**Poverty (Matthew 5:1-4)**

 We as citizens of the Kingdom of God have a different understanding of success – we are blessed for entirely different, spiritual reasons. Today we begin a new season of sermons in our church life. This year, we will be speaking about God’s Kingdom as citizens of it. We begin that theme today with the first couple of Beatitudes, taken from the Sermon on the Mount (found in Matthew chapter 5.) We’re speaking today about poverty of the spirit and the concept of mourning. Once again, I’d like to stress that We as citizens of the Kingdom of God have a different understanding of success – we are blessed for entirely different, spiritual reasons. Let’s move onto this difference between us and the worldly nonbelievers…

 If you feel poor in spirit and often find yourself mourning in this world, according to Jesus you are blessed. Today’s world has a completely different understanding of blessedness. For them (the nonbelieving world), only material success is a blessing (at the core of their belief system). A smoothly going life is the only reality that is considered blessed for them. The spiritual world does not even show up on their radar. But for you and me, the world is a place of many ups and downs, and a blessed life is not dependent on those events. When Jesus said those words from the mountain, his poor but astonished disciples had gathered around him on that peak. Jesus was saying to them, in effect, “You are blessed because you recognize the true plight of the world (the unbelieving populations), but you are following the Source of “wealth” for the True Life (meaning himself, of course). The disciples were being called blessed not because life’s difficulties are in and of themselves blessings, but because within those tough times and challenges they were following the Source of Blessing, Jesus Christ.

 The one who is poor in spirit always feels the need for God. He or she is not satisfied with the vanities of this world. The one who mourns for the world senses just how much the spiritually lost around him need the Savior. In both of the above cases, such people (believers in Christ) may seem sad. However, if we dig deeper, we see that they recognize the truth, and we also are called to that life of spiritual hunger.

 The French writer Bossuet wrote the following about truth: Truth is a queen who has her eternal throne in heaven, and her seat of empire in the heart of God.

 Today the Bible calls each of us to be poor in spirit and to mourn for the lost around us. You are a blessed person if you see your constant spiritual need of Christ. You are a blessed person when you see that it is your spiritual life that gives meaning to life in all seasons. You are blessed when you help the lost in their difficulty and blessed when worldly distractions drive you to mourn for those trapped in them, and not to rejoice for their vain life-pursuits. This is because the Christian’s life is expressed and even preached through his or her spiritual life. Your life is a sermon to others. Today, do not be afraid of being an expression of truth through your poverty of spirit and mourning for the lost. Do not be afraid to admit to your spiritual poverty and to trust in the riches found in Christ. Do not stop mourning and praying for those who are spiritually dead around you.

 If you feel poor in spirit and often find yourself mourning in this world, according to Jesus you are blessed. We as citizens of the Kingdom of God have a different understanding of success – we are blessed for entirely different, spiritual reasons. We have Jesus as our wealth. Therefore, let us pray for the lost and bear witness to our True Spiritual Life.