

Panthers:

Where do you go to satisfy your desires? Jesus gave the secret to satisfaction in the greatest speech ever given when he addressed an estimated 20,000 followers along the mountainside outside Capernaum. We call it the *Sermon on the Mount* recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapters 5-7) where Jesus laid down the gauntlet for full surrender of one's heart to God. He outlined the *be-do-go of full surrender*. In essence, He said, "Who you are to *be* determines what you *do* which determines where you *go*." God designed life to flow from the heart (Prov. 4:23)

Jesus began with a Hebrew literary device called an *inclusio* featuring the Beatitudes (from *beati*, Latin for "Blessed" meaning *satisfied*). The dominant theme of the *inclusio* is evidenced in the first and last Beatitude where the following phrase is repeated, "*For theirs is the kingdom of heaven,*" God's divine reign, rule, and order in the hearts and lives of people on this earth now and in the future. Thus, we find *satisfaction through surrender* to Christ who brings us into the kingdom of heaven.

What satisfies our desires? Jesus' first words are, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit*" (Matt. 5:3). Restated, Jesus said, "Satisfied are the humble." *Humble*, means "to be lower than, or to bend the knees of one's heart." *Humility* and *humanity* come from the same Latin root, *humus*, meaning "from the ground." We call it "down to earth."

The condition of one's heart is determined by the object of its desires. A humble heart desires Christ. "*Poor in spirit*" is declaring my moral bankruptcy before a holy God, trusting in Christ's free gift of grace as payment for my sin. Humility says to Christ, "I can't. You can." "I can't pay for my sin. You can. I can't be Lord of my life. You can." *I can't* is *repentance*. *You can* is *faith*. Contrast this heart condition with a proud one which says to God, "I can. You can't." *Pride* means "to be higher than, or to exalt." A proud heart desires self and remains dissatisfied.

Why are our desires satisfied? "*For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 5:3). Jesus, our ultimate example of a humble heart (Matt. 11:29) said that humility is the entrance requirement to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:1-4). This is where we experience God's divine reign, rule, and order which is why we were created.

How do we humble our hearts? In order to humble our hearts, we must surrender our pride. In a great story tucked in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus contrasted the temple prayer of a proud Pharisee with that of a humble tax collector. The respected Pharisee exalted himself while the disrespected tax collector stood at a distance, refused to look up to heaven, and beat his breast—three acts of humility. The tax collector finally made an attempt to put into words the condition of his heart, "*God, have mercy on me, a sinner*" (Luke 18:13). Jesus said that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified before God. He summed it up this way, "*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*" (Luke 18:14).

This week, take a *poor in spirit* inventory of any pride in your life where you are ruling your own kingdom. It will be manifested in a relationship, a task, or a conflict that is leaving you dissatisfied. Surrender your pride to Christ, saying, "I can't. You can." Live out this humility toward Christ in your relationships where you will experience satisfaction through the surrender of your desires to Him. May you live in the kingdom of heaven where those around you are drawn to Christ in you.

Satisfied through surrender,

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