an average day, most of our time is spent pursuing these things, and we've been endlessly creative in our efforts to get them on our own, apart from God. It turns out, however, that He is the only real source of significance and security open to us. And not only that, His plan requires us to admit the total failure of our own previous attempts at these things.

Yet rather than abandon our futile attempts to fill our own needs, we often try to bring these with us when we come to God, as if we think we've been partially successful in filling ourselves up and we just need God to top us off. This problem of coming to God thinking that we are already partly full is an old problem. Concerning some, Paul said, "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (**Romans 10:2, 3**). It is hard to admit the failure of our own systems and to come to God with a brokenhearted sense of our need, our poverty, and our emptiness.

But as painful as it is to admit our total bankruptcy before God, there is no other way to be receptive to Him. "In my hand no price I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling" (Augustus M. Toplady). It is only when our vessel has been drained of its last dregs that it is ready to be filled anew. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Only those who see themselves as utterly destitute can fully appreciate the grace of God.

Erwin W. Lutzer

Gary Henry

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:4 – 10

Mark 16:16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved is a simple straightforward message that every creature can understand. Only hardened hearts rendered insensitive by theological concepts can be blind or deaf to this command. A lesson from the hardness of the Jews against Jesus because of "Jewish theology" should be a warning to modern man not to allow theological systems to harden them against truth. Many today "see" but do not perceive and "hear" but do not understand what is said in this verse.

The apostles were to preach that those who "believe" and are "baptized" will be saved, meaning clearly that both faith and baptism are essential to salvation in Christ. Only the parsing of words and twisting of meanings can escape this simple fact. Few have problems with the idea that "believers" shall be saved, but to many of the same folks baptism is not essential.

R. C. H. Lenski, a Lutheran commentator, captures the thought of the commission message: "Faith and baptism are combined here as the means of obtaining salvation. For one thing, faith and baptism always go together; the moment a man believes he will want and will have baptism. By believing he clings to the gospel, and part of that gospel is baptism. But believing is subjective; the act of baptism is objective. They go together in this way. Baptism cannot, therefore, be a mere sign or symbol that bestows nothing. If it were no more, it could not be so vitally connected with salvation. Baptism bestows, and the believing baptized person accepts and receives this great *soteria* [salvation] from the Savior. For anyone who comes to faith, baptism is the great means of grace, that is, the channel by which forgiveness, life, and salvation are bestowed upon him. As he believes the word, so he will demand all that the Word promises in baptism and thus the baptism act itself. He who claims to believe but refuses and rejects baptism most surely deceives himself about believing; his could be only a highly pathological faith" (*The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, pp. 766, 767).

Some scholars appeal to this verse as a "spurious" passage to avoid the truth about baptism. However the textual problem may be resolved, it is clear elsewhere in Scripture that "baptism" is for "the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38); that baptism is necessary to "wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16); that baptism "doth now save us" (1 Peter 3:21); that out of baptism one arises to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) in the experience that Jesus called the birth "of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5); that baptism puts one into Christ Jesus where he becomes a new creature (Galatians 3:26-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17); and that baptism is into the Christ's death (Rom 6:3), where his blood was shed "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

That baptism is into the death of Christ shows that it, as Lenski says above, "is the great means of grace, that is, the channel by which forgiveness, life, and salvation are bestowed upon him."

L. A. Stauffer

Truth Commentaries Mark, pp.412 – 413

Respectable Worldliness

The most common idea of “worldliness” is the idea of overt sinning, drunkenness, adultery, etc. The Bible explicitly condemns such a life. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend to the world is the enemy of God?” (James 4:4).

Another kind of worldliness is prevalent which is not so easily recognized as the enemy of God. It is the kind of worldliness which is respectable, for it is involved with only the good things of this world. It has to do with the material—our jobs, family, recreation, education, etc. All of these material blessings have their place in our lives, but any or all of them become sinful if we attach more importance to them than to the service of God (Matthew 6:33).

An increasing number of church members are engaged in “respectable worldliness.” They are not drunkards, liars, adulterers, etc., and wouldn't be found in company with such. But their lives have become so involved with wholesome activities they have pushed Christ aside. How often do we hear, “I do not have time!” We are too busy earning wages, enjoying ballgames, or visiting friends; consequently, we no longer have time to study and teach the Bible, attend all the services, visit the sick, or restore the fallen. We mean no harm; in fact, we say we love the Lord, but our lives demonstrate a misplaced affection.

The blessings of this great nation have become a curse to the spirituality of the church. Take a look at ourselves. We have no time for in-depth study of the Bible, and some prefer a sermonette during the short time that is set aside for teaching. We drive several miles to attend a ballgame but cannot drive across town to attend a gospel meeting. We hardly blink an eye at the debt we assume to buy a new color TV or automobile, but we would suggest a psychiatrist for the man who would make the same sort of debt to support gospel preaching in a needy area.

On and on this analogy could go, but probably it would do little good. This kind of worldliness has given us a “ho-hum” attitude toward evil because it seems respectable. We all know the drunkard, the liar, etc., are going to hell, and we will amen the preacher who steps on their toes! But can a person be lost because he worked too many hours making an “honest living?” Or will one be condemned for attending ballgames? Or relaxing with friends? Or for buying a new TV or car?

The answer to these questions is found in the parable Jesus taught in Luke 14:16-24. The people who were forbidden to taste of the great supper did not commit any overt act of sin. They were lost over a piece of ground, five yoke of oxen, and a new wife. The lesson is simple: PUT GOD FIRST! “For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

Robert Harkrider

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 14:26 – 27

Is God Pleased With Just Any Religion?

Often we hear people told to “attend the church of your choice.” Or we hear that churches are changing to “meet the needs” of the community, or to make their worship “more relevant to modern man” in order to attract people who might be dissatisfied or bored with traditional forms of worship.

In practice, churches often try to make worship more “relevant” by adding things that the worshippers will find entertaining. But what is often lost in these efforts is a simple question: *whom is the church supposed to please?*

In Galatians 1:10, Paul asked, “Do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.” Paul knew that trying to please people instead of God always leads to apostasy. Too often, religious practice is determined by asking, “What do people want?” rather than, “What did God say?” But being a child of God comes from following “not the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). The point of worship is to please God, not to entertain the audience.

In Exodus 32, Moses was receiving the Law on Mount Sinai, and the people grew impatient. They demanded that Aaron allow them to worship in their own way. He agreed and proclaimed “a feast to the Lord” (32:5). When Moses came down, he found the people dancing and making merry and worshipping. Their worship was a feast to the Lord that was contemporary, relevant, entertaining, and suited to their desire, but God was prepared to destroy them for it. God told them (Deut. 12:29-32) not to be attracted to the worship they saw practiced by the pagans. He told them, “You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way....Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” It is not enough simply to direct worship to God - our worship to Him must follow His instruction.

In Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus found people who had made their own rules. They were attempting to worship God, but He rejected them because they taught practices that suited themselves. He said, “in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” When deciding how to worship God, do not ask whether something pleases you. Instead, ask whether God has said that it pleases Him. If He has not, then such worship is vain.

Erin Percell

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

John 14:6

Times of Service

Sunday Bible Class	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	9:55 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Visit us on the web at <http://www.broadmoorchurch.com>