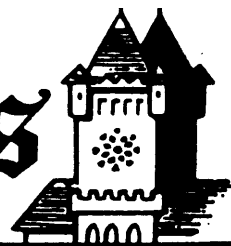


The Geneva Papers



No. 37

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March, 1985

THE THEOLOGY OF POVERTY

by Ray R. Sutton

What should be our response to the recent advertising propaganda to feed the starving children of Ethiopia and other parts of the world? Do you feel remorse because you haven't given anything? Do you feel guilty because you have? Or, are you tired of seeing some pagan movie star, would-be politician, or person of liberal note, guilt and pity you to donate to the "save the whomever fund" to assuage his or her debauched life?

To answer these questions and many more, I want to consider the issue of poverty. One classic New Testament statement that comes to mind is "Blessed are the poor in spirit." In the following we will not have space to develop the entire beatitude. Our concern will be with the Old Testament background and theology of poverty. But I think our study will lay some ground work for a richer (no pun intended) understanding of not only our Lord's view of poverty, but the intent of the first beatitude.

Poverty: A Blessing or A Curse?

"Blessing" is the transfer of inheritance (Gen. 48:15ff.). The first law of inheritance is to "be poor in spirit." We cannot help but notice the priority of the "poverty" beatitude. What does this emphasis mean? Some would be quick to point out that aspects of the *poor* are symbolic of the people of God (Luke 16:19ff; 18:15ff); Jesus himself was apparently poor; The disciples were told to forsake their possessions and follow Jesus; And, the early Church was so poor that it had to live on a common purse. If Jesus is saying that "material" poverty is the beginning of blessing, then a Christian should start his spiritual life by selling all his possessions. Is this the message of Jesus?

Some would also say that Jesus was making a decisive change. In the Old Testament, blessing was characterized by material prosperity, but the New Testament excludes wealth as an index on blessing. God dealt with the Old Testament man in a visible way. But the New Testament expresses a shift from the external to the internal so that "blessing: "kingdom," and "spirituality" are internalized. The rich are therefore unrighteous, and the poor are righteous. A premium is placed on being poor, and the really righteous go so far as to take a "vow of poverty."

There are definitely many who would agree with the statements above. The question is, "Did Jesus mean these things?" Right off, we must note other comments Jesus made. He said, "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29), and "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Who Are the Poor?

Clearly, poverty, not wealth is internalized in the New Testament. If anything, the Matthew 19:29 statement indicates that the New Covenant will be a time of greater internalized poverty and greater external wealth. Thus, a simple

reading of the complete statements of Christ tells us we should not pit Jesus against the Old Testament, physical against spiritual, and wealth against poverty. So, let us try to gather a clear meaning of the "poor" so that we can determine "poverty of spirit."

There are good poor and bad poor in the Scripture. There is "unBiblical" poverty due to a failure to work (Prov. 20:4). Further, God judges those who refuse His Meal, the Eucharist, by taking their food away. They have not because they would not have Christ. It would be good to remember that the needy who reject Christ, whether in the third world, or any part of the world, are without because they have rejected the Gospel. In many cases, they have thrown the Church out of their countries and even eaten the very missionaries who brought them the message of peace. We should expect God to send droughts and kill their children. The God of the Bible becomes extremely angry when a nation rejects His messengers and Meal. Our money and gifts will not, nor cannot buy off the judgment of God. Those who are being judged are the only ones who can stop the march of drought and death by accepting the Christ they have rejected.

If Jesus is referring to this kind of "unBiblical" poverty in the first beatitude, we have real problems. Jesus would then be blessing unfaithfulness. God would be unjust, a rewarder of the unfaithful. Such a conclusion is contrary to the clear statements of Scripture. God rewards the faithful. So, Jesus is speaking about the "good" poor, "righteous" poverty.

Virtually all references are to this group. The good poor are *dependent on God's Word in a special sense*. How so? The Old Testament made special provision for the poor. Moses said, "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:9-10).

The poor man *had* to depend on the Word of God to live. His compliance with the "gleaning laws" proved his special dependence on the Lord. The leading example of a Biblically poor person was Ruth, the Moabitess. When her husband died she was forced to return penniless to her mother-in-law's homeland. We know she was poor because she had to utilize the laws of poverty (Leviticus 19:9-10). Through these laws, she met her new husband, Boaz, and entered the genealogy of Christ. Thus, the Law of God blessed her, and set her up for a husband who would bring her greater blessing, a descendent who would be the Son of God. The Old Testament was full of blessing for the poor. But their blessing was always due to special dependence on the Lord.

Christ re-iterated the special dependence of the poor. A Canaanite woman once came and asked Him to exorcise her daughter. His response is usually neglected. He said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs." She told Him, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the

crumbs under the table" (Matt.15:26ff.). Then, Christ exorcised her daughter.

Jesus did not immediately give her what she wanted. By the way, Jesus connects the issues of exorcism and poverty when He refers to an exorcism request as "feeding crumbs" to her. But Jesus would not give the exorcism to her at first. She was a Canaanite, outside the Kingdom. Before He would extend His welfare, she had to come "under the Table," or to put His language in "gleaning" terminology, she had to come to the edge of His field. Her answer told Jesus that she understood this principle and was in fact a dog "under" His table.

The "poor" of the Bible were not just any poor. They were people dependent on the Word of God in a special way. They were *in* the covenant or dependent *on* the covenant (i.e. the "stranger" in the land). By an unusual stroke of "providence; the poor were forced to greater dependence on the Lord, a dependence that relied on the blessing of the rest of the Nation of Israel. The poor trusted that God's Word was true when it promised blessing to the faithful nation. The poor counted on a good enough harvest to feed them. They waited on the Lord to raise up a people who would actually do what God had promised. The poor knew that when the nation disobeyed God, welfare ceased, the land was no longer a place of refuge for the needy, and they starved. Yes, the poor trusted God in a special way. The reasons for Biblical poverty reinforce our point.

Reasons for Poverty

First, a Biblical man could become poor as a result of God's judgment or discipline. Two examples are given, Ruth and the "beggars" of the Bible.

Ruth was a Moabite. Her nation originated from the incestuous union of Lot and his daughter (Gen.19:36-38). Moab became a cursed nation under the judgment of God. The Book of Ruth begins with background information on the marriage of Elimelech and Naomi, Ruth's father- and mother-in-law. As the book opens, Elimelech responds wrongly to God's judgment of famine and leaves the land of promise. He and Naomi settle in Moab, a land which had refused bread to Israel during the wilderness wanderings; Elimelech's two sons marry Moabite women. God, however, does not bless Elimelech in his rejection of the covenant land and both he and his sons die in this self-imposed exile.

Naomi and her daughters were left without husbands. The brides needed a husband. Naomi decided to return to Israel. Hunger had driven them out of the land, now, hunger was driving them back. Her two daughters were given the choice. One chose heaven, Ruth, and the other chose hell, Orpah.

Ruth represents more than just herself. She is a symbol of the nation of Moab as well as the faithful descendant of True Israel from Lot. As a symbol of Moab, we see that Moab was judged because of the unfaithfulness of Israel. Lot brought about this nation's troubles through his sin, just as surely as Ruth's husband caused Ruth's predicament because of his sin.

Ruth, however, shows her faithfulness to the covenant. She decides to seek salvation in Israel. Gleaning becomes her means of doing so. When Ruth returns to the land, it is a symbol of Moab's return and salvation. And, her return is the salvation of her husband's blood line. The text says, "Then Boaz said, 'On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance'" (Ruth 4:5). This "resurrection" of Elimelech symbolizes the salvation of the Jews through the conversion of the Gentiles, a very New Covenant idea (Rem. 11).

As a descendant of faithful Israel, Ruth was a poor woman as a result of God's judgment and discipline of her husband. Her poverty was a sign of the judgment. But God's judgment drove her to salvation, as it always does in the case of the faithful. She was driven to special dependence on the Lord, Ruth demonstrated her faith by being willing to glean the corners of the Kingdom of God. So, Ruth was not

just any "poor" person wandering around asking for a hand-out. As a matter of fact, she wasn't asking for a handout. Rather, she understood salvation was the way to receive food. And, she also believed that her troubles were due to the lack of salvation. When she sought salvation from the Lord, she found relief to her hunger pains, but most important, release from the hand of Almighty God.

The "beggar" is another group whose poverty is tied directly to the judgment of God. In the Old Testament, begging is always referred to in a derogatory sense. Professional beggars were "despised by the Jews, and support for them from the general charity fund was prohibited."¹ The Psalmist says² that the seed of the righteous does not need to beg for food because God will provide his needs (Psalm 37:25). The seed of the wicked are in contrast in that they will be reduced to begging (Psalm 109:10). This reference uses a Hebrew word, *sa'al*, which normally means "to ask," but the intensified form of the verb, in a series of imprecations, indicates that begging is in view.

The same word is used in Proverbs 20:4 which says, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold (winter); therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing." In this reference, we see the difference between begging and asking. The theology of asking is significant in Scripture. Jesus spoke of an importunate widow who persisted in asking the magistrate, and finally received her request. Jesus said ask, and you shall receive, and James said that you have not because you ask not.

Asking is important, but not the same as begging. What is the difference? Work! The sluggard in Proverbs 20:4 will only ask. He is perfectly healthy and has no excuse for not working. The importunate widow is another matter. She is willing to ask *and* work. Thus, the beggar of the Old Testament was considered a sluggard, cursed by God, and looked upon with great disfavor.

In the New Testament, we find several classic beggars. There is the blind beggar (John 9:8-9), Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52), the beggar at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-11), and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31; Not to be confused with Lazarus of Bethany.)

So, what about these beggars? In each case, the Bible speaks favorably. Has Scripture changed its view of the "beggar?" No. We must take note that their plight is due to physical handicaps. They are not like the sluggard who can but won't work. The beggars of the New Testament are in a different category.

These people could not work. The laws of charity provided for them. Definitely the poor tithe should have been used on people who were forced to beg for an existence. Yet, they still continued to go hungry. Why? The fault lay with the religious and political leaders. They were not living by the Bible. Beggars were the first sign that Israel, as a nation, was much like the beggar, hungry.

From what we know of the Old Testament, we should be alerted to the fact that this is a sign of God's judgment on Israel. God had said that the children of the Israel would not be reduced to begging, and that only the children of the wicked have to go to the streets with can in hand to survive (Psalm 109:10). The presence of these beggars is a sign of the lawlessness of Israel as a nation. They show God's judgment on the nation as a whole.

In the case of the blind man who washed in the pool of Siloam, Jesus specifically said that his handicap was not a result of personal or familial sin (John 9:3). Jesus goes on to say that he was blind so "that the works of God should be manifest in him." In other words, Jesus showed the religious leaders that they were not only blind, like this blind man, but that He was the light of the world (John 9:5) who could heal their spiritual blindness. Therefore, God had ordained his blindness that he might be a sign to Israel. In every case, these beggars had a special purpose in relation to Israel,

1. The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. 1, pp. 509-510.

2. The Hebrew word is *baqas* (to seek) which is used over 200 times in the Old Testament. But in this reference it is translated "begging" by RSV and KJV. The reason is probably that the participle here indicates a repetitive kind of action in the verb. See Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar.

and that makes them unique. As a matter of fact, one is impressed with the number of ailments which were healed by Christ. Each time, the spiritual lesson of Christ pointed to Israel as "covenant-breaking" people.

Because the issue was the judgment of God, it should be observed that Jesus and His disciples at no time gave these beggars money. As a matter of fact, Luke goes out of his way to record a famous statement which Peter and John made to a beggar outside the gate of the temple. When asked for money Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Why did Peter and John not give him money?

The answer goes beyond the fact that they did not have any. Probably, they could have secured money for this man from the Church, if that was what they were supposed to do. No, they healed him as a testimony to the Nation Israel that healing came through Christ. The Gate Beautiful was in front of the Temple. God had raised up a new priesthood that could lead the nation out from under God's judgment.

On a more practical note, the poor of the Bible were a working poor. They were required to glean, and anyone who would not work and live according to the covenant God had made with His people, could not eat (1 Timothy 5:8). Work was at the heart of the original mandate given to man (Genesis 1:28ff.; 2:15). Any man who would not work, was not committed to God's covenant. He was *worse* than the infidel. Therefore, the beggars were healed so that they could *work*.

It was wrong for them not to be provided for in first place, but the Christian way for an incapacitated poor man to be helped is to heal him so that he can work. This has important social implications which militate against socialism's approach to the poor. The State needs the healing ministry of the Church to overcome welfare demands. But our point is to note that even in the unique case of the handicapped poor, God dealt with them by enabling them to serve a function for the Kingdom of God. Their function was to show that the poverty of Israel was due to the judgment of God. And, by their special dependence on Christ, put "covenant-breaking" Israel to shame.

Second, another reason for Biblical poverty is a test from the Lord. Job was a living example of a man who was tested with poverty in the strictest sense. Job had been a man of blessing, meaning he had a rich inheritance—space (land), future (many children), influence (reputation and name in the community). One day, however, God took his inheritance, and Job was left without anything.

Job was tested because the Devil thought he was faithful because of his money. The Satanic mind always thinks that possessions make it easier to trust the Lord. But the rich man has more to trust God for. His salvation is difficult, so hard that Christ said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Satan went to the Lord and requested a test. Job lost everything. His friends were certain that this meant God was judging him. Job stood strong under the test, and persisted in arguing that he was a righteous man. In the midst of this argumentation, Job identified himself with the poor. Job essentially said that he had been blessed to the extent that he had delivered the poor (Job 29:12). God's tests, however, had brought him down, and all of his inheritance was gone (Job 30:22).

In this sense, Job was a type of Christ. The Apostle Paul said, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Job had become poor to demonstrate to Satan that he was faithful. So Christ became poor, was tested, and remained faithful to display the Righteousness of God (Rom. 3).

Therefore, poverty was sometimes due to the tests of God. For this reason, the one who was tested with poverty, and who was in the covenant, was to be treated with mercy. The Biblical man realizes that God might test him with the same. How interesting. The moment the community of Christ quits believing that God tests His people, it becomes

cruel toward those in need. The laws that were provided to take care of the poor (Leviticus 19:9-10) are no longer applied. The State is depended upon. God's promise that He would not let His sheep go without daily bread is challenged.

Third, the final reason for Biblical poverty is voluntary and temporary commitment to do something special for the Lord. An example is the Nazirite vow. The Nazirite was one who took a vow on a temporary basis, and totally dedicated his life to holy war (Numbers 6). One of the things he gave up was the fruit of the vine which was an emblem of prosperity (Numbers 6:4).

Prophets usually took such a vow, and were often called poor (Jeremiah 20:12ff.). They found themselves in the position of bringing lawsuit against Israel because the leaders were the people's inheritance (1 Kings 21:1ff.). And "these disinherited found their titled defenders in the prophets. Following Amos who 'blushes' over the crimes of Israel (Amos 2:6ff.; 4:1; 5:11), the messengers of Yahweh denounce unceasingly 'the violence and highway robbery' (Ezekiel 22:29) that soils the country, shameless frauds in trading (Amos 8:5ff.; Hosea 12:8), land grasping (Micah 2:2; Isaiah 5:8), enslavement of the little ones (Jeremiah 34:8-22; cf. Nehemiah 5:1-13), the abuse of power, and the perversion of justice itself (Amos 5:7; Isaiah 10:1ff.; Jeremiah 22:13-17). It will be one of the tasks of Messiah to defend the rights of the wretched and the poor (Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 72:2ff., 12ff.)."³

When the Lord became man, God sent Him through testing, and Jesus became the final Nazirite. With His death, however, the Nazirite vow came to an end in a redemptive sense for He was the true Nazirite. This explains why Christ was surrounded by poverty, and called His disciples to forsake possessions. This poverty, however, was only temporary for Christ promised that temporary forsaking led to greater wealth eventually.

Even Christ and His disciples were not as poor as some like to think. "Jesus was the son of poor parents (Luke 2:24), but there is no reason to suppose He lived in abject poverty. As the eldest son, He would probably have inherited something from Joseph, and it appears that He was used to paying the Temple tax (Matthew 17:24). Some of His disciples were reasonably well-to-do (Mark 1:20) and He had some fairly wealthy friends (John 12:3)."⁴ Both Jesus and the disciples did, however, temporarily go without to accomplish their callings. In similar, but not identical, manner, there is a place for temporary vows of denial.

The Apostle Paul took a Nazirite vow which indicates that certain sacrifices (non-animal) can be made on a temporary basis. One might even deny himself luxuries at special times, such as Lent. Unless these sacrifices are temporary, however, pharisaical tendencies can appear. One is tempted to think he is more spiritual because he has denied himself. Permanent denial of something—something permitted by Scripture—leads to the doctrine of "taste not touch not" (Col. 2).

So, the poor are often those who make temporary sacrifices for the Kingdom of God. In this category, we could put missionaries, organizing pastors, or even a man starting a business. Each demands a certain amount of "temporary" poverty to reach long term goals.

The reasons for poverty are threefold: Judgment, testing, sacrifice. So far, I have tried to show that the "poor" are dependent on God in a special way. They are symbolic of what the people of God are supposed to be. Not in their poverty, but in their faith. Often, Christ sometimes contrasts the poor *dependent* man to the autonomous rich man (Lk. 18:22) because wealth tends to make a man autonomous unless his wealth is submitted to the Word of God. But Christ is not trying to advocate poverty. The problem is not in the money, but the "love" of it (1 Tim. 6:10). Jesus uses the poor man's dependence as an example of faith.

A New Perspective on Poverty

Now that we have examined the poor of Scripture, we have a different perspective. To summarize: First, the poor

3. Dictionary of Biblical Theology, p. 436,

4. New Bible Dictionary, p. 1016.

are not just any poor. The poor should be viewed in their relationship to the Kingdom of God. If they were not willing to live in terms of God's requirements, there were no benefits. Clearly, the "poor" of the Bible are always *in or under* the Biblical covenant in some sense.

Second, the Bible uses the poor as a symbol of faith. A poor man had to depend on God's Word being applied, vis-à-vis the gleaning and tithing laws, or he would die. So, the poor symbolized dependence as opposed to autonomy.

Third, the poor worked, and could receive nothing if they were not willing to glean. Even the beggars who appear on the pages of the New Testament were healed, instead of being given handouts, so that they could *work* to build the Kingdom.

How did the poor man work? He worked either by working the edges of a field, and picking up what was left over (gleaning), or by other efforts. One of the Hebrew words for poor, *dalal*, means to "be low," or "languish," and refers to the poorest class in Palestine during the Babylonian captivity. Yet, it is clear from the text that these people were vine dressers and ploughmen (2 Kings 25:12; Jeremiah 52:16). The poor were vassals of the king of Babylon, but they were not a "slum" type of poor man.

So, the poor of the Bible worked. The only exception was the "sluggard" (Prov. 20:4). And, no provisions were made for him. The "sluggard" starved and became a living testimony of the "sluggard" of God. If he repented, he and his family would have become indentured servants. One might protest saying, "this is slavery." It is.⁵ Slavery, however, is inescapable. At present, the poor are wards of the State. Our famous war against slavery over 150 years ago resolved an abusive application of slavery, but it certainly didn't altogether remove the practice. The War Between the States took from the family the concept of "indentured servant," and gave it to the State. Perhaps a better solution would be to allow the working poor to become servants of the Church. At any rate, slavery is still with us.

Nevertheless, the Biblical perspective on the "poor" should help Churches know how to treat those who come looking for a hand-out. Usually, someone shows up and says, "I'm on my way to another town and just need a little gas money. My family is in the car and with a little extra help from you I can get to my job." Are Churches obligated to give to every drunken and drug addicted poor person that comes to their door?

No. A person who has no family or friends to turn to indicates that he has consistently violated the trust of everyone around him. He is a chronic repeater of some offense. He's unrepentant! To give to him unconditionally, sight unseen, is a waste of God's money, and is an irresponsible use of the tithe. Moreover, such "unconditional" giving is a contrary witness to the Gospel. The Unitarian view of life is that salvation is unconditional. Everyone is ultimately saved because everyone's sins have been paid for. The Gospel contradicts such a view. Christ had to meet the conditions of the Law. In the end, He suffered the full wrath of God the Father. He paid a price. Salvation was not unconditional. Furthermore, anyone who wants this salvation, and the offer is to everyone, must repent and believe. Are not these conditions? So, the practice of "unconditional" welfare is a denial of the Gospel!

But does the Church just say to the beggars of the world, "don't come to my door"? I don't think that is the correct response either. The Biblical principle is that the poor benefit from welfare if they are (1) under the covenant, and (2) willing to "glean." So, the one asking for a hand-out should be asked if he's a member of a Church. If he is, then the pastor of the Church should be contacted. Perhaps the pastor

knows some details that need to be aired. Perhaps the pastor would get his Church to shoulder the responsibility of the one in need.

If the poor man is not a member, however, then he should be required to go to Church on Sundays. This would be coming under the covenant in a similar way to the "stranger in the land" of the Old Testament. By applying the "stranger in the land" principle the Church avoids "implicit faith." As long as he comes faithfully, small amounts of welfare, money, food, clothing, and even housing, could be supplied. The officers of the Church would also check to see if the man is indeed working. The idea is, the greater the commitment to Christ and His people, the greater the benefits. But, if the man does not at least go to Church, and work at some kind of job, no welfare is supplied. Unless this or a similar program is applied, the Church is shifting the irresponsible welfare programs of the State to her own sphere. Of course, an irresponsible Church welfare system is definitely an improvement over an irresponsible State welfare system! Better, the Church should show the world the Biblical and more effective welfare program. If the individual in need is not willing to work and to submit to the covenant of Jesus Christ, in the "stranger in the land" sense, then he should not be helped.

Fourth, the poor in Scripture have symbolic significance. They symbolize faith, and they also symbolize the message of salvation. The primary function of the poor, "gleaning," demonstrates. Hebrew uses two words to refer to gleaning. Both are used interchangeably in the locus classicus for gleaning, Leviticus 19:9-10. The first word, *laqat*, means to pick or gather, whereas the second word, *'ala'*, means to do something a second time. The second word, however, seems to be the major idea behind the first.

The story of Ruth illustrates. Although *laqat* is used, the first word for gleaning, the book has the theological message of *'ala'*. Because Ruth married an Israelite, she was entitled to his inheritance. Upon the death of her husband, she travelled with her mother-in-law back to Israel. There, her husband's inheritance, through his father Elimelech, was eventually purchased by Boaz. What had been lost in Moab, was reclaimed by Boaz. Ruth's marriage to Boaz meant Israel got its inheritance back. But Moab also got a new husband a second time. Moab's first husband, Lot, was unfaithful. Her new one, ultimately Christ, was faithful. The overlay of doing something a second time is clear.

Here is the redemptive symbolism of the poor. They represent "doing something a second time." The work of Christ is the definitive work of gleaning the earth. God the Father planted and plowed, but the Son became poor and gleaned.

The symbolism of doubling or doing a matter a second time is pregnant with theological meaning since the idea of "things coming in twos" is found throughout Scripture. There are two Adams, two gardens, two cities, two worlds, two Israels, two gates, two men (spiritual and carnal), two houses (Moses's and Christ's), two mountains, two resurrections, two sheep, and two creations. The doubling effect is necessitated by the fall of man. If he is to be redeemed, God must recreate, thereby establishing a definite theological and redemptive pattern. The poor symbolized this most central and powerful idea of Scripture.

Conclusion

This overview of the "poor" is just a beginning. In summary, the acceptable "poor" of the Bible had to be gleaners, and were either in or reliant on the covenant (land). The unacceptable were sluggards and received nothing.

What does our principle of gleaning say about the first beatitude? In short, Jesus draws on the "gleaning" idea so as to make it a principle of life. Entrance into the Kingdom at the corner, the door, Jesus Christ. This principle also presumes that life starts at the edge. The new believer starts in a humble posture and allows God to exalt him (1 pet. 5).

(This study is part of an exposition the first beatitude. The entire study of the Beatitudes is scheduled to be published in book form. Rev. Sutton's taped series can be purchased through Geneva Ministries.)

5. James Jordan, *Law of the Covenant* (Tyler: Institute For Christian Economics, 1984), pp. 75-92.

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