

Luke 6:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

Analysis

Jesus begins the Sermon on the Plain: 'Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.' This beatitude pronounces blessing on the 'poor' (Greek 'ptōchoi,' πτωχοί, destitute, beggars), not merely low-income but utterly dependent. Luke's version says 'ye poor' (you who are poor) rather than Matthew's 'poor in spirit,' emphasizing actual poverty but with spiritual implications—those who recognize complete dependence on God. The kingdom belongs to such people because they know they cannot earn it. Poverty strips away self-sufficiency, creating receptivity to grace.

Historical Context

First-century Palestine had sharp wealth disparities. Roman occupation, taxation, and debt impoverished many Jews. Religious leaders (Pharisees, Sadducees, priests) were often wealthy, while common people struggled. Jesus' ministry attracted the poor (Luke 4:18), who had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the kingdom. The beatitude challenged cultural assumptions that wealth indicated God's favor and poverty His disfavor (a view Jesus repeatedly corrected). Kingdom membership depends on grace, not socioeconomic status, and often the poor more readily acknowledge their need for God.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does poverty—whether economic or spiritual—create receptivity to the gospel that wealth and self-sufficiency often prevent?
2. What does Jesus' pronouncement of blessing on the poor teach about the kingdom's values versus worldly values?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπάρας τοὺς ὄφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς
And he lifted up eyes he on G3588 G3788 G846 G1519 G3588

μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔλεγεν Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί ὅτι
disciples he and said Blessed be ye poor for G3101 G846 G3004 G3107 G4434 G3754

ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ
yours is the kingdom of God G5212 G2076 G932 G2316

Additional Cross-References

James 2:5 (Kingdom): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

2 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Matthew 25:34 (Kingdom): Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Luke 12:32 (Kingdom): Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Revelation 2:9 (Parallel theme): I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

2 Corinthians 6:10 (Kingdom): As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Isaiah 29:19 (Parallel theme): The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Zephaniah 3:12 (Parallel theme): I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

James 1:12 (Blessing): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.