

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

- SUNDAY -

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. – Matthew 5:3.

True Christians recognize and acknowledge their sinful unworthiness in the sight of God, and are thus described as being *poor in spirit*. They come before the Lord as humble beggars who have nothing of their own merit to set before Him, and who look to Him for grace and mercy, realizing that they lack anything (in and of themselves) of which they could boast. However, looking to Christ in humble faith, trusting in His merits alone, such people are given rich and priceless blessings. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" Clinging in faith to the treasure that they have in their Savior, they know that no earthly treasure can compare in value. When others praise them and point to any earthly or personal advantage as the source of their great happiness, they can smilingly shake their heads and focus instead upon the spiritual and eternal blessings that they have through Christ. Must not the light of the moon and the stars pale before that of the sun? The Apostle Paul was a man who, by the grace of God alone, understood this well. He writes: "*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, Yea, doubtless; and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*" (Philippians 3:7-11). Thus true Christians are poor in spirit, humbling themselves before God as unworthy beggars; and yet they are also truly blessed and happy, being rich beyond all earthly wealth through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER. – O my God, who for Christ's sake hast graciously given me the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven, make me poor in spirit through Thy Holy Spirit, that I may not set my heart on the things of this world, lest I be enchanted and ensnared by vain, fleeting, and delusive things, but that with all my heart I desire only that which will make me truly and eternally happy. Amen.

One thing's needful; Lord, this treasure teach me highly to regard;
All else, though it first give pleasure, is a yoke that presses hard.
Beneath it the heart is still fretting and striving,
No true lasting happiness ever deriving.
The gain of this one thing all loss can requite
And teach me in all things to find true delight.

Hymn 366, 1. (TLH)

* Scripture reading for Sunday. Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6 Gospel: Luke 14:1-11