

Momentum: Pursing God's Blessing Through the Beatitudes
Week/Session 2 — The Enigma of Emptyhandedness: Being Poor In Spirit

- This week our lesson focuses on the first beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).
- Important Quote: "Humility is the gateway blessing that leads to all the others, and without this, none of the other blessings can be reached." And thank God the starting point is within reach for us all.
- Colin began his message by saying, "No one wants to be poor, so how can the poor in spirit possibly be blessed?"
- Since being poor in spirit is so different from a modern way of thinking, how would a person develop this characteristic? Colin used the example of Isaiah, who was one of the most eloquent prophets in the Old Testament, yet when he had a vision of the glory of God, he cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). John Calvin said, "It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself" (Institutes of Christian Religion, Vol. 1, p. 38). Therefore coming close to God made Isaiah poor in Spirit, and Jesus says, that is where blessing begins. If this is true, how might you attempt to draw closer to God in your own walk with him?
- Other thoughts: Humility comes from the word "humus" meaning, "earthy." It entails recognizing the ground on which we stand. What is the ground that we stand upon when we come before God? The Prayer of Humble Access (See BCP p.337) relates to this ground. In this prayer we are taught to say, *"We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy..."* How is this kind of thinking foreign to our western culture, which only knows how to be assertive when one is standing on their own rights and dignity and goodness?
- "Humility is being clothed with the very beauty and blessedness of Jesus" (Andrew Murray). Who are people that you have known or have read about that have demonstrated this kind of grace and beauty?
- Colin said, "When you know that you have nothing to offer to God, you're in a position to receive everything that he offers to you." How would this attitude protect a person from resentment when life doesn't go the way they expected? How might his attitude help you as you face the present COVID-19 crisis?

Prayer: Ask God to give you what you do not have, and trust him believing his promise that he will come to you, live in you, and bless you.