

SERMON-BASED STUDY: THE EMPTY LIFE

Matthew 5:1-4, ESV – *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 This week we learned that blessed can mean happy, fortunate, but mostly approved. How do you feel knowing that you are blessed (approved) by God?

- 2 We also learned that the first and last Beatitudes end with the same reward, the kingdom of heaven. What is the kingdom of heaven? Why is this such a great reward?

3 Why is it important for people to recognize their spiritual brokenness and that sin brings death?

DIGGING DEEPER

A *Luke 18:9-14, ESV – ⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ 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. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the 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!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

4 At the heart level, what is the difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector?

5 What does Jesus mean when He said, “this man went down to his house justified”?

6 What are some ways that people tend to be like the Pharisee in this parable? How can we avoid becoming this way?

B *Luke 15:11-24, ESV – ¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.*

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

7 Looking at the passage above, describe the physical state of the younger son at the point of his 'revelation'. What do you think his mental, emotional, and spiritual state was at that moment?

8 How is the father's reaction upon the son's return a mirror of how God reacts when we return to Him?

9 Why does it seem necessary for people to be in a broken place to fully receive the blessing?

TAKING IT HOME

Jesus reminds us that we are to remember that we are spiritually broken and that we need Him. How are you doing at keeping this mindset in your life? Are there times in your life that you forget this? How can you continually keep this understanding in your mind and heart? Share with your group or accountability partner what God has been showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to be people who live the empty life.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 6:5

John 14:10

Romans 3:10-18

1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Colossians 2:9-10

1 Timothy 1:15

Revelation 3:17-18