

# **This is the Day...Wednesday**

**October 6, 2021**

## **Poverty**

*“Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)*

There is nothing fun about being poor. My first experience witnessing poverty occurred when I was a teenager, living in Gastonia. Through our local church, I met Loretta Simpson. Ms. Loretta lived with her disabled son in an old, dilapidated mill house on the edge of the Firestone Mill village. She had no running water and only a wood burning fireplace for heat. Most of their meals consisted of raw, peeled potatoes and some thin soup Loretta would concoct from whatever she had. Loretta received very little in the way of government assistance and I could offer nothing more than the occasional cans of vegetables and some fruit to help sustain them. For me, Loretta had shown me for the first time the stark reality of poverty.

There is nothing fun about being poor. No one wakes up in the morning, filled with excitement that their home is a box under an interstate overpass. No one is overcome with happiness at the prospect of having to figure out where their next meal may come from. No one enjoys hearing their children cry themselves to sleep because they are hungry. Physical poverty is an endless nightmare from which many are unable to awaken. It is a cycle of despair.

Jesus recognized the presence of the poor. He fed thousands and made it clear that as we care for those in need, we are caring for Him. He also made it clear that there will always be poverty. Physical poverty is a byproduct of our sinful human condition. Jesus taught us that, in order for us to have an impact on the physical poverty of this world, we must be willing to become poor ourselves. Jesus wants us to recognize that, for those of us with an abundance, ministry to those experiencing poverty is more a condition of the heart than a condition of the wallet. It is in this way that physical poverty reveals spiritual poverty. Poverty of spirit is an acknowledgment of our reliance on Him to provide our every need each day. Nothing we have is our own. We have because of God, and it has been given to us to share so that God may be glorified. When we become poor, we become blessed.

The same is true for our spiritual poverty. Blessed are the poor in spirit does not mean that we live in that spiritual box under the overpass. It means that we recognize our reliance on the Holy Spirit each day. It means that God becomes the most important person in our lives and that we never stop seeking to know Him better. Through our poverty of spirit our eyes are opened more fully to view the glory of God in our lives and to see the kingdom lived out in our lives. When we become poor, we become blessed.