

# Happy Are the Nobodies

Amen. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for reminding us this morning whom do we have the privilege to worship? Thank you for reminding us that all the world is yours and you created the mountains and the seas and you own it all. I pray that as we're approaching your word this morning, that you're reminding us of the privilege we have to come to the throne of grace.

And we do this because of Christ and His substitutionary work on our behalf on the cross He bore our sins so that we can have life. I pray that if there are people here today who don't know you, that they'll be encouraged by your word and who you are in your character. And for all of us, Lord, who are followers of you, I pray that we would be refreshed in reminding us who you are and what you called us to. We pray this in Jesus name and all God's listening people said, Amen. Amen.

Good morning. I'm glad you're here this morning. If you have a Bible, open with me in Matthew, chapter five. And I'm not sure how many of you grew up in a church, but this last song, the new song we just sang, had a lot of rhymes, or at least a part of it that took me back to my Sunday school years when I just learned about my God is so big, so great and so mighty, and nothing that my God cannot do. Just a great reminder of who you get to serve this morning.

If you've been with us last week, probably you were a little bit shocked in your system because I emphasized through my sermon that God is a happy God and there was probably something that was new to you. I know it was to me, years ago when I first just thought. Thought about this, heard about it. And since then it was actually an interesting thing how on Monday I have all these books in my library, in the office, and between meetings, I usually glance just through my books I have there just to see how many I still need to read and a reminder how little I know. But as I was glancing through, in passing over my bookshelves, I saw a book that caught my attention.

It was called Happiness by Randy Alcorn. And I haven't read this book in the past, so I'm like, I need to pick it up and see what He's talking about. And sure enough, Randy Alcorn is known for writing a book called Heaven, a very good book. He wrote this book of 400 pages, and it has four parts to it. And one of the parts, the second part, is all dedicated to the happiness of God.

And I realized I was reading through it like man, praise God, that I'm not alone in thinking this. There are all the other people. And then He mentioned a lot of theologians, Jonathan Edwards being among them, and John Piper, who write on this topic. So if you think that this is just kind of some thoughts and insight that Andre has, I just want to tell you, you're in good company. We are in good company.

It's not just us or me believing this. There are others who have thought about these subjects. We are serving a God when His character, in His essence is a joyful, loving, happy God. And one of

my points was to tell you that if you think in eternity past, then you would actually agree with me. Because in eternity past, if you think about it, there's nothing to be wrathful on or judging towards because there's no sin.

So in the Trinity, you have this blissful, perfect, godly unity around joy and happiness and bliss, and everything is just perfect. So the wrath of God, the judgment of God, the anger of God, the justice of God is contingent on His creation. Now, yes, God does do those, and He does them, but that's the same level or the same intensity or the same joy as He loves to love His people. So God actually says several times in the scriptures, He does not take pleasure in punishing the wicked. He has to do it because of His holiness, but He doesn't take pleasure in doing this.

So that should be an encouraging thought for us, because for many years, and some of you come from Eastern Europe or places where the holiness of God is so uphold and upheld that you feel like there's nothing joy or nothing to be joyful about in God. You don't laugh in His presence, you don't smile in His presence. I remember growing up in churches, or you go and still now in cathedrals, or you go in monasteries, and you are not allowed to speak much, you're not allowed to smile, you're not allowed to say anything because God is there and He might strike you dead if you do something you shouldn't. And I want to challenge that view that you have of God. And I pray that will really blow your mind away and you'll help you to see God as a joyful, happy to see you happy God.

He's not out there to kill all your sources of joy or for you to ask Him something, and you think, oh, that's going to bring me joy. So I cannot ask Him for that. So because I'm afraid even He's actually doing the opposite of that because He's a joy killer and that's not the God of the Bible. And there's plenty of passages talk about. I just gave you first Timothy one, I think, and six last week.

But anyhow. And I told you also that my exhibit number A for arguing on this is not only the word of God, but also Jesus Christ. He is God incarnate. And His disposition as a human being, yes, He's 100% God or fully God, but He's also a human being. Fully human.

And as a person, we are told that people were liking Him, they wanted to hang out with Him, especially simple people, sinners, not because He would endorse them in their sin, but because He was likable and He knew how to approach them. And they left His presence, most of them transformed. He never endorsed them. He actually helped them to have their license form. But He was not only this snobbish guy.

We kept them at a distance. He was both simple in the sense there were people, simpletons, who approached Him at the same time. He was the example of godliness. I remember years ago, it was probably 17 or 18 years ago, I did an internship, right? I was between my third and fourth year of seminary in Romania.

And a friend of mine, Ken Luce, who was one of the guys who supported this church, He's a missionary in Romania. He said, and, I would love for you to spend the summer with a dear friend of mine in Cincinnati, Ohio. That was my first experience with America. So I end up being in Cincinnati, Ohio for the summer and just shadowing this experienced pastor. His name is Kevin Land.

This is still at the same church. This is 43rd year, the same church, pastoring the same congregation. And I just loved being with this man. It was just a great experience. And at one point I was with a bunch of guys from His church and He was not there.

And I said, what do you like about Pastor Kevin? What makes Him so attractive to you guys? And some of them have been there for 20 years, since He started. And they said something that was memorable for me. They said, Kevin is a simple man, like a lot of us, but He's funny to be around, He's joyful, and in the same time, He's a godly man that all of us strive to be like.

He's a simple man, fun to be around, but He's a godly man that all of us want to be like. And I said, that's it. That's exactly how I want to be in my own life. I want to be that type of person. I'm still praying that one day I'll grow up to be like that.

But that should be the aim. That should be the heart. And ultimately that's the heart of Christ. You are modeling Christ when you do that. And that's what we have here.

Psalms 144:15 says, Happy are the people whose God is the Lord. God wants our lives filled with joy. He wants to bless us. He wants to experience a deep. For us to experience a deep inner happiness, not produced and not affected by emotions or by changing circumstances, but a kind of joy that is not subject to outside forces, but is dependent on inside transformation.

That's what God wants of us. And the Lord wants people in His kingdom to really enjoy happiness. And that's the subject of the Beatitudes. That's the subject of the Sermon on the Mount, which the Beatitudes begin. Each one, each one of these Beatitudes begins with the word blessed, which is just another word for happiness.

I'll get to that in a second, but if you don't mind, just follow along with me. I'm only going to read the first three verses of Matthew, chapter five. Listen to Matthew. Seeing the crowds, He, meaning Jesus, went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now, the context is very important, and I shared this with you last week, but it's important to kind of get some details here.

This is the very first official sermon that is recorded by Matthew and comes on the heels of Jesus' baptism and His victory over Satan's temptations in the wilderness. This is a longer sermon. He had sayings here and there. You see that He talked about repentance because the kingdom of God is near. But this is the first sermon that we had recorded that is longer.

And it's very interesting how it starts. And I pointed out that there's been 400 years of silence between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the coming of Christ is 400 years in which God did not give any prophetic word. There's intertestamental, intertestament books out there called the Apocrypha that, for example, are added in the Catholic Bible. You have a section that there's written like Maccabees and a few others like that. But those are actually seen as commentaries.

None of the Jewish people, this is not Christians, none of the Jewish people considered those books that were written between those 400 years as being inspired by God. But in this 400 years, there's no sign from God. There's no prophetic word. And here God comes in the person of Jesus Christ and He gives us the first full sermon. And the first words of Jesus, Mount is happy is the one who is poor in the spirit.

Very interesting. He's talking about blessedness, He's talking about beatitudes with an idea of happy. I came to bring joy, I came to bring happiness, I came to bring life. Because when you have life in Christ, in God, you have joy, you have happiness in the pure sense of that word, true, deep, pure, godly, biblical happiness. And I pointed out that the word makarios in Greek, that represents here the word blessed has the idea of happy and blissful.

And I also pointed out that unfortunately, in the English language, the word happiness is not very helpful, because the root word of the word happiness, the word hap, means chance. That's where we have the word haphazard. It's something by chance. So in our culture, in our mindset, immediately, we think about happiness as being something giddy, something that is just temporal, something that is circumstantial, someone who's laughing sometimes, not being serious. You're not thinking about something very deep and joyful.

And I pointed out that the words of Jesus point out to something deeper. An inward contentedness is not affected by circumstances, a joy which is completely independent of all the circumstances of life. That's what we mean when we say happy. Now, unfortunately, a lot of translators have used the word blessed, and I don't think that that's actually a very good word either. Why?

Because blessed has this more idea of being privileged by God, favored by God, which is not bad. It's true, we have other passages talk about it, but that's not the word here. And blessed is very Christianese, isn't it? You say to a friend of yours, blessed are you? Aren't you?

And you're like, what? Blessed? What does that mean? It's not a word that you use outside of Christian world. It's a very Christianese word.

Again, it's not a bad word per se. It just doesn't give you the full extent of what this word actually means in original. And even if you look at the Old Testament, there are many passages that actually talk about happiness instead of being blessed. Happy is the man who does not walk in the ways of the scoffers. Very interesting.

That is the wording there. But we feel again, because we were taught no, that God is holy, just He blesses you happiness is not for you. We are almost by inertia. By default, we want to exclude that word happiness in the realm of God. It's not something you are for.

You're supposed to be miserable here. Okay, that seems to be, unfortunately, the underlining current.

So Jesus goes on to talk about eight beautiful attitudes, as I call them, or Beatitudes. First four Beatitudes focused on our relationship to God, and the second four in our relationship to the people around us. And by the way, as we look at verse one, I pointed out this last week, He's talking to His disciples primarily. Like, you see that He's talking with them based on, later on several passages here in the Sermon on the Mount. He's talking with a specific group of people, but the other ones are listening in.

That's because He wants intentionally to tell them, if you want to be happy, this is the way you get to be happy, by entering God's kingdom. There's no other way in which you can truly enjoy happiness as God designed it, because you cannot have it outside of God. He's the one who created it. He's the source of it. We wouldn't have joy and happiness if it wasn't for God.

And if you don't believe me, just watch all those documentaries about in nature how dolphins play with each other, or dogs or cats. Who created that? God. And He wants us to experience a little bit of that, even though, yes, we live in a fallen world. We live in a.

In a world that is not perfect and sinful. We get that. But He wants us to have glimpses of that. He wants us to enjoy parts of that here on this earth. Now, the first Beatitude that we start with here is poor in spirit.

This one is also the foundation for the rest of them. Being poor in the spirit is probably the most important one because it's foundational for the rest of them. And you'll see why in a minute. Now, what does it mean to be poor in the spirit? Here's what it doesn't mean.

Here's what this doesn't mean. First, it doesn't mean that He's talking about material poverty, being economically poor. It doesn't mean that. Now, there is a tendency, and this is probably the most common misunderstanding on this passage. Why?

Because In Luke chapter 6, verse 20, Jesus, in a parallel text, is quoted to say, blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. There's no in the Spirit. In Luke, chapter six, blessed are you who are poor, comma, because theirs is the Kingdom of God. Now, if you just have the Gospel of Luke and you don't have Matthew, I can see how you can probably think that that's what He says. But if you actually know the whole context of the Gospel of Luke and you know the whole New Testament, you can definitely tell that that's not what He means.

Not even Luke. Why? First of all, Luke himself was a pretty well to do guy. He was a physician. A lot of people in the circles of Jesus or guys who had some money, Joseph of Arimathea, other guys who became followers of Christ, they were people of money.

In the Old Testament, we find people who, who were rich. David was rich, Abraham was rich. And God doesn't judge them for that and think about the opposite. So if you're saying that the ones who are blessed are the ones who are poor, then forget about helping people to get out of poverty. Are you hungry and thirsty?

Blessed are you. I'm not going to give you anything. Blessed is for you to be like that.

You shouldn't have any orphanages, any help for like people who are on the streets, people who are homeless. We should not help them because you are blessed more than you think. More than you think. That's why, for example, some misunderstandings of this led to people who become nuns and monks. They want to sell everything because they're thinking, blessed are the poor.

That is not what it says here. Blessed are the poor. What the spirit. That's a total different category. Yes.

Are there dangers by trusting in the riches of this world? Are there dangers in having riches? Yes. Paul, Jesus, all the New Testament writers, Old Testament speaks about this. Watch out, beware.

Do not put your trust in riches. But it doesn't mean that being rich makes you unspiritual. Very important. A second thing, it doesn't mean, it cannot mean poor. As if one that doesn't have any value, someone who doesn't have a good view of self.

It doesn't mean the absence of self worth. It doesn't mean that we need to consider ourselves to be zeros. People who go around and are just, always are nothing. I'm just a worm. I'm a worm, I'm a worm.

I don't deserve anything. There are people who actually believe this about them. That's not actually spiritually commendable. That's not right. Yes, we are unworthy.

We're going to talk about that. The fact that we are spiritually bankrupt and we should see ourselves, spiritually speaking, unworthy. There's a song that says at the cross I find both my unworthiness and my worthiness. My unworthiness because it says you are so dead spiritually that God couldn't just send angels or give away universes or galaxies on your behalf. He had to send His only begotten Son to die for your sins.

So you are as bad. You were so bad that God had to send His Son, so He dies for you. That's your unworthiness. But then on the same vein, He says, you are so loved by God, you are so seen as so worthy by God that He sent His only begotten Son. The golden verse of the scripture is John 3:16 that says, For God so loved the world, He loved you.

Me. You are so loved by God that He sent His only begotten Son to die for your sins. So stop thinking I'm just a zero. I'm nothing. I don't have anything.

I'm just a drop in a bucket. Yes, you are. But at the same time you're known by God. Your father is God. You're His child, His son, His daughter.

That's exactly the biblical way of looking at. It is not biblical to think that you are zero or nothing. Thirdly, it doesn't mean shyness or lack of drive or enthusiasm. Actually, many people who are naturally shy and introverted could be very proud because some of them are just fearful of other people. They're fearful that people might think bad of them.

That's pride. So it doesn't mean shyness or it doesn't mean, I'm always locked. I'm not going to do anything. I'm just. I let others do it because that's what praying spirit means.

No, David, Abraham, others were spearheading things. Paul, Peter, they have personalities like, no, I want to do things for God. And then finally, it doesn't mean showy humility. I'm just so poor in spirit. I'm so humble with that.

I remember years ago when I was growing up in Romania, the church I grew up in, and this is pretty much classic with all the other churches. We had services from nine to twelve and in the evening from six to eight. Aren't you thankful we're not doing that? Nine to twelve in the morning. So from nine to ten we had the prayer time and then from ten to eleven Bible study and then eleven, twelve we do a sermon with some songs.

But from nine to ten, when all the church was there, we had like three hundred and fifty people and we had a few guys doing some devotionals and. Or a little devo at the Beginning five minutes. And then we go to prayer, and we pray one by one out loud so we can all agree with the prayers. This is an about this church. So I remember just hearing prayers, and after one point, you kind of know who prays what.

After a year or so, you're like, man, I kind of know who prays exactly what. And I was a young believer, and I remember just being very ticked a little bit by this guy's prayer. He would always pray, very dramatic prayer, saying, lord, I'm the greatest of sinners. I'm the worst of sinners. There's nobody like me.

Now, if you'd never met the guy, you'd be like, man, that guy is truly, like, repentful and poor in spirit. But once the church was done and you were hanging out with Him, He was the most rude and arrogant guy you could ever meet. Totally the opposite. At one point, I was a zealous believer, new believer. Someone has to tell Him something.

So I thought I should try my luck with Him. So I go out to Him and I said, excuse me, brother, who is the greatest and worst of sinners of all? Can I have a chat with you? And He was so upset. Who are you to tell me I'm the greatest sinners of all?

I'm just like, I'm just quoting you from your prayer. Oh, that's. You are not to judge me. Who are you? Nobody should judge me.

The point was, you can say those showy things in front of God and of other people. In reality, if you are just a jerk, an arrogant guy, you're totally missing the point. This is not about that. It's not about showy humility. It's all truly being humble.

Okay, so what does being poor in the spirit mean then? What does it mean? The word poor is from the Greek word tokos, which is the word that describes a beggar. There's few other words in Greek that describes poor people, but this is kind of the lowest of the totem pole. If you're of Ptokos, if you are in this type of circumstance that you are left with nothing, the only hope for you is begging.

Begging someone who doesn't have any resources to live on and is totally dependent on someone else. And then you have the words in spirit, meaning that Jesus is referring to the inner person, not the outside of a person. So you're spiritually begging. DA Carson, a renowned New Testament scholar, says that poverty in spirit, then, is the personal acknowledgment of spiritual bankruptcy.

Is this personal acknowledgment of the of spiritual bankruptcy. It's the awareness and admission that we are utterly sinful and without the moral virtues adequate to commend us to God. The recognition of our personal moral unworthiness. They see themselves as spiritually needy. If we want to have another way of expressing this beatitude, it would be something like Blessed are those who realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend them to God, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Let me say that again. Blessed are those who realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend them to God, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. This is why it's so important for all the rest of the other beatitudes. You recognize that you don't have anything to bring to the table, spiritually speaking. And there's many examples in the Old Testament why this is the right interpretation of this.

Isaiah 66:2 says, this is the one to whom I will look. He who is humble and contrived in spirit, and trembles at my word. Isaiah 66:2. This is a very known passage. Probably you should memorize it.

Psalm 34:18. David says, the Lord is near to the brokenhearted, saves those who are crushed in spirit. You see this again. Brokenhearted, crushed in spirit. Same thing.

Humility of Spirit. Psalm 51:17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. O God you will not despise. This is coming from the lips of David, who was the king of Israel.



And He's just reminding himself that even though He's the king, He didn't have anything to bring to the table from the beginning. Even then He doesn't have anything spiritually to contribute to His salvation. He actually says later on in second Samuel chapter seven, who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far? He reminds himself on a constant basis, who. Who they are without Christ, without God's mercy, there's no Christ at that point in time.

But there is the promise of the Messiah and the promise by faith that He will have salvation. It's this constant reminder that without God, I will not have anything good in me. Without Jesus, there's nothing good in me. More you get to that acknowledgment, better it is for you, and more freeing and more happy you are. It's interesting.

When Jesus began His ministry, He opened the scroll in the city of Nazareth, in a synagogue, and He quoted from Isaiah 61:1. And this actually kind of surprised me this week. Not because I didn't know the verse. But I didn't think the significance of this verse earlier. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.

Isaiah 61:1. This is Jesus quoting from Isaiah, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. And for whatever reason, I always thought that He's talking about materially poor, but it's not what He's saying. Isaiah specifically in this context, was referring to the people who were exiled out of Israel, who had not compromised, and who looked to God alone to save them and establish His kingdom. He was thinking about poor in spirit.

And we know this because we see in the New Testament when He comes to the ones He comes to speak to. You see that there is a humility of spirit that recognizes the Messiah. From, for example, Mary, the mother of Jesus. In Luke 1:46, she says, My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. She is pointing out that I am poor in the spirit.

She looked into her own life and realizes, I don't have anything to bring to the table.

You see that when Christ was born, He was announced to the humble shepherds, now to the establishment. And then when Jesus was presented to the temple, you have some humble people there, Simon and Anna, all their folks, all their saints who come to see Christ. And what puts them on the map, what qualifies them to be among the people that should be notified of Christ's birth is their humility of spirit. People who recognize that Jesus is the only hope or the Messiah is the only hope for their lives.

Someone pointed out that these are people to whom Christ is born and in Him in whom, excuse me, He is born. These are people to whom Christ is born and in whom He is born. I think one of the greatest examples of what poor of the Spirit means is in Luke 18, coming from the lips of Jesus, He's giving this parable. We don't know if it's a true event or it's just a parable, a story that Jesus made up. But this is what He says.

Two men went up into the high temple. Excuse me, into the temple to pray. One a Pharisee and the other one a tax collector. The Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus. God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all I get. But a tax collector standing far off would not even lift up His eyes to heaven, but beat His breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. And Jesus concludes, I tell ee this, this man went down to His house justified rather than the other, talking about the tax collector. For everyone who exalts himself will be humble, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

The point of Jesus account here is to tell us that we need to be realizing who we are, that we are spiritually bankrupt. And when we come to God with that type of attitude, we're actually living, leaving God's presence, freed up from our burdens and with a better view and actually a biblical view of life. Poverty of spirit is an indispensable sign of grace. Poverty of spirit is an indispensable sign of grace. No one can truly know Christ without it.

This is not to say that one must have a perfect sense of one's spiritual insufficiency to be saved. It will never get there.

And let's be honest, when we first become Christians, especially early on in your life, you think you're a sinner, but you don't actually recognize how sinful you are until probably you get married and you realize, whoa, I'm worse than I thought. And then you have kids. Add more to it. You're like, whoa, there's another layer of sinfulness I have. I didn't know.

But the reality is you never get to the point where you truly understand how sinful you you are. Nevertheless, is there an attitude of such that you're recognizing? I do recognize I'm spiritually bankrupt.

Those who acknowledge themselves as spiritually bankrupt enter the kingdom of heaven. No one enters God's kingdom without such an acknowledgment, regardless of how many times He or she has walked the aisle, raised a hand, signed a decision card, prayed a sinner's prayer, or given His or her testimony.

But let's talk a little bit about the reward here. Reward for the ones who are poor in spirit. It says, theirs is the kingdom of God. Now, theirs here is used more in the sense of theirs alone, bearing all others who approach God with a different spirit than that of a spiritual beggar. Nobody who doesn't have that type of realization of their spiritual poverty would be eligible to make it into God's kingdom.

That's why it says theirs as an idea of theirs alone. Anyone who doesn't have this does not make it to God's kingdom. And then what's the reward? The kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven.

Now, what does He mean by that? Immediately, we're thinking about heaven and the upcoming heaven and the New Jerusalem, Revelation 21, which is true, but the kingdom of God,

remember, it's also now among us. The kingdom of God means to be under the kingdom of Christ, under His rulership. Actually, In Ephesians chapter 2, He says that we are seated now in the heavenly places. What does that mean?

Means God sees us as His heirs, as His children. He gives us what we ask of Him. That's why He says, ask of me and I'll give you. We have the authority, the privileges of a child. Now, what happens if He doesn't answer according to what we ask is most likely because He doesn't think for that season or this season in our lives.

We need to have that specific thing we're asking for, but not because we don't have access to Him. It says no or wait because He loves us for a time. He says that for us. He loves us eternally. But He says to us, maybe wait or maybe no this time, but don't miss this.

We are now subjects of Christ. We are now inheriting God's kingdom. And yes, we're going to have a future reward as Christ returns. But until then, don't miss it. We are part of His kingship.

A few applications we close this morning. How does one become poor in spirit? How does one become poor in spirit? How do you get to that place?

First of all, I think the best place to start is to compare yourself to God, to read more about God, sing about God, listen to audiobooks, or read books about God and who God is. The best book to always go to is the Bible, of course. See who He is, recognize how holy, how loving, how perfect He is, and what are His requirements for you? Because that would be really good. You know why?

Because most of the times we compare ourselves with others and we think we're doing pretty good compared with others. And we usually like to choose people who are not as good as we are, let's be honest. So we feel pretty good about ourselves. And I gave this illustration years ago, but I'll repeat it for you. This morning we have this basketball hoop on our driveway.

And I'm no basketball player whatsoever, but I remember my oldest kids, daughters were younger, and I took the basketball ball and I was just like, let's play some basketball. And they were so impressed with my skills, and they looked at me and they said, dad, you can even slam dunk. I'm like, of course. The slam dunk was like, the basketball is right here. You can do it easily.

But for them they're like, here, no, they couldn't really jump. And for a few moments, I really thought good about myself, man. Probably I should have been to. If I was in America, it would be an NBA of sorts or something, because I can see the skill. It's right there.

It's present. But in reality, if I play with someone, not even in the varsity JV high school, they would knock me out. I'll hurt myself and hurt them probably in the process, because I didn't have anything to do with that sport. But if I compare myself with little kids, oh, I'm great. Same thing in life, you compare yourself with people who have less skills than you or they're not as good.

You're always going to find someone who's less disciplined, more drunkard, more this, more that. And you're like, look at me. But when you compare yourself with God, you recognize, oh, my, I can never meet the qualifications or the standards of God. Not only that, I actually failed all of them. If I had to look through the Ten Commandments and to see on the Sermon on the Mount here that Jesus goes to the principle of ten Commandments and He takes you one by one, you realize, wow, I'm really a sinner.

And to recognize that the penalty of sin is death, wow, I definitely don't deserve anything. How do you build humility? Is by looking more to Jesus, recognizing who He is and recognizing who you are. And if you're a Christian, to recognize, hey, yes, I'm not. Well, I used to be.

I'm a new creation. But without Jesus, I would be there. If it wasn't for Jesus, I wouldn't be here. Everything I have good in me is Jesus, and there's still bad stuff in me because of my flesh. And I want to own that instead of always trying to argue with others and try to tell them I'm not as bad as they think I am.

Can you imagine? I said it many, many, many times, and it's just hard for us to believe it. I said it how many times. Our conflicts would not exist if we just say, you know what? I'm not going to argue with you because I'm actually probably worse than you think.

I know I was worse than this. And even now, I still have reminiscences of flesh in me that I don't even know about. So let me just say I'm sorry. And let me just say I want to work more of this and praise God for His grace that we're not saved based on our deeds, based on Christ. By the way, that's one of the ways in which you recognize if you're truly having poverty of spirit, if you're humble in spirit.

Here's a key way I said it in the past and I repeat it again. Are you welcoming criticism? I'll go even a step further. Do we invite criticism and are you okay with it? Because more you grow in maturity, in Christ, less the spotlight is on you.

John the Baptist says in John 3, one of my favorite verses, He says, may I decrease and may He increase. The more you hear of Christ, more you have of Christ in you. It's going to be easier for you to not take things personal, as if, like people are attacking you. They're not attacking you, they're attacking your flesh. You have to say, hey, if there's anything good in me, it's because of Christ.

And probably I have to own all the other bad stuff. But praise God that He's on the work. I'm on the working project.

May God help us to be poor in spirit, to acknowledge our spiritual poverty, our spiritual bankruptcy. For we are sinners under the holy justice of God, and we deserve nothing but the judgment of God. We don't have anything to offer, nothing to plead, nothing with which to buy the favor of heaven. I want to finish with these words from a known hymn. Nothing.

In my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling naked come to Thee for dress helpless look to D for grace. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. I pray that you'll help us to really be humble in spirit, to recognize our spiritual state without Christ in our lives. Lord, thank you for the transformation that you've done in us.

We are new creations and we praise God for all the work you've done. You've done and you're continuing to do in our lives. But we recognize that there's anything good in us is because of Jesus. Help us to always point back to Him. Lord, we pray that you continue to strengthen us to be a people that is joyfully pointing others to you, not to us and to your greatness, not to our greatness.

And tell them that all we have is Christ. All we have is Christ. We pray this in Jesus name and all God's listening people said Amen.