

## Absent are the Poor in Spirit: James Street

August 11, 2024

James 1:9-11

From Matthew 5:3: **Poor in Spirit**: those who have rooted out in their lives all that the world would hold on to them. Free from possessing, yet possessing all things (Job 1:21, Matt. 13:44-46, John 12:1-8). To have Christ we give everything, Matt. 16:24-27. Theirs in the kingdom of God. **Context of James 1**: V2-4, trials bring joy. V5-8, God desires to help us in our trials with wisdom. V9-11, believers are poor in spirit, whether rich or poor in this life.

**James gives us two principles that help us understand being poor in spirit.**

1. **Unconventional Principle: Boast in What You Will Lose**: V9-10a, James switches conventional wisdom, the lowly or **humble** believer (in poverty or financial strain) glories in their future exaltation in heaven. James is speaking to the matter of the heart calling the brother **lowly**, or one who has been humbled.
  - a. We see James discussing wealth and poverty in Chapter 2:1-8 so his use of “lowly” or humble is in relation to the heart and not material wealth.
  - b. The humble brother has a humble heart even though they possess little wealth.
    - i. They can boast in the inheritance they will receive when they enter heaven.
  - c. The **rich** believer glories in their humiliation.
    - i. Anticipating in the next life that they will leave everything behind.
    - ii. Looking forward to leaving all behind.
    - iii. Boasting in what they will lose on that day.
  - d. Both rich and poor believers have a future reward for enduring trial and temptation.
2. **Unmistakable Point: Nothing but Christ Will Last**: V10b-11, we should learn to let things go – to become poor in spirit.
  - a. A flower is tender, easily plucked and trampled.
  - b. Like the flower of the field, their beauty is here today and gone tomorrow.
  - c. The heat wilts the flower and burns the grass, they are like riches and wealth.
  - d. The rich should learn to be generous and be rich in good works, the rich should not trust in “uncertain riches,” 1 Tim. 6:17.
  - e. We shouldn’t trust in other things we possess: intelligence, entertainment, image we keep up, all of these things perish and are temporary.
  - f. Passages that James draws from: Is.40:8, Ps. 103:15-16.
  - g. As believers we put our hope in Christ and not in things.
3. **Applications**:
  - a. Boast in what you’ll become because nothing but Christ will last. Col. 3:1-4, Set your mind on things above, your life is hidden in Christ. When He appears, we will appear with Him in glory.
  - b. Where are our affections? Where do they lie? In things of the earth that are temporary or things that are eternal? Matt. 13:44-46.
  - c. Christ is our glory and our inheritance, nothing else is needed in life, Ps. 73:26.
  - d. How we repent of a heart that desires the things of the world:
    - i. Identify what you consider to be important in life?
    - ii. Pray daily and fervently that the Lord will take the love of the world out of your heart. God works in you to will and to do His good pleasure, Phil. 2:13.
    - iii. Come to Christ, He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you. He humbled Himself for us, 2 Cor. 8:9, we became rich because Christ became poor in spirit.

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### Further Discussion and Application

For those who are having a difficult time identifying what is holding their heart, what questions might you ask them to help them understand where their treasure is? Have them write out their weekly schedule, see where their time is spent. Have them examine their bank statements to see where they spend their money. Have them list their friends, how many are those in the church? How many friends are outside the church? Who are their closest friends?

In examining Romans 12:1-21, the Christian life is on display. What does the life of a believer look like when you examine Romans 12? What are the actions towards others from Romans 12:10? How should believers live in order to please Christ and what do they have to give up to follow Him? What does it cost to follow Christ?

There is always a sense of loss when things are given up. What promises from God's word would you share with the believer who wants to know, what losing your life means? What hope do we have that the next life doesn't compare to whatever might be lost here and now? What Scriptures would you provide them? What experiences of your own would you share with them? What is Paul saying to believers in Romans 8:18?

What are the blessings of humility? Why is it so important to approach God with humility? How will humility be demonstrated in your life? What will be demonstrated in your speech towards others, James 3:17-18? What does a humble believer do? How do they treat others? How do they serve others? What motivates the humble believer to obey the Lord?

We were bought at a price, 1 Cor. 6:20. How do we glorify the Lord in our bodies and spirits? What should our body be doing? What should be happening in our spirit? What is the blessing of being poor in spirit?