

March 16, 2025

# From Pride to Humility

Matthew 5:5; Luke 18:9-14

Perhaps the good news of the gospel is best heard by those who are powerless: those who are marginalized, poor, sick, and humbled by how society treats them. Jesus' earthly ministry sought to turn over the power imbalance of the world. The "hopeless," often translated as "poor in spirit," Jesus said, are heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

In the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus saw those who were invisible. He saw the grief-stricken, the hungry, the peacemakers, the ignored, and the unloved. He made promises to them, telling them that God had a greater love for them than they could possibly imagine.

To those others seen as living miserable lives, Jesus promised blessing, contentment, and well-being. Those who seemed to have little and no hope of ever having much could look to God to meet their needs and give them hope. Contrary to conventional belief, those who live under God's rule experience well-being and contentment.

Recently, I was with a group of preachers who felt that many sermons didn't convey urgency when preaching the gospel. After all, so many churches are in places where hunger is invisible, grief is hidden by wealth, and pride is the outward face of fear. Just under the surface of a community, though, the people Jesus identified are right there. They still need to hear that God has big plans for them. God will give them the kingdom of heaven, the entire earth, and a harvest table groaning with a feast.

When we deny our negative emotions, we also deny God's saving grace. We refuse to see God's work in our lives. Many of us are trying so hard to flourish in the material world. Jesus tells us that those who are rewarded are those who flourish under God's rule, not under human rule. Are we orienting ourselves toward God? If not, then the Sermon on the Mount doesn't speak to us, and we probably need more humility. If we set ourselves apart from the poor and powerless, we cannot be humble.

The Sermon on the Mount doesn't speak to our financial inheritance. Jesus isn't concerned with our reputations or mortgages. Jesus is concerned with our souls and our spiritual inheritance. In that light, humility is urgent and real.

1. How can you become more responsive to the needs of those who are struggling in your community?
2. How does Jesus' promise of blessing to the poor in spirit challenge conventional ideas of success?
3. In what areas does pride prevent you from embracing humility and dependence on God? How can you move from pride to humility?

Adapted from *Daily Bible Studies*, Spring 2025, by Amy Sigmon (Cokesbury, 2024).