

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 35)

SPIRITUAL POVERTY. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). The natural man believes that happiness derives from one's own resources and adjustments to the world. Jesus said the exact opposite. He said that happiness comes from poverty of spirit. Man has no resources God can use. The cosmos is the Devil's cosmetic. To cover the deceptions of the world. His plan promises happiness without righteousness. The world is the Devil's alternative to God's righteous rule. The poor in spirit aren't fooled by the world's allure. The poor in spirit understand they are empty without God's resources. Radical disciples recognize their insufficiency. We have nothing to give God and nothing God needs. We are recipients of God's supply. Hendrickson explains the meaning of poor in Spirit. "...Jesus does not pronounce these people blessed because they are poor in material goods, though for the most part they are that also. They are called blessed as being poor in spirit, not in spirituality but 'with respect to' their spirit. That is, they are the ones who have become convinced of their spiritual poverty. They have been made conscious of their misery and want. Their old pride has been broken. They have begun to cry out, "O God, be thou merciful to me, the sinner" (Luke 18:13). They are of a contrite spirit and tremble at God's word (Isaiah 66:2; cf. 57:15). They realize their own utter helplessness (Romans 7:24), except nothing from self, everything from God."