

Matthew 5:3

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Aug. 11, 2018.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Many Bible students enjoy reading scriptures from the section that is generally called the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5 through 7 in the book of Matthew).

When Christ saw the multitude, He went up on a mountain (Matthew 5:1). When He was seated, His disciples came to Him (same verse). Then, He began to teach them (verse 2). Today, let's look at Matthew 5:3.

Matthew 5:3—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Poor in spirit

What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? Let's notice how a few other translations describe the phrase.

- Emphasized New Testament—"destitute in spirit"
- James Moffatt Translation—"who feel poor in spirit"
- New English Bible—"who know that they are poor"
- Berkeley Version of the New Testament—"who sense spiritual poverty"
- New Testament in Modern English—"how happy are the humble-minded"

Let's notice some other verses in the Bible that describe the characteristic.

Isaiah 66:1-2—"Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,'" says the LORD. 'But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.' "

Matthew 18:3-4—"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Philippians 2:2-4—"Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambi-

tion or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Kingdom of heaven

It is interesting to note how the Gospel of Matthew often refers to the Kingdom as the kingdom of “heaven” while the other three Gospel writers generally refer to it as the kingdom of “God.”

Here is an unofficial breakdown of how Matthew described the Kingdom.

- Kingdom of Father—2 times
- Kingdom of God—6 times
- Kingdom—10 times
- Kingdom of heaven—30 times

In a particular discussion, Christ referred to the Kingdom as both of heaven and of God.

Matthew 19:23-24—“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’ ”

In an epistle from the apostle Peter found later in the Bible, he wrote about about the Kingdom being reserved in heaven for the elect.

1 Peter 1:3-5—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”