

Blessing the Poor in Spirit with Jesus  
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It is not safe to admit weaknesses in our world. We don't want our boss to know we aren't the perfect employee. We demand our favorite football team to only draft or recruit the best... or even scout ahead and steal signs to get an edge (ha). We even mask our weaknesses by calling them strengths sometimes. Just like our knee-jerk response - I'm fine - when someone asks how are we doing, we try to actually believe that ourselves.

We don't like to admit we are weak as Christians. Some people even like to deny they are sad when a loved one dies. We think we should be always positive, never doubting. We think we should hide our struggle with any particular sin. We should always be happy and confident. Just look at all the happy people on church websites!

Yet the first thing Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew after announcing that the reign of God has come to earth is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3) Right away we think - ok now I need to become poor in spirit or else Jesus won't bless me. Friend, you are poor in spirit!

That's ok. You don't need to pretend anymore.

Jesus blesses you in particular, not with the ability to be strong, but with the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life. He is strong for you. No matter how much you may grow as a disciple of Christ, you never get beyond totally depending on His grace and His strength. He's got you. In fact, the more you actually grow in Christ the more you realize how poor you are...and how rich in mercy and love God is.

As we begin to build on Christ's promises and strength this year, we seek to impact more and more lives. More people who are tired of pretending to be fine will find rest in what God has done through Christ for them.

I believe that there are so many people out there who are tired of pretending they aren't poor in spirit, meek, or mourning. They are hungry for the Good News that God loves sinners and only sinners.

Have you learned that in your life? Would you like others to experience this as well? Please pray that we are able to extend Jesus' blessing to the poor in Spirit through His work in our lives.