Jesus had spent the night in prayer, and as He came down from the mountain to the lakeshore, a large multitude had gathered, looking for Him. Jesus had compassion on them, and led them back up the mountain side to a large grassy meadow, and there sat down, and taught the people. What He taught them is recorded in the chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew.

This morning I want to look with you at the first part of what Jesus taught the people, but before we do, let's have a look at the people who were listening -- their thoughts, their hopes, and their expectations. In this way we can better picture the meaning of Christ's words that day.

The multitude were mostly from the surrounding Galileean towns, from all sections of society. There were also people from Judea, Jerusalem, and surrounding nations. Let me quote from Mount of Blessing on this:

MB Preface  “Besides the usual crowd from the Galilean towns, there were great numbers from Judea, and from Jerusalem itself; from Perea, and from the half-heathen population of Decapolis; from Idumea, away to the south of Judea, and from Tyre and Sidon, the Phoenician cities on the shore of the Mediterranean.”.

They had all heard of Jesus, and many sat down, eager to hear this great Teacher.
Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

But what were their thoughts, why were they eager to hear Him. Lets again hear from Mount of Blessing:

MB 5. “A feeling of expectancy pervaded the multitude also, and eager faces gave evidence of the deep interest. As they sat upon the green hillside, awaiting the words of the divine Teacher, their hearts were filled with thoughts of future glory. There were scribes and Pharisees who looked forward to the day when they should have dominion over the hated Romans and possess the riches and splendor of the world’s great empire. The poor peasants and fishermen hoped to hear the assurance that their wretched hovels, the scanty food, the life of toil, and fear of want, were to be exchanged for mansions of plenty and days of ease. In place of the one coarse garment which was their covering by day and their blanket at night, they hoped that Christ would give them the rich and costly robes of their conquerors. All hearts thrilled with the proud hope that Israel was soon to be honored before the nations as the chosen of the Lord, and Jerusalem exalted as the head of a universal kingdom.”

# Theirs were proud, ambitious thoughts, looking forward to the glory and prestige they believed the Messiah would bring them. They felt ready to enter in to this great new event.

But then, Jesus opened His mouth, and said...

Matt. 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ”
Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

Why had Jesus come to the earth? Yes, He had come to die for our sins; but He came for another reason...

DA 21. “The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken... His (God's) character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2."

So what other reason had Christ come to the earth – to make manifest the character of God, the way He thinks, how He does things among men, what He regards as important for men. This Christ came to make clear.

It says, “the earth was dark through misapprehension of God..."
Yet to what nation did Jesus come, among whom was He born? The Jewish nation.

Could it be, that this nation, who had the greatest amount of truth from God, who believed themselves that they were God’s special people, could be included in this darkness, this misunderstanding of God? Is it possible that this proud, religious nation, was also deceived in relation to God?

The answer to our question lies in understanding the meaning in Christ’s opening sentence, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Who was Jesus meaning by “the poor in spirit”? Who were these people? Lets have Mount of Blessing again explain:

MB 6-7. “In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. The prayer of the Pharisee, “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men” (Luke 18:11, R.V.), expressed the feeling of his class and, to a great degree, of the whole nation. But in the throng that surrounded Jesus there were some who had a sense of their spiritual poverty...In the multitude gathered upon the mount there were souls who, in the presence of His purity, felt that they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17); and they longed for “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” (Titus 2:11). In these souls, Christ's words of greeting awakened hope; they saw that their lives were under the benediction of God.”
Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

Those who felt that their lives are not measuring up to God’s purity, those who feared that they were outcast because their characters are lacking....these, says God, are blessed—under the smile of God

Lets look at the Bible record of some prominent ones who entered into the kingdom of heaven...

Uneducated, rough, foul-mouthed fishermen

Despised, crooked tax collectors

Loose-living Samaritan woman

Prostitute Mary, out of whom were cast 7 devils

Dozens of Lepers

Paralytics, usually such because of their sinful habits

Un-professing Roman centurion – a practising pagan
Uneducated peasants

and the list goes on...

#All these had something in common—in men’s eyes, they were outside the favour of God. All of them had nothing to offer in regard to spiritual attainment. Yet all of them were open to the Holy Spirit’s work. All of them acknowledged that they needed a Saviour. These people represent the poor in spirit.

There is another character in the Old Testament that describes what poor in spirit means... Let me quote from PP.

PP 183-184. “It was with a deeply troubled heart that Jacob set out on his lonely journey. With only his staff in his hand he must travel hundreds of miles through a country inhabited by wild, roving tribes. In his remorse and timidity he sought to avoid men, lest he should be traced by his angry brother. He feared that he had lost forever the blessing that God had purposed to give him; and Satan was at hand to press temptations upon him.”
“The evening of the second day found him far away from his father's tents. He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray. But he was so utterly lonely that he felt the need of protection from God as he had never felt it before. With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin, and entreated for some evidence that he was not utterly forsaken. Still his burdened heart found no relief. He had lost all confidence in himself, and he feared that the God of his fathers had cast him off.

“But God did not forsake Jacob. His mercy was still extended to His erring, distrustful servant... Wearied with his journey, the wanderer lay down upon the ground, with a stone for his pillow. As he slept he beheld a ladder, bright and shining, whose base rested upon the earth, while the top reached to heaven. Upon this ladder angels were ascending and descending; above it was the Lord of glory, and from the heavens His voice was heard: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac."... Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

# It is when you think that you are furthest from God, that He is really the nearest. You have lost all confidence in yourself, and you know that there is no hope from something within you. You are directed upward, and Jesus is revealed as your Saviour.

**Mat 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**Mat 5:4** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Some of you here today may be mourning over failures during the week, or even this morning on the way to church. Brethren, the very fact that you mourn, means that you care about your soul. That sense of loss, that feeling of lack, is the tender work of the Holy spirit upon your heart, that you might come to Jesus for the healing of your soul. Jesus says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 21:28-31 “ But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

Brethren, what is the message here! What is God saying to us...!

# Those who are confident that they are right and going to heaven, may not be going there at all! And maybe those who we would least expect, will be in heaven instead of us.

RH Nov. 7, 1882. “No stronger delusion can possess the human mind, than that which makes
men believe they are on the right foundation, and that God accepts their works, when they are sinning against him."

# Doesn't this bring us to our knees, driving us to search our souls, to see where we are with God! Are we deceived? Are we cocky in religious things, feeling confident in our correctness? Do we consider ourselves spiritually safe, and others beneath us because they don't see it the way we do? Are we meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for that TRUTH, whatever it may be? Do we need to be shaken, to awake from a dream that Satan might have bound around us regarding our spiritual condition?

How shall we know where we are at with God? How can we know if we need awakening?

In Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, the opening sentence shows a requirement to enter heaven, one that maybe many of us are overlooking. In the world, the strongest succeed; those who excel receive the reward. The popular are those with many talents; the honoured, the ones who fought the closest. This expectation has unfortunately been carried into religion as well. We regard heaven, righteousness, and Christ-likeness the reward of the strongest. We expect the one who fights the bravest, who stands the surest, who holds out the longest, to win the companionship of God.

But what if you are not strong, doubting, discouraged, timid, or dare I say, in sin? Surely
this shuts you out from hope, from God, from victory. The world would say so, many Christians would say so....but our Lord says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit...THEIRS is the kingdom of heaven.”

This is what so puzzled and annoyed the Jewish leaders. Why was such a prestigious Teacher, welcoming and mingling with such freedom with prostitutes, drunkards, outlaws, and underworld crooks. They felt that to keep a high profession, such people should be shunned, kept away from themselves, lest they be contaminated, and dragged down.

You see, Jesus does not excuse or ignore sin, but He does welcome the sinner. He favours you where you are, as you are...

MB 7. “Jesus had presented the cup of blessing to those who felt that they were "rich, and increased with goods" (Revelation 3:17), and had need of nothing, and they had turned with scorn from the gracious gift. He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ...There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person....”

“ Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed.”
At what time would you most appreciate sleep? When you are tired and at the end of your strength. When will you most appreciate the saving grace of Jesus—when you are mentally worn, heavily laden, and spiritually flat.

**ST August 21, 1884.** “Our great need is itself an argument, and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do for us those things that we desire. Oh how shamefully has Jesus been treated! He is inviting, urging us to come to him and receive the very help we need; yet too often his invitations are slighted, his proffered aid refused.”

How are his invitations slighted, his aid refused? By sourcing another builder; by turning to other help than Him. Pride tells us we must strive, battle, push ourselves toward the Lord; that the strongest will win heaven, and come out wearing Christ’s likeness. We are taught this in religious class, it is implied in our sermons, our discussions; it is in our very outlook on life. We will fight for our dignity right to the very end. And when we stop, when we lose hope of attaining any further step, then guilt sets in; we think we have let God down. But really, pride has only had its day.

Brethren, it is much easier to help a wounded one when they are still, and not kicking and thrashing about. God invites us, Be still, and know that I am God.” When you are at the end of your spiritual tether--- for God will allow your self-sufficiency to be fully stretched--- when you fear your experience is crashing down around you, I would praise God!
The blindness of self-righteousness, and contented smugness is being removed from you, and you are realizing your NEED. You are in the best position to appreciate Jesus, to appreciate HIS aid. Here is where the Holy Spirit wants to take us, that we may voluntarily abandon our self-reliance and welcome in the righteousness of Jesus. When you feel poor in spirit, and in need of the grace of Jesus, praise God; for He says, yours is the kingdom of heaven.

Come to Jesus for both your title, and your fitness to enter into Heaven. He is the WAY setup by our Father in heaven to both receive and be made ready for companionship with Him. Your acceptance with God is not based on your efforts at following Him; but on the love of our Father in heaven for you already. Accept this, walk in this, and He will save you.