

Living in the Blessedness of the Reality of the Kingdom of God by Being Poor in Spirit and Pure in Heart

by Ed Marks

The entire New Testament reveals that Christ is the desire of God's heart. God's heart's desire is that every person, every matter, and every thing in the universe would express Christ by being headed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10). When Christ enters into us through our faith in Him, He wants to be everything to us—our life, our life supply, our living, our expression, our joy, our reward, our goal, and our expectation (Col. 3:4; John 4:10, 14; 6:35; Phil. 1:20-21; Psa. 43:4; Rom. 14:17; John 15:11; Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:14, 20-21). The Gospels are a fourfold biography of this wonderful Christ who dwells within every regenerated believer. In Matthew He is the King-Savior; in Mark, the Slave-Savior; in Luke, the Man-Savior; and in John, the God-Savior. We especially need to see, realize, and experience Christ as the King-Savior so that we may live in the blessedness of the reality of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God, which is God's heavenly rule within His people, is actually Christ Himself.

When He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. (Luke 17:20-21)

Because the Lord was in the midst of the Pharisees, the kingdom of God was in their midst. In prophesying concerning the coming Christ as the reality of God's kingdom, Isaiah said,

Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness,... /
And a man will be like a refuge from the wind / And
a covering from the tempest, / Like streams of water in a
dry place, / Like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted
land. (32:1-2)

Christ our King is not only the complete God but also the perfect man. When we take this God-man as our King and allow Him to reign within us, He becomes our sure refuge and covering from the storms of daily life, our pure water of life in the dissatisfied world, and our protective hiding place in the desert wasteland of human existence.

If we are filled with the ruling presence of Christ as our King-Savior, we will enter into the principles of living in the reality of the kingdom revealed in Matthew 5 through 7. These principles are impossible for us to live by in our natural life, but thank the Lord that what is impossible with man is possible with God (Mark 10:27). The King-Savior as the ruling life in our spirit is the highest supply to meet these highest demands. It is important to realize that the Christ who dwells in us is our ruling life. He wants to be our Ruler, our Lord. We must take note that it is *the Lord* who is with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) and that Christ died and rose from the dead *that He might be Lord* (Rom. 14:8-9). When we receive the Lord as our life and Savior, He dwells in us as our King-Savior, and He wants us to take Him as our King in all the areas of our daily life and service to Him in the gospel. He wants us to be His kingdom people, those who are filled and blessed with His ruling presence so that we know the joy of being under His heavenly rule. The kingdom of God is Christ as righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (v. 17).

A. B. Simpson expressed the joy of living and working together with Christ as our King in a wonderful hymn, the basis of which is 1 Chronicles 4:23, which says, "They dwelt...with the king for his work." The king here is David, and in the New Testament Christ is the Lord of David, the Son of David, the Root of David, the Offspring of David, and the real and greater David (Matt. 12:2-4; 22:41-46; Rev. 22:16). We dwell with our real King David, Christ, for His work to spread His kingdom

to the whole inhabited earth (Matt. 24:14). Stanzas 2 and 4 of this hymn show the inner enjoyment of our King's ruling presence and the overflow of His presence as the living message and spreading of the kingdom of God:

I'm dwelling with Jesus my King;
I've found where He dwells with His own;
I've opened the door of my heart;
He's made it His temple and throne.
Like Mary I sit at His feet,
Like John I recline on His breast;
His presence is fulness of joy,
His bosom is infinite rest.

I dwell with the King for His work,
The work, it is His and not mine;
He plans and prepares it for me
And fills me with power divine.
So duty is changed to delight,
And prayer into praise as I sing;
I dwell with the King for His work
And work in the strength of my King. (*Hymns*, #904)

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Christ is typified not only by King David but also by King Solomon. David typifies the suffering and crucified Christ. Solomon typifies the resurrected and coming Christ. In speaking of the queen of Sheba coming to pay honor to Solomon and hear his words of wisdom, the Lord Jesus said, "The queen of the south...came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something more than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42). After listening to Solomon's words and seeing everything related to his kingship with his palace and servants, the queen exclaimed, "Happy are your men! Happy are these your servants, who attend you continually and hear your wisdom!" (1 Kings 10:8). In the New Testament our happiness is to live in the presence of the resurrected Christ as our King. Our happiness is to continually attend to Him and enjoy Him as the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24, 30). Our happiness, our blessedness, is to be gained by Christ, to have personal and intimate fellowship with Him, and to be ruled by Him in every part of our being. The Greek word for *blessed* in Matthew 5:3-11 can be rendered "happy" or "blessed and happy." The Amplified Bible expands on the word *blessed*, rendering

it as "happy, enviably fortunate, and spiritually prosperous...with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of...outward conditions." Another hymn by A. B. Simpson says that Christ is the fountain of joy within us, an eternal and divine joy that is not dependent on outward circumstances:

I have come to the Fountain of Joy;
His joy is the strength of my heart.
My delight is unmixed with alloy,
My sunshine can never depart.
The fig tree may wither and die,
Earth's pleasures and prospects decline;
But my fountains can never be dry—
My portion, my joy is divine. (*Hymns*, #523)

Such joy was declared by John Nelson Darby when he said, "Oh, the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here" (Weremchuk, quoted under the photo of Darby on the opening page). This joy is described in the Lord's ninefold

blessing to us, His disciples, in Matthew 5:3-11. These verses reveal the outflow of the kingdom people's inner being, the expression of what they are within, the expression of their being blessed with the person of Christ as the presence of the Triune God. The most crucial part of this blessing is the blessing

of being poor in spirit and pure in heart (vv. 3, 8).

"Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs Is the Kingdom of the Heavens"

Man is a tripartite being composed of a spirit and a soul and a body (1 Thes. 5:23). Our spirit is an organ created by God for us to contact God and worship God (John 4:24). To be poor in spirit is to be emptied, unloaded, in our human spirit (the innermost part of our being) so that we may realize and possess Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. To be poor in spirit is to have a learning spirit, "a spirit of needing help," a spirit of a disciple. A disciple of Christ is one who is always "learning" Christ in the way of receiving more revelation of His supreme preciousness and of subjectively gaining more of Him day by day (Eph. 4:20; Phil. 3:8-9). In Luke 18:17 the Lord said, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall by no means enter into it." Children are not filled with and occupied by old concepts. They are able to receive new thoughts, and they are dependent on their parents for much needed help. If

we are truly poor in spirit, our inner being is empty, open, and ready to receive and be renewed with the new thoughts of Christ's mind from His Word. If we are truly poor in spirit, we also have a spirit of "needing help" from God as our Father, from Christ as our Head, from the Spirit as our Comforter, and from the members of His Body as our fellow believers. The more we go on with the Lord and grow up into Him in all things (Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:15), the more we realize that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

To be poor in spirit means that our inward attitude is one of acknowledging that we have nothing, know nothing, can do nothing, and are nothing. The apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:3, "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." Isaiah 57:15 says,

Thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Objectively, the Lord is in the third heaven dwelling in the high and holy place as the high and exalted One. Subjectively, He dwells in and with those who are contrite and lowly of spirit, poor in spirit. How amazing it is that the One who inhabits eternity also inhabits the inner being of those who humble themselves before Him and love Him with reverence! If we experience any failures in our Christian life, our lowliness and contrition give Him the way to revive us. In our weaknesses and failures, we can pray as David did: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, / And renew a steadfast spirit within me... / Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit" (Psa. 51:10, 12). Those who are poor in spirit have a willing spirit for their service to the Lord and to His church for the sake of His economy. They do not serve out of duty but out of delight. They do not serve in their own strength but in the strength of their King.

Isaiah 66:1-2 says,

Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest? / For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

These verses reveal that God's desire is for man to be His house, His home, His living temple (2 Cor. 6:16). God wants to build Himself into us and us into Him so that we become His home and He becomes our home for the mutual abode of God and man (John 14:23; 15:5). For us to be God's habitation, His dwelling place, we must be those who are poor in spirit and who tremble at God's word. We need to be those who treasure the Lord's speaking to us, having a reverence for His holy Word and allowing it to dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16).

Our spiritual progress depends on our hunger for the Lord and for His Word. To be poor in spirit means to forget the things that are behind, even our past experiences of Christ, and to press forward to gain more of Christ day by day (Phil. 3:8-14). We should be afraid of self-contentment, self-satisfaction, and satisfaction with things of the past. Luke 1:53 says, "The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty." Those in the church in Laodicea thought that they were rich in Christ, but the Lord's assessment was that they were poor in Him (Rev. 3:17). We should pray that we would be "the hungry,"

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those whom the Lord fills with the good things of Himself as the all-inclusive and bountiful Spirit (Phil. 1:19). Otherwise, we will be sent away from Him empty, without having any of His spiritual riches or divine element added to our being. Spiritual stagnation is the result of indifference to our own spiritual lack, and all failure and decadence are the result of self-complacency. Deuteronomy 4:25 says that the children of Israel would eventually be those who "languished in the land," the good land of their inheritance. The word for "languished" in the Hebrew implies "the loss of spiritual freshness, and the blunting of original impressions, produced by force of custom, or long residence in the same spot" (Recovery Version, note 1). As we daily spend personal time with the Lord, we must be exercised to be emptied in the depths of our being and open to Him, giving Him the way to cause us to walk in the freshness and newness of Christ as our life and serve Him in the freshness and newness of the Spirit with our spirit (Rom. 6:4; 7:6; 8:16).

The history of the children of Israel, recorded for our admonition, shows that we can never depend on our past

victory to be our present strength. The book of Joshua records that the children of Israel had a great victory at Jericho. When they followed the Lord's instructions to march around Jericho, the walls came down. The next city that they encountered was Ai, and Joshua sent some men to spy out the situation there. When the spies came back, they said to him, "Not all the people need go up; let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai" (7:3). However, when the men went out to battle, they ended up fleeing before the men of Ai and were soundly defeated. The underlying reason for their defeat was that they relied on their past victory over Jericho to be their present strength. In the destruction of Jericho, no fighting was needed, but at Ai the children of Israel lost the presence of the Lord. "Instead of asking God what they should do against Ai, they forgot God and knew only themselves. Israel acted on their own, without seeking the Lord's direction and without having the Lord's presence" (Recovery Version, note 1).

The spiritual lesson to be learned from this account is that we, the people of God, should always be one with our God, who is not only among us but also in us, making men one with God—God-men. As God-men, we should practice being one with the Lord, walking with Him, living with Him, and having our entire being with Him... This is the way to walk as a Christian, to fight as a child of God, and to build up the Body of Christ. If we have the Lord's presence, we have wisdom, insight, foresight, and the inner knowledge concerning things. The Lord's presence is everything to us. (v. 4, note 1)

We cannot go on without a new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him. By *new knowledge*, we do not mean new objective knowledge but a new, precious, subjective knowledge of the Lord in both revelation and experience. When Paul said that he counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he was referring to his revelation of the supreme preciousness and supereminence of Christ (Phil. 3:8). When Paul expressed the desire "to know Him" (v. 10), this was to know the Lord in his subjective experience according to the vision that he had received of the Lord. Day by day we need to know the Lord in a new and increasing way. Because Paul was poor in spirit, the Lord made him a minister and a witness not only of the things in which he had seen the Lord but also of the things in which the Lord would appear to him again and again (Acts 26:16). Paul was continually on a quest to know Christ subjectively and to receive fresh, new visions of Him. We need to follow this pattern of progress in our Christian life.

Whenever we find ourselves crying, "I cannot make it," our progress has begun. Then God is easily able to create a desire for Him in us. When we realize that we are sick and in need of the Lord as our Physician, and when we realize

that we cannot make it in ourselves and by our own strength, we become desperate for the Lord (Matt. 9:12-13). Then we realize that we are utterly helpless in ourselves and need to be in constant, intimate fellowship with the Lord. As we pursue the Lord more and more, the following words become more and more precious to us: *utterly helpless*. When we acknowledge that we are utterly helpless in ourselves, the resurrected Christ becomes our all-sufficient grace tabernacling over us. When we realize that we are utterly helpless, we can say with Paul, "When I am weak [according to the flesh in my natural man], then I am powerful [according to the Spirit in my inner man]" (2 Cor. 12:10). This can be seen in 2 Chronicles 20, when a great enemy was about to destroy Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah. In a very poignant scene, Jehoshaphat called on all the people to seek Jehovah, "and all Judah stood before Jehovah with their little ones, their wives, and their children" (v. 13). In this desperate situation Jehoshaphat prayed, "O our God,...we have no strength before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we do not know what to do; but our eyes are upon You" (v. 12). This is real prayer that displays a man who was poor in spirit, a prayer that gives the Lord the way to come into our situation: "Lord, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." If we know what to do, we do not need the Lord. However, the less we know what to do, the more we need Him. Paradoxically, the more we grow in the Lord and are brought on to maturity by the Lord, the more we do not know what to do apart from Him. This genuine dependence on the Lord gives Him a way to display His victory in us.

We need to realize that God gives difficulties to us in order to dig more deeply in us so that He can fill us more with Himself. God causes all persons, matters, and things in our environment to empty us of every pre-occupation that is within us so that we can have an increased capacity to be filled with Him, transformed by Him, and conformed to His image (Rom. 8:28-29). Toward the end of Jacob's life, he was a relatively transformed man, but when he lost Joseph, he lost the treasure of his heart. Although he later regained Joseph, this tragedy caused his whole being to be absolutely open and empty toward God (Lee, *Life-study* 1187, 1196-1197). Jacob became an open vessel whom the Triune God could fill to the brim with Himself as life so that Jacob would fully express God and reign in life.

Whenever we become empty, the Lord will fill us up. Spiritual progress is a matter of being continually emptied out and continually filled up. In our Christian life we need to be those who are always hungry for the Lord yet continually being satisfied by Him. In 2 Kings 4 the prophet Elisha came to a widow who was being pursued by a creditor. She had only a little jar of oil. Therefore, Elisha told her, "Go and borrow vessels outside, from all your neighbors,

empty vessels, and not just a few. Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and each one you fill set aside” (vv. 3-4). She did as he said and started filling the vessels. Verse 6 says, “When she had filled the vessels, she said to her son, Bring me another vessel. But he said to her, There is no other vessel. And the oil stopped.” This story shows, in typology, that we need to be “empty vessels” who can be freshly filled with the Lord—vessels who can be filled with the God of mercy, unto honor and glory (Rom. 9:21, 23). In order to be poor in spirit, we must tell the Lord, “Lord, I want my whole being to be open to You. Empty me of my past experiences and of everything of the past. I want to receive You in a fresh and new way.” When we pray in this way, He will fill us with Himself as the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and we will overflow with Him for His expression (John 7:38). This is the experience of being filled with Christ as the reality of the kingdom of God.

“Blessed Are the Pure in Heart, for They Shall See God”

The kingdom people—those who continually are being gained by God, have fellowship with God, and are ruled by God—are not only poor in spirit but also pure in heart. Before proceeding further, we need to point out that the spirit and the heart are distinct from each other and are not the same thing. We have said previously that man is a tripartite being, possessing a spirit, a soul, and a body (1 Thes. 5:23). Man’s spirit is for contacting God and substantiating God (John 4:24; 2 Cor. 4:13), his soul is for enjoying God and expressing God (Luke 1:46-47; Psa. 43:4-5), and his body is for magnifying God to the glory of God (Phil. 1:20; 1 Cor. 6:20). Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; John 14:1; 16:22; Acts 11:23)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20). The shaded area in the following diagram illustrates the parts that compose our heart:¹



The following hymn reveals the kind of heart that we need to maintain before the Lord; stanzas 2 through 5 speak of the parts of the heart—the mind, emotion, will, and conscience:

- 1 In dealings with the Lord as life
We need a proper heart,
That of His riches, in His grace,
We fully may take part.
- 2 We need a heart in all things pure,
With mind both sound and clear,
To understand His mind and heart
In trembling and in fear.
- 3 We need a fervent, loving heart,
A heart on fire with love,
With an emotion filled with zeal
For Him, all else above.
- 4 We need a true, obedient heart,
With a submissive will,

A pure heart is a heart that loves God,
wants God, and is fixed on God alone.
Besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire.
Our heart should be single for God so that we
are fearful of nothing except offending Him
and losing His presence.

A will made pliable, yet strong,
God’s purpose to fulfill.

- 5 We need a heart condemning not,
In all things right with God;
A heart which has a conscience purged
And covered with the blood.
- 6 Lord, grant us such a heart as this,
Forever fixed on Thee,
That of Thyself we may partake
And Thy true fulness be. (*Hymns*, #744)

A pure heart is a heart that loves God, wants God, and is fixed on God alone. Besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire. The psalmist is able to say to the Lord, “Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth” (Psa. 73:25). Our heart should be single for God so that we are fearful of nothing except offending Him and losing His presence. In Psalm 86:11 the psalmist prays, “Make my heart single in fearing Your name.” We should pray

this prayer, telling the Lord that we want our heart be single towards Him, having a heart that reveres Him and that holds Him in the highest regard and respect. To have such a heart means that in our daily life and in our serving Him, we honor Him by consulting Him in everything that we do. We should pray, “Lord, I want You to be my Head, my Lord, my Master, and my King. I want You to direct every area of my life and service.”

To be pure in heart means that our heart is single, seeking nothing but Christ Himself, so that He may grow in us without frustration. Matthew 13:19-23 shows that the Lord, typified by the sower, went out to sow Himself as the seed of the kingdom into men’s hearts, that is, into their inner being, which is typified by the soil. There is no problem with the seed. There is, however, a problem with the condition of the soil. In this passage we have four conditions of the human heart: hardened, rocky, thorny, and good. We must pray to the Lord that He would not allow our heart to become like the hardened wayside but would instead make it soft toward Him. A soft heart is a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic. It is a heart that is submissive and yielding to the Lord, not stiffnecked and rebellious (cf. Exo. 32:9). Our heart should also be saved from having rocks, which can be things such as hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity. We need to have personal and affectionate times with the Lord, times in secret with Him, so that He can be deeply rooted in us (Matt. 6:6). We also need to be saved from the thorns—the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches—so that our heart can be the good earth for Christ’s full growth in us.

When we were regenerated and God put His Spirit within us, He gave us a new spirit to contact Him and a new heart to love Him (Ezek. 36:26-27). God commands us to love Him from our whole heart (Mark 12:30). Anything in our heart that we love more than God or that we place above God is an idol in His sight (Ezek. 14:3). Spiritual progress is the increase of the element of God in us and the decrease of things within us that usurp God’s place in our heart (1 Tim. 4:15; Col. 2:19). As long as there is one thing, one matter, or one person that takes possession of us, there is something in our heart usurping the place of God. Second Timothy 3:2 and 4 tell us that in the last days men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure. However, in these verses there is a fourth kind of lover mentioned: a lover of God. We want to be God-lovers—not self-lovers, money-lovers, or pleasure-lovers. A loving heart is a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, and yearns for God. Psalm 42:1 says, “As the hart pants / After the streams of water, / So my soul pants / For You, O God.”

The parts of the soul—the mind, will, and emotion—are

the three major arteries of our psychological heart that need to be maintained in the health of the divine life and the divine light. We need daily heart examinations in the presence of the Lord. Psalm 139:23 and 24 are two verses that we can pray: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts; / And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.” In these verses *harmful way* may also be translated as “idolatrous way” or “way of pain.” Any way that we take other than the eternal way, the way of Christ Himself, is a harmful, idolatrous, and painful way. This is why we need to allow the Lord, in our personal fellowship with Him, to shine on us day by day. We need to stay with the Lord for a period of time, asking Him to fully bring us into the light of His presence, and in the light of what He exposes, we need to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins to Him (1 John 1:5-9). In order to unclog the artery of our mind, we need to confess everything that is sinful in our thoughts and in our way of thinking. In order to unclog the artery of our will, we need to confess the germs of rebellion in our will. In order to unclog the artery of our emotion, we need to confess that in many cases we hate what we should love and we love what we should hate (cf. Rev. 2:4, 6). If we take the time with the Lord that is necessary to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart, we will have the sense that our entire being has become living, and we will maintain the purity of our heart before the Lord.

For us to be pure in heart means that our heart is fully turned toward God. Our spiritual progress depends on the degree to which our heart is turned toward God. The first word of the gospel of the kingdom in the book of Matthew is for men to repent (3:2; 4:17). To repent is to turn from all things other than God to God Himself. Second Kings 23:25 says that among the kings of the children of Israel, there was no king like Josiah, “who turned to Jehovah with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might.” If we are pure in heart by turning our heart to God and by seeking Him alone, our reward is that we will see Him. How wonderful it is to actually see God! Second Corinthians 3:16-18 says that when our heart is turned to the Lord, we are beholding the glory of the Lord with an unveiled face, and we are “being transfigured into His *very own* image in ever increasing splendor *and* from one degree of glory to another” (v. 18, Amplified Bible). This means that as we are beholding the Lord and seeing Him, we are gaining Him as the God of glory (Acts 7:2). Thus, seeing God equals gaining God.

The more we see God, the more we are transformed by God and the more we abhor ourselves. After passing through much suffering and many trials, Job said to the Lord, “I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But

now my eye has seen You; / Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes" (42:5-6). The more we see God, the more we deny and even hate ourselves, repenting and confessing our sins. The more we see the Lord, the more we will see that the things and objects of this world are refuse in comparison to Christ (Phil. 3:7-8). Having this kind of seeing is critical for our serving and our ministering the Lord to others. In Jeremiah 15:19 the Lord said, "If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth." This means that if we see the supreme preciousness of the Lord, everything other than the Lord—all the things of this world—will be absolutely worthless, and the Lord will make us His spokespersons on this earth. We will be His prophets speaking for Him, dispensing Him into people to open their eyes so that they may see that there is nothing in this universe more precious than Christ.

Matthew 12:34-35 tells us that what we speak comes out of the abundance of our heart. We must treasure up God's word in our heart (Psa. 119:11) so that His word becomes the good treasure of our heart. The more a person is in the word of God, the more of God's treasure he accumulates in his heart and the purer he becomes. Our human heart is not pure, for it is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), but every word in the Bible is pure. Psalm 12:6 says, "The words of Jehovah are pure words, / Silver refined in a furnace on the earth, / Purified seven times." Psalm 119:140 says, "Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it." If we want to have a pure heart and be blessed to see God, we must spend much time in His Word. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life." The way that we can keep our heart is seen in verses 20 through 22: "My son, be attentive to my words; / ...Keep them in the midst of your heart. / For they are life to those who find them, / And healing to all their flesh." The Hebrew word for *healing* may also be translated as "medicine." We need to immerse ourselves in the word of God so that His word inhabits our heart (Col. 3:16). By keeping God's words in our heart, we keep our heart purely for Him, and His words of life will even convey His Spirit of life as medicine and healing to our mortal body (John 6:63; Rom. 8:11).

Matthew 5:3 and 8 reveal that we can live in the blessedness of the reality of the kingdom of God by being poor in spirit and pure in heart. We need to be poor in spirit so that we gain the reward and the blessing—the true, pure,

and eternal happiness—of receiving and enjoying Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. We need to be pure in heart so that we gain the reward and the blessing—the true, pure, and eternal happiness—of seeing the unsearchably rich Christ as the presence of God. Psalm 78:8 shows the importance of caring for both our spirit and our heart. This verse says that the children of Israel were "a stubborn and rebellious generation, / A generation that did not set their heart right, / And whose spirit was not faithful to God." We need to be poor in spirit to maintain our faithfulness to God and pure in heart to set our heart right before God. Ultimately, we can care for our spirit and our heart by daily praying that our Father would strengthen us with His power through His Spirit into our inner man, our spirit, so that the pure One in the universe, the glorious Christ, can make His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:16-17). By being poor in spirit, we keep our spirit in a living condition in our continual receiving of God. By being pure in heart, we keep our heart in a loving condition in our continual seeing of God. Our eternal reward for this is the real, pure, unalloyed joy and blessedness of living in Christ, by Christ, and with Christ

We need to be poor in spirit so that we gain the reward and the blessing—the true, pure, and eternal happiness—of receiving and enjoying Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. We need to be pure in heart so that we gain the reward and the blessing—the true, pure, and eternal happiness—of seeing the unsearchably rich Christ as the presence of God.

as the reality of the kingdom of God for the glory and good pleasure of God. **AFC**

Notes

¹For a more detailed exposition of this, we commend to the reader the excellent booklet by Witness Lee entitled *The Parts of Man*.

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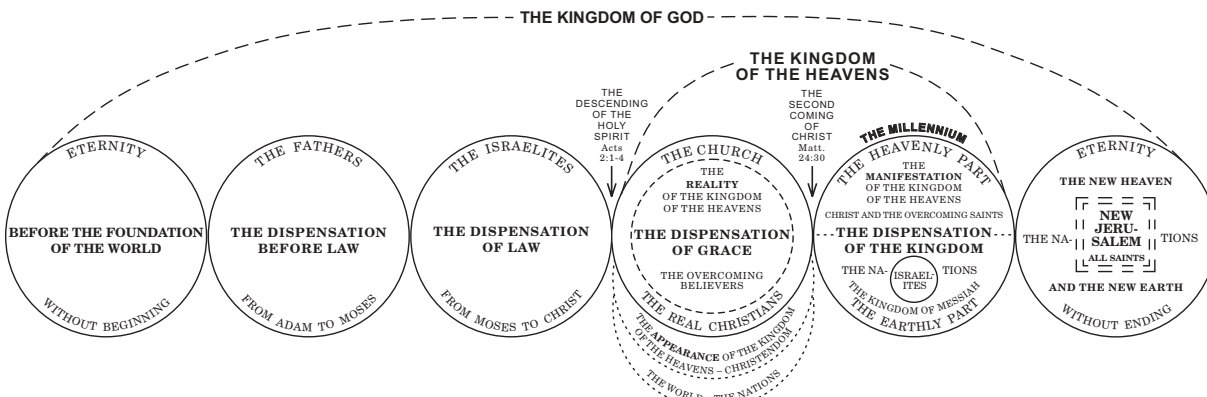
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Footnote from the Recovery Version of the Bible and a Chart of the Kingdom

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **kingdom** of the heavens” (Matt. 5:3).

kingdom: *Kingdom of the heavens* is a term used exclusively by Matthew, indicating that the kingdom of the heavens differs from the kingdom of God [see chart below], the latter being mentioned in the other three Gospels. The kingdom of God is God’s general reign from eternity past to eternity future...The kingdom of the heavens is a specific section within the kingdom of God, a section composed only of the church today and the heavenly part of the coming millennial kingdom...

According to Matthew there are three aspects concerning the kingdom of the heavens: the reality, the appearance, and the manifestation. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is the inward content of the kingdom of the heavens in its heavenly and spiritual nature, as revealed by the new King on the mountain in chs. 5—7. The appearance of the kingdom of the heavens is the outward state of the kingdom of the heavens in name, as revealed by the King on the seashore in ch. 13. The manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens is the practical coming of the kingdom of the heavens in power, as unveiled by the King on the Mount of Olives in chs. 24—25. Both the reality and the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens are with the church today. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is the proper church life (Rom. 14:17), which exists in the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens, known as Christendom. The manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens is the heavenly part of the coming millennial kingdom, which is referred to as the kingdom of the Father in 13:43; the earthly part of the millennial kingdom is the Messianic kingdom, which is referred to as the kingdom of the Son of Man in 13:41, and which is the restored tabernacle of David, the kingdom of David (Acts 15:16). In the heavenly part of the millennial kingdom, which is the kingdom of the Father manifested in power, the overcoming believers will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4, 6); in the earthly part of the millennial kingdom, which is the Messianic kingdom on earth, the saved remnant of Israel will be the priests and will teach the nations to worship God (Zech. 8:20-23).



ETERNITY PAST Eph. 1:4 1 Pet. 1:20	FROM THE CREATION OF ADAM TO THE DECREE OF THE LAW Rom. 5:13-14	FROM THE DECREE OF THE LAW TO THE COMING OF GRACE John 1:17	THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS NEAR Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7 THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS Matt. 16:18-19; 13:24; 22:2 THE CHURCH 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 1:22b-23 THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS Matt. 5-7 THE APPEARANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS Matt. 13:24-42	THE MILLENNIUM Rev. 20:4-6 (1) THE HEAVENLY PART The manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens Matt. 24:46-47; 25:19-23; Luke 19:15-19; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5 Tim. 2:12 "The kingdom of the Father" Matt. 13:43 with Christ and the overcoming saints as the kings (2) THE EARTHLY PART The kingdom of Messiah 2 Sam. 7:13 "The tabernacle of David" Acts 15:16 The restored kingdom of Israel Acts 1:6 "The kingdom of the Son of Man" Matt. 13:41; Rev. 11:15 with: (a) the saved Israelites Rom. 11:26-27; Zech. 12:10; Ezek. 36:25-28 as the priests Zech. 8:20-23; Isa. 2:2-3 and (b) the restored nations Acts 3:21 as the people Matt. 25:32-34	THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH Isa. 65:17; 66:22 2 Pet. 3:13 with: (1) the New Jerusalem as the administrative center Heb. 12:22 Rev. 21 (a) constituted of all the redeemed and perfected saints, the sons of God Rev. 21:6-7 (b) these perfected saints as the kings Rev. 22:5 and (2) the purged nations as the people Rev. 21:3-4, 24, 26; 22:2b
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