

A black and white photograph of an elderly person's hand held out, palm up, with a young child's face visible in the background. The hand is wrinkled and aged, and the child's face is partially obscured by the hand and the text. The overall mood is contemplative and poignant.

#Blessed?

The First Position

Recap

Is our understanding of blessing nothing more than thinly veiled narcissism?

Is it our way of telling the world that God loves us because look at how much stuff/beauty/vacations we have?

Recap

Blessing Isn't Stuff/Health

Now listen, you rich people, **weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.** James 5:1

Blessing is Jesus

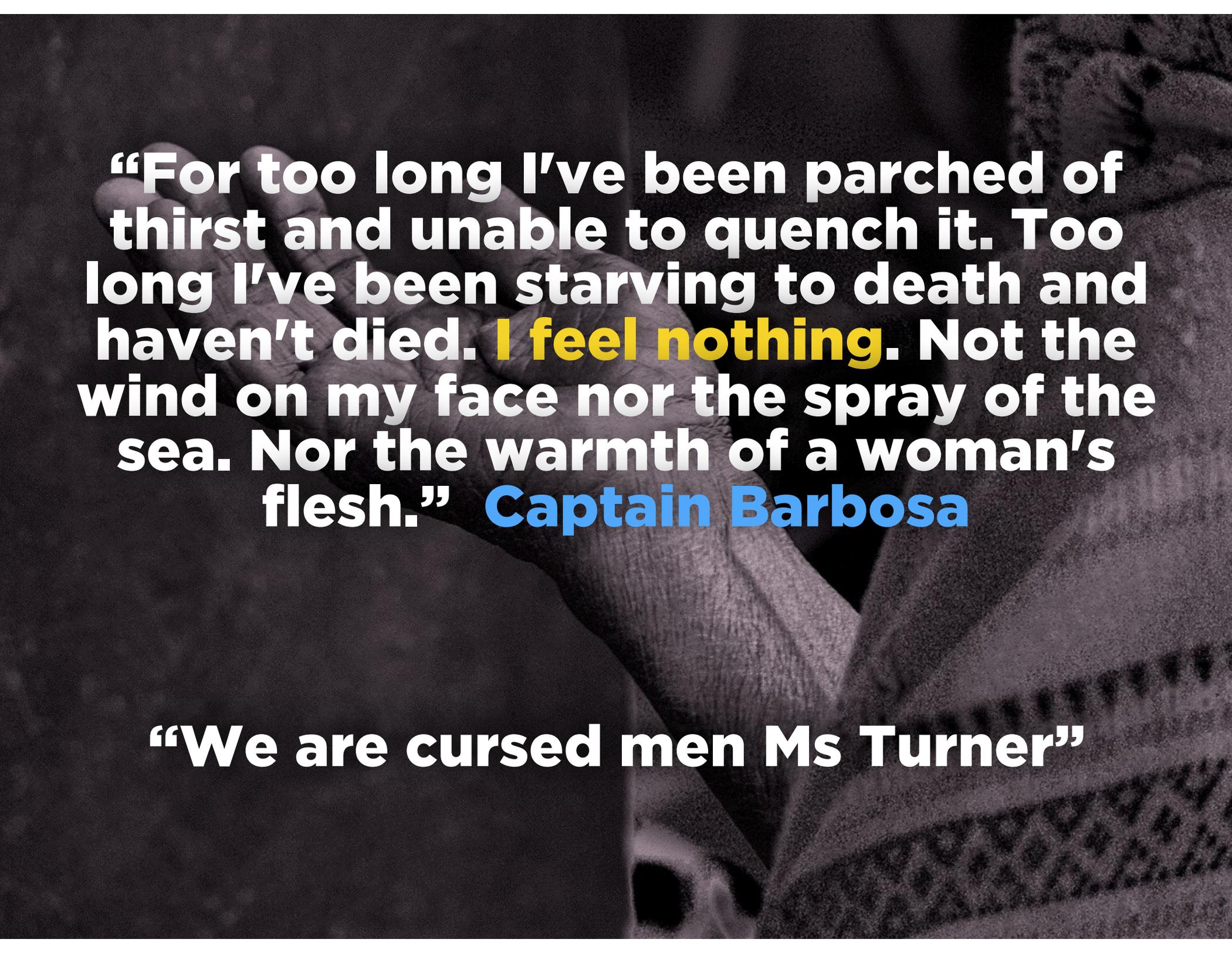
There is no greater blessing than Jesus (person, path, future)

Blessing is from the Spirit

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.** Ephesians 1:3

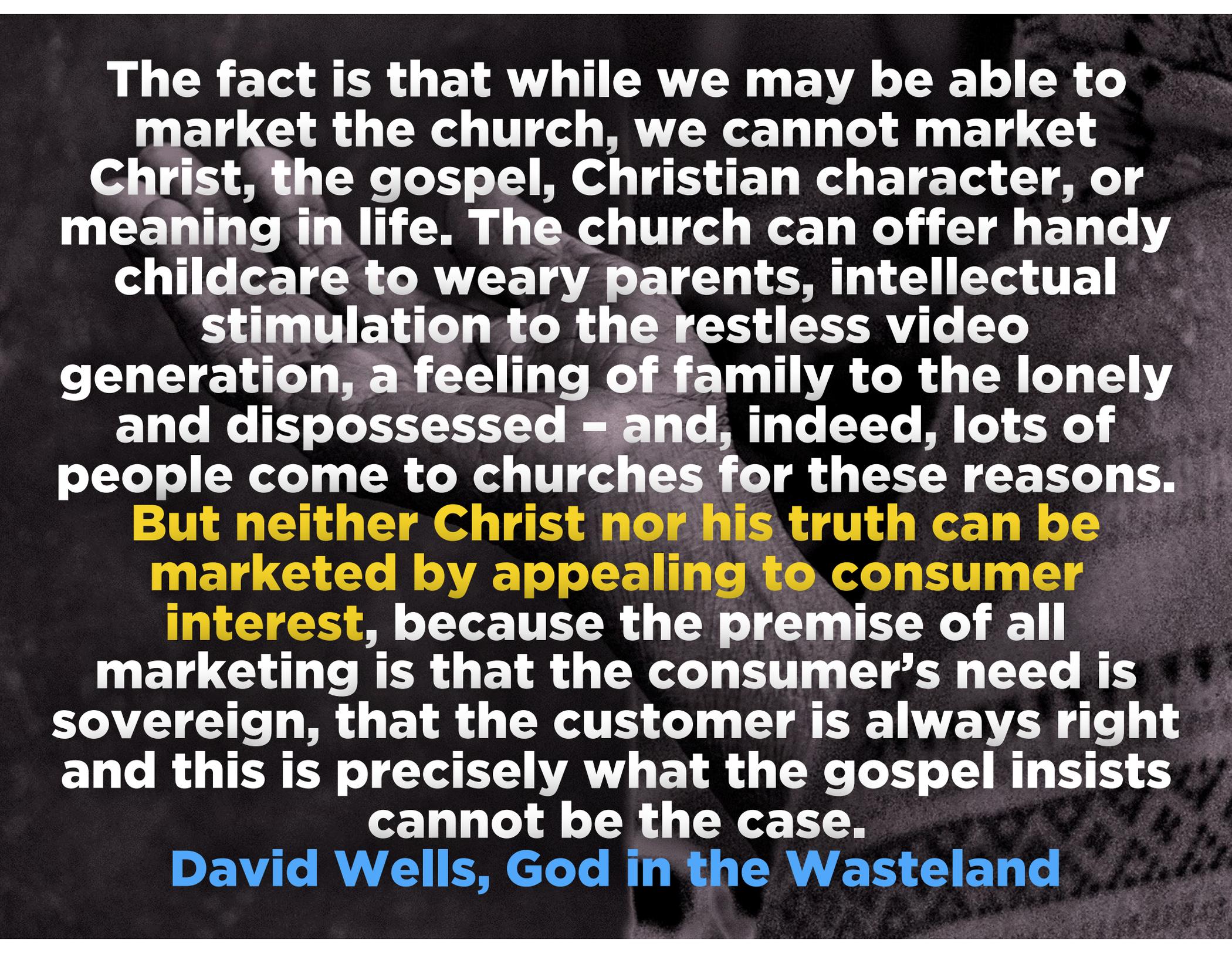
Recap

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. **James 1:12**



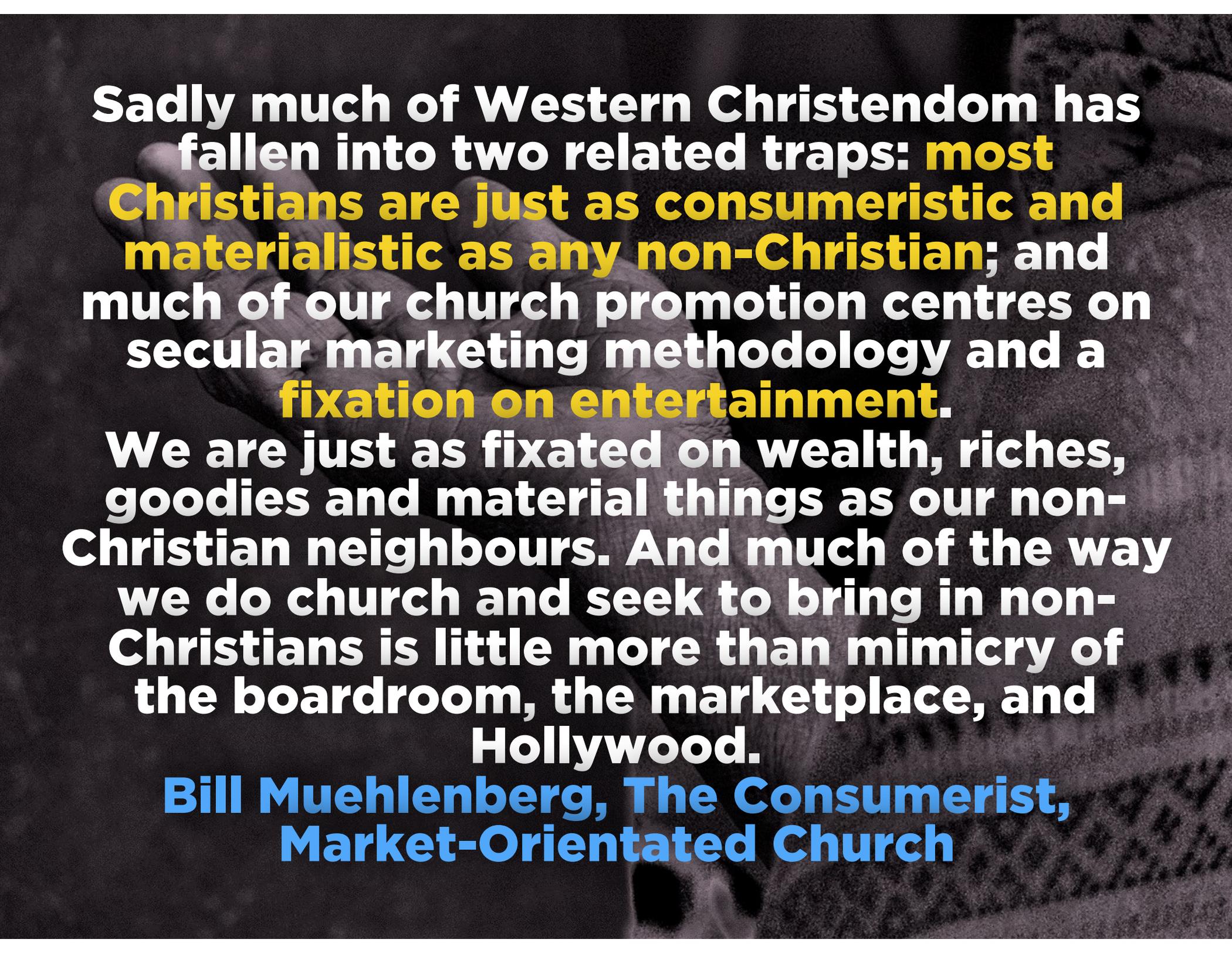
“For too long I’ve been parched of thirst and unable to quench it. Too long I’ve been starving to death and haven’t died. **I feel nothing. Not the wind on my face nor the spray of the sea. Nor the warmth of a woman’s flesh.” **Captain Barbosa****

“We are cursed men Ms Turner”



The fact is that while we may be able to market the church, we cannot market Christ, the gospel, Christian character, or meaning in life. The church can offer handy childcare to weary parents, intellectual stimulation to the restless video generation, a feeling of family to the lonely and dispossessed – and, indeed, lots of people come to churches for these reasons. **But neither Christ nor his truth can be marketed by appealing to consumer interest**, because the premise of all marketing is that the consumer's need is sovereign, that the customer is always right and this is precisely what the gospel insists cannot be the case.

David Wells, God in the Wasteland



Sadly much of Western Christendom has fallen into two related traps: **most Christians are just as consumeristic and materialistic as any non-Christian; and much of our church promotion centres on secular marketing methodology and a **fixation on entertainment.****

We are just as fixated on wealth, riches, goodies and material things as our non-Christian neighbours. And much of the way we do church and seek to bring in non-Christians is little more than mimicry of the boardroom, the marketplace, and Hollywood.

Bill Muehlenberg, The Consumerist, Market-Orientated Church

When one climbs up by a ladder, he sets foot on the first step, and from there goes on to the one above. Again the second step carries the climber up to the third, and this to the following, and hence to the next. Thus the person who goes up always ascends from where he is to the step above until he reaches the top of his ascent. Now why do I begin like this? It seems to me that the Beatitudes are arranged in order like so many steps, so as to facilitate the ascent from one to the other. For if a man's mind has ascended to the first Beatitude, he will accept what follows as a necessary result of thought, even though the next clause seems to say something new beyond what had been said in the first.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-386)



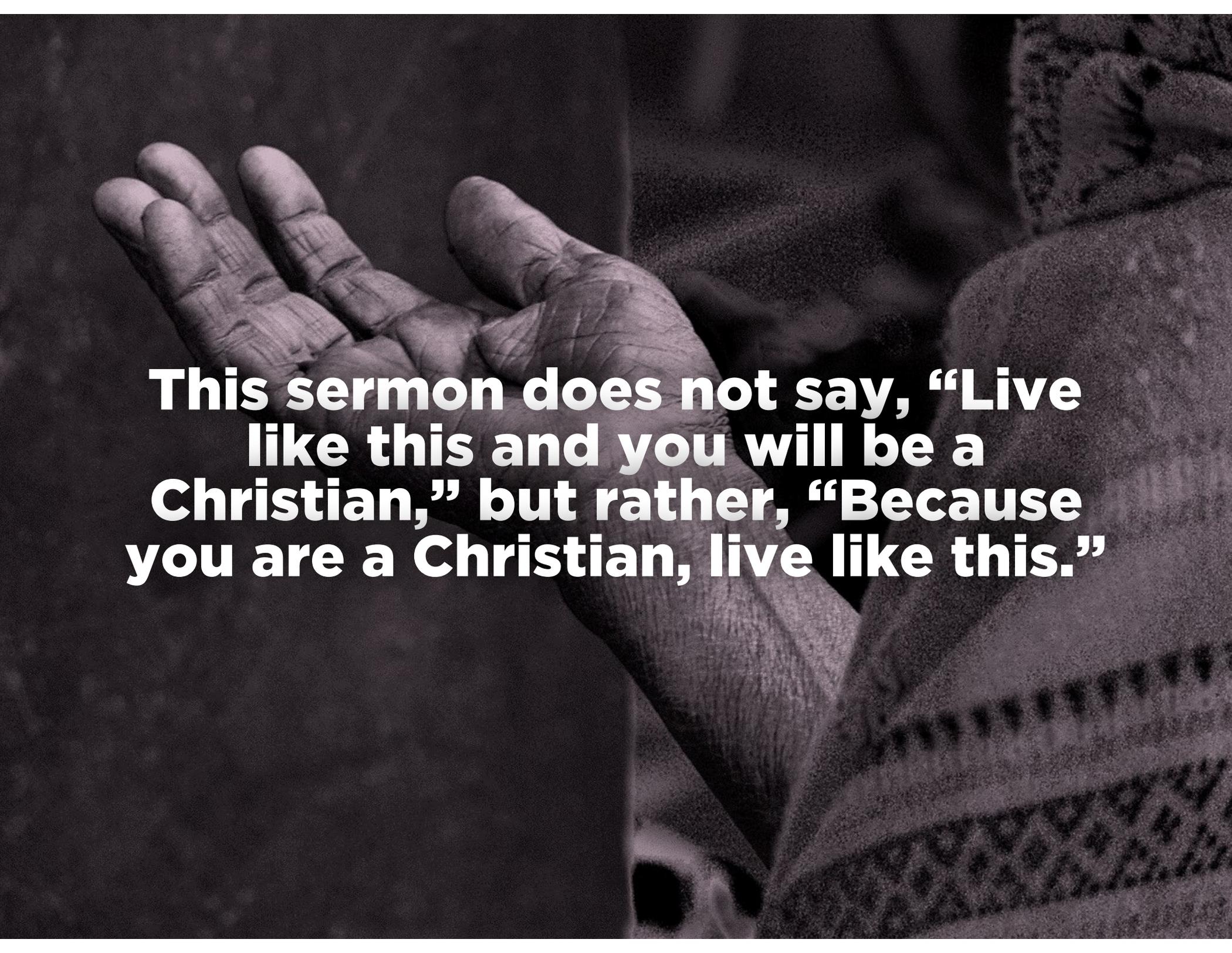
First Position

This is the main Ballet position that most of the steps you practise as a beginner will start from. So it's important to get it right.

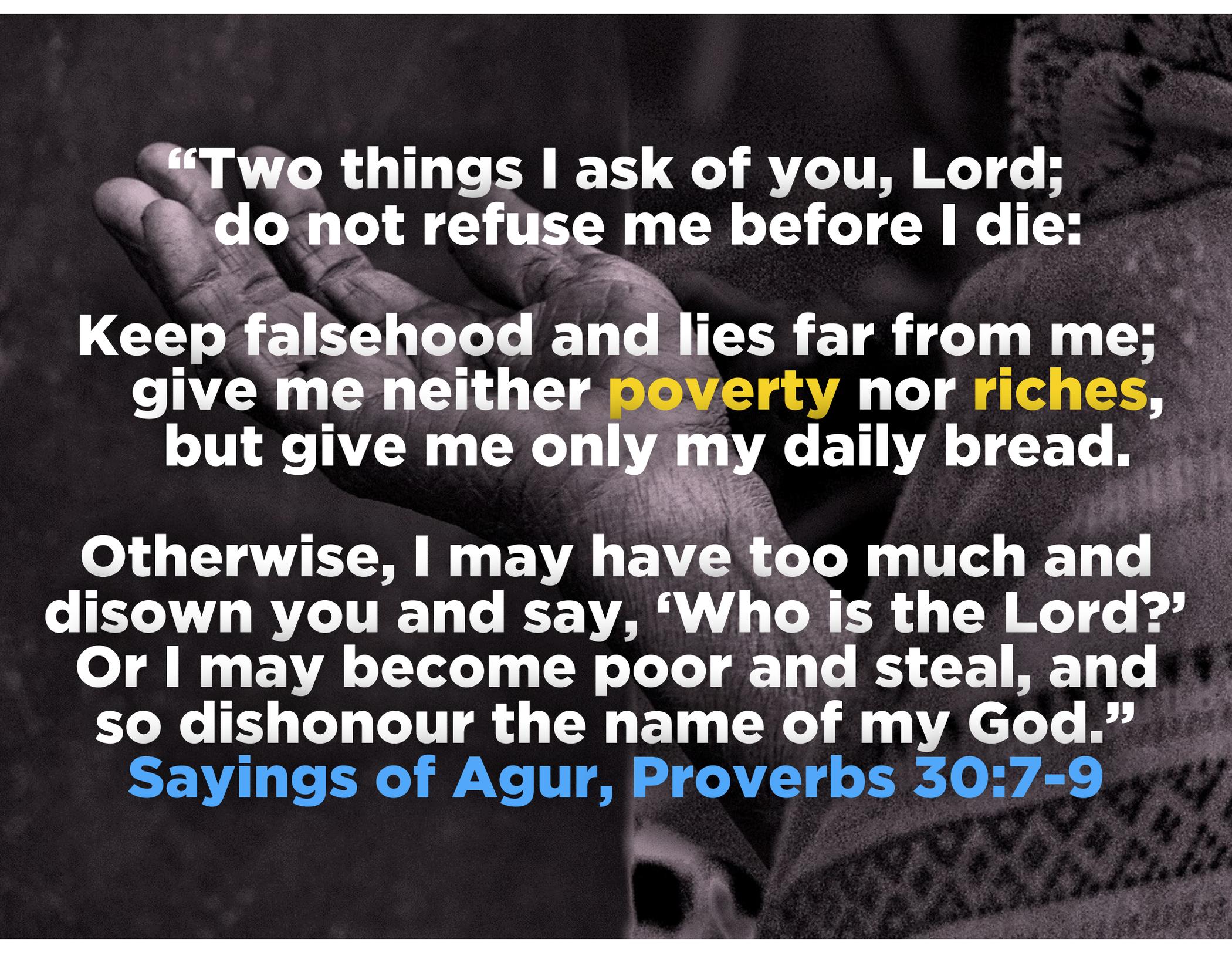


**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
Matthew 5:3

**The Beatitude begins with the
awareness of our spiritual state**



This sermon does not say, “Live like this and you will be a Christian,” but rather, “Because you are a Christian, live like this.”

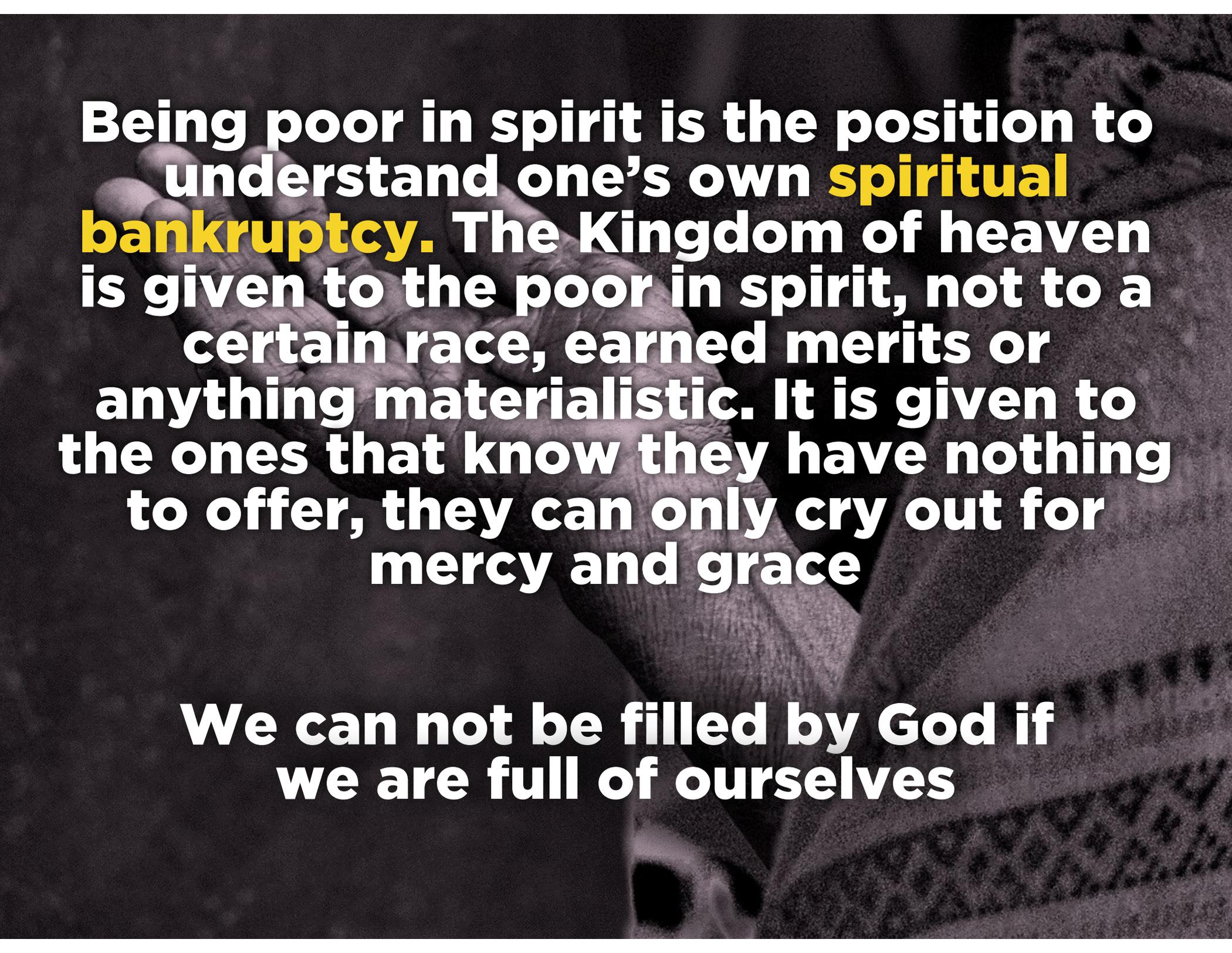


**“Two things I ask of you, Lord;
do not refuse me before I die:**

**Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither **poverty** nor **riches**,
but give me only my daily bread.**

**Otherwise, I may have too much and
disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’
Or I may become poor and steal, and
so dishonour the name of my God.”**

Sayings of Agur, Proverbs 30:7-9



Being poor in spirit is the position to understand one's own **spiritual bankruptcy. The Kingdom of heaven is given to the poor in spirit, not to a certain race, earned merits or anything materialistic. It is given to the ones that know they have nothing to offer, they can only cry out for mercy and grace**

We can not be filled by God if we are full of ourselves

The Kingdom of Heaven

“Poor”

Someone who **understands**
their **lack** of resources

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **Philippians 3:7-8**

The Kingdom of Heaven

“Spirit”

We can have everything and have nothing. Our lives can be full of all that we see but those of the “spirit” know that this is not enough.

You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But **you do not realize** that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. **Revelation 3:17**

The Kingdom of Heaven

“Poor of Spirit”

The “Poor of Spirit” recognize the Gospel as good news. It is the hope that they long for. The self sufficient see the Gospel as inconvenient and see it as a hindrance to their lifestyle

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then **in his joy went and sold all he had** and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, **he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.**”

Matthew 13:44-46

The Kingdom of Heaven

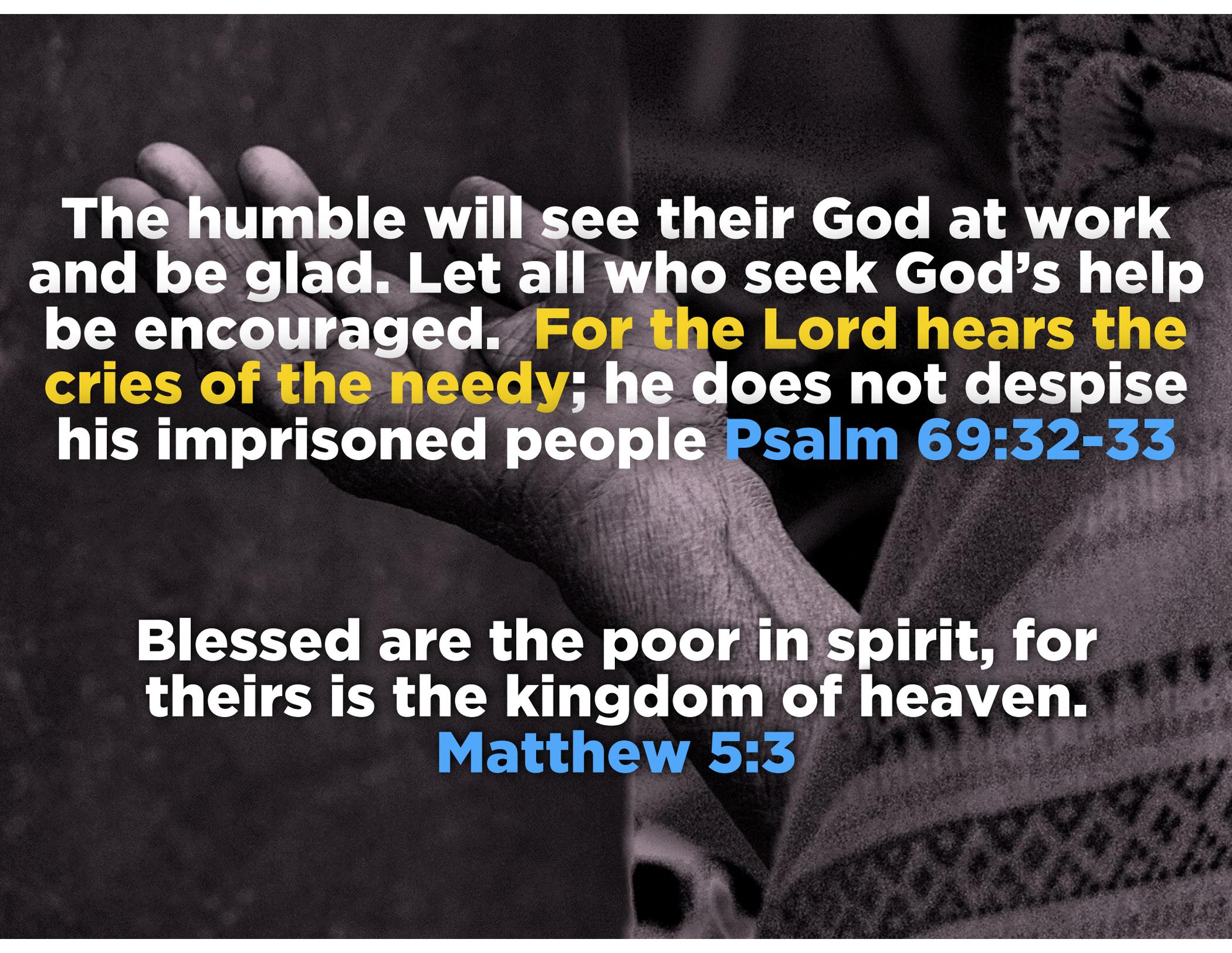
“The Kingdom”

If the poor of spirit know their need then they become “Kingdom” dwellers and show this truth in their lives

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living **water will flow from within them.** **John 7:38**

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, **you will bear much fruit;** apart from me you can do nothing. **John 15:5**

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. **This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.** **Matthew 13:23**



The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. For the Lord hears the cries of the needy; he does not despise his imprisoned people Psalm 69:32-33

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Matthew 5:3**