

## ***The poor in spirit***

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus Christ opened his mouth, and the rivers of grace began to flow from His lips in abundant sweetness and still quench the thirst of mankind until today. The Lord started with the nine Beatitudes as keys to open the hearts of the audience. Thus, he can later build His foundation and principles in them.

The beginning was: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven"*

+ **What is being poor in spirit?** A poor spirit is a humble one, that is to say, the Lord Jesus Christ praises and blesses those who are humble at heart, and promises them the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

+ **True humility is for man to know himself very well**, to know that he is dust and ashes (Genesis 18), to know that he is just a clay vessel which God has honored by placing His treasures of grace in it (2 Corinthians 4), to know that he is merely a breath given by God and He will take it again. Additionally, true humility is for man to know that he is created after the image of God and that, through baptism; he has become a child of God and His ambassador in the world.

+ A long time ago, St. Isaac the Syrian said: **"Good deeds and humility make man as though a god on earth."** In the sense that a humble man is led by the spirit of God in all his deeds so the image of God is clearly reflected in him.

+ God always wants to give us abundantly from His grace. But our tendency to self pride makes God stop His overflow of His grace lest we grow in our pride. But the humble man, God pours on him without limit, and trusts him on His deep mysteries, confident that he will be guarded by his humility. This kind of people who are poor in spirit are found to be of very little words, never complain, accept suffering with thanksgiving, love everyone and serve everyone without discrimination, never boast in themselves regardless how much grace and glory they have, but only take pride in the love of God, His care, and faithfulness.

+ Another important fact about this subject; **the state of being poor in spirit is not inherited but rather acquired through a combination of strife and grace.** The Lord emphasized in his words to the disciples: *"Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 18:4). This means that our main strife to be great is to deny ourselves and to humble ourselves like young children, and this of course will qualify us to receive the grace of God: *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (1 Peter 5).

+ Let's see some of the quotes of the Fathers, from their real experience, on humility and being poor in spirit:

### **\* St. John Chrysostom:**

"The poor in spirit are the humble and broken hearts, not unwillingly, but rather they humble themselves willingly and show reverence and respect for the divine commandments. God says: *"Upon whom will I show respect, but to the humble and the peaceful and to him who trembles at my words."* (Isaiah 66: 2) And this is the man who lowers himself to the ultimate levels of humility and breaks himself, *'A sacrifice to God are a broken spirit, a broken and a humbled heart God will not despise.'* (Psalms. 50: 19)"

"As pride is the source of all evil, likewise humility is the basis of all self-control."

"Every fasting, prayer, charity, or chastity if they are all gathered in one person without humility, all of them will fade away and vanish. Likewise is the Pharisee who reached the pinnacle in fulfilling the law of God and lost everything because of his pride and flaunting in his fasting and holiness against his brother."

"Humility is the foundation over which a building is constructed soundly. If it is taken away from us, even when man reaches heaven, will completely collapse and come to a grave end, despite his practice of fasting, prayer, giving, chastity and all the good deeds. Without humility, everything you build inwardly will collapse and perish."

### **\* St. Gregory the bishop of Nyssa:**

"Acquiring humility is not easy but more difficult than other virtues. The poor in spirit is a person who replaces the overindulgence of the flesh with the richness of the spirit and stays away from the pursuit of wealth to fly soaring in the joy of the Lord."

### **\* St. Augustine:**

"The poor in spirit is meek, fears the word of God, acknowledges his sins, and doesn't boast in his worthiness or righteousness.

The poor in spirit is he who praises God whenever for good things, and reproaches himself for bad things.

The poor in spirit is he who has no hope but in God because placing hope in Him alone, would not bring disappointment.

The poor in spirit gives up all his wealth and follows Christ and when he is freed from earthly burdens, he would soar high like an eagle."

*Fr. Yohanna Naseef*  
[fryohanna@hotmail.com](mailto:fryohanna@hotmail.com)