

JESUS SAID WHAT?!!**4th July 2021 – week 1****HillSide's Minister – Rev' Allan Booth****LIVE IN HUMBLE DEPENDENCE ON GOD.**

Blurb:

Behind all the statements Jesus said - there are the most wonderful keys to life. Not only do they make life possible, but they are secrets that create the way for us to a meaningful life and good relationships...

Luke 9:23-25 &

²³ Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

Matthew 5:3

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

As we begin a new series... Jesus said What? We explore the lesson behind the words. Each Sunday will serve as a starter, which means there is more to explore, homework. I invite you to get in touch with nicole and she will be able to send you the relevant home work for each week!

The world says: be daring, be strong full of self-confidence.

Sermon

This is a true confession... that I probably share with most of my gender.... when dealing with a problem I am probably not going to ask for help. Seriously, I am more likely to struggle along obstinately, tapping new depths of stubbornness; then if things don't work out just giving up and walking away. There is another thing I do, that is relating to group meetings with the assumption that I can do things better. I sit and stew over things that could help the event run smoother rather than participate and enjoy. Then along comes Jesus and says... blessed are the poor in spirit... But ever since I could, I have sought to strengthen my independent spirit. So what is Jesus saying here? If Charles Dickens had written the gospels he would not have written poor in spirit, I believe he would have used a phrase like blessed are the humble of heart. This is what Jesus was addressing... our spiritual attitude toward learning and submission. The problem is that most of us don't want to be considered submissive, we would rather be the top dog, dominant and solving our own problems. Many of us don't accept that we still have a lot to learn; trouble is I can see that in a lot of people I know, as can you, but it is ever so difficult to see it in myself. We are not as different from the Pharisees as we might think. Although Jesus was addressing a crowd when he spoke these words, his target audience would have been the leaders of the day, those who assumed themselves to be above the rest. In modern language we would say that they had made themselves unteachable.

The lesson is repeated in Luke 14 where Jesus teaches about taking the lesser seat at a wedding banquet and leaving it to the host to invite you up to a better place. Paul takes up the thought in his letter to the Romans 12:3 "for by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement in

accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” But the lesson is also as old as time... in Proverbs 16: 18 we are warned that “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

So the truth is God has been trying to get this concept through to us forever!

Why is it so important? Well think of the times you have been in a teaching role... wouldn't you prefer 10 teachable students, than 1 who knows it all already? I would guess that's the broader lesson of there being only 12 disciples who were willing to learn. As opposed to the priests and Pharisees who thought they already knew everything there was to know, so were unteachable. Imagine just for a moment how different things would be if Caiaphas chose to follow Jesus?

What about us, who have the advantage of thousands of years of academic scholarship. We even have all the accumulated knowledge of humanity accessible with a few mouse clicks, we might be insatiable when it comes to seeking.... But how do we respond to the one who challenges 'it is written, but I say to you...' Are we ready to be taught by him, to listen to him and be transformed by what we learn?

Allow me to share some tools for developing a state of being poor in Spirit. The first is to admit your imperfections, admit your sin honestly, trust the God of second chances. Then evaluate your areas of strength realistically, it is a myth that you can be anything you want to be.... Being poor in spirit means having a realistic grasp on your abilities, knowing where you are strong, and knowing where you need help. We need to enjoy successes gratefully, everything we have is a gift from God and one day we will have to account for how we have used all we have been given. I believe we also need to use what we have been given to serve others, in other words our gifts are not for us alone but given for sharing in the community. And above all these we need to grow our dependence on Jesus continuously and consistently. Not one of us can solve every problem and fix everything that has been broken; but we can live in a growing relationship with the one who can and does redeem all things. In short Admit, Evaluate, be Grateful, Serve others and Depend on Jesus.

A bumper sticker take away to help us remember what it means to be 'poor in spirit' is this “ Being Humble, isn't about thinking less of yourself; it is about thinking of yourself less.”

At the risk of sounding like Rick Warren; living this life fully is not about you, not about me, but it is about what God can do through people like you and me if we would only submit our lives to him. The final word is a combination of Proverbs 22:4 and Matthew 5:3: Humility is the fear of the Lord; it's wages are riches and honour and life. For blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Prayer: Lord Jesus we love you and praise you. Today we ask that you would show us where we put ourselves first, and push you off the throne that rules our life. Help us to always put you first, instead of relying on our individual strength. This morning we commit ourselves to your plan in all things. Amen.

Benediction: And now The one who made himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant and being found in human form... always bless and fill our lives with his Grace.