

How can I be happy when I'm poor?

"Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Matthew 5:3



The hand is out. The face is pleading. In this case, the need is real. When one has run out of options and is desperate for help, begging seems the only choice. It's hard to imagine that one who is forced to beg would be happy about it. Being so poor in physical things can make life very hard.

Yet when it comes to a person's spiritual condition, God says that it is very important to be a beggar. In fact, true happiness only comes when you see that you are a beggar.

Do you see yourself as a spiritual beggar? However wealthy we might be financially, it is very tempting to feel that we—just naturally—have what we need in our spiritual bank account. We think that striving to be a good person has to count for something before God. We may not be perfect, but we reason that surely God doesn't expect us to be.

Have you ever tried to reassure yourself with thoughts like those? And yet have you had lingering fears,

wondering whether you've really done enough good? Does guilt for things you have done wrong keep coming back, robbing you of happiness?

Rather than trying to shout louder than those frightening voices, hear God speak a hard truth: *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). When I disobey God's perfect will in my life, I deserve to die eternally in hell. For God demands that everyone be perfect—that we never sin, even once.

This makes it quite clear that by nature we are all spiritually bankrupt. Yet Jesus says, *"Blessed (happy) are the poor in spirit."* But isn't being spiritually poor—even bankrupt—reason to be sad and afraid?

Yes. But this is also the moment to hear God tell us a most amazing truth from his Word: *"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

When we see that we have nothing to give God, we are so grateful that God has lavished us with spiritual riches. Jesus freely came to earth to take all of our sin on himself. He became poor—he humbled himself to become the victim of the greatest suffering, paying on the cross the penalty of sin that we owed. He now assures you, "Your sins are forgiven." With sins forgiven and the eternal kingdom of heaven yours because of Jesus, you are truly rich!

It is a blessing to be a poor beggar before God because in Jesus we are filled with the riches of salvation.