



Downsize Me

By John UpChurch

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.- Matthew 5:3, ESV

You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule. - Matthew 5:3, MSG

Let's try to regain the shock value in the way Jesus opened His Sermon on the Mount. We're too familiar with the statements and too far removed from the time to hear it like the original listeners. Imagine

- 1 lb. ground sausage (hot or mild)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 (15 oz.) cans whole tomatoes
- 2 (6 oz.) cans tomato paste
- 2 Tbsp. dried parsley
- 2 Tbsp. dried basil
- 2 ½ tsp. salt
- 3 cups cottage cheese
- 2 whole eggs, beaten
- ½ cups grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. dried parsley
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 (10 oz.) pkg. lasagna noodles
- 1 lb. sliced Mozzarella cheese

In a large skillet, combine ground beef, sausage, and garlic; cook over medium heat until browned. Drain some of the fat; add tomatoes, tomato paste, 2 tablespoons dried parsley, basil and 1 teaspoon of salt. Simmer for about 45 minutes. In a medium bowl, mix cottage cheese, beaten eggs, grated Parmesan cheese, 2 more tablespoons parsley, and 1 more teaspoon of salt; stir well and set aside. Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add ½ tsp. salt and the olive oil to the boiling water and boil noodles until "al dente" (not overly cooked) and drain. To Assemble: Arrange 4 cooked noodles in the bottom of a large baking dish, overlapping if necessary. Spoon half the cottage cheese mixture and spread evenly. Top with a layer of mozzarella cheese; spoon a little than half of the meat sauce over the top. Repeat layers ending with meat sauce; sprinkle top generously with extra Parmesan cheese.

You may freeze at this point, refrigerate up to 2 days, or bake immediately at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until top is hot and bubbly.

This is well worth the trouble!

**Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, The Help. Fleming can be reached at lafkitchen@hughes.net.*

going to a fast food restaurant, ordering an enormous value meal, and the cashier hitting you with this question: "Would you like to down-size your meal for a dollar less?" Or imagine a car salesperson pausing before you sign the papers and saying, "You know what? That extended warranty is overpriced. Let's get rid of it."

Now you have an idea how much impact Jesus had and why the audience was so astounded. Just like we expect people to push us to buy more, the Jews at the time expected their rabbis

to tell them the things they needed to do, the rules they needed to abide by. They came expecting to learn the ten steps required to earn God's favor, but Jesus crumpled up that idea and threw it out. Instead, He revealed that God's favor and blessings come to those who are poor in spirit.

There's more to it, however, than simply feeling beaten down or contrite. The poor in spirit—the ones at the end of their ropes—are those who realize they've gone as far as human effort can get them. In terms of salvation, that's not very far. Here's how John Gill puts it:

The greater part of mankind are insensible of this their condition; but think themselves rich, and increased with goods: there are some who are sensible of it, who see their poverty and want, freely ac-

knowledge it, bewail it, and mourn over it; are humbled for it, and are broken under a sense of it; entertain low and mean thoughts of themselves; seek after the true riches, both of grace and glory; and frankly acknowledge, that all they have, or hope to have, is owing to the free grace of God. (John Gill, commentary on Matthew 5:3)

The poor in spirit don't just feel bad; they feel bad because they realize how destitute their condition. When we truly understand that "karma points" and charitable acts amount to nothing more than drops of food coloring in the ocean, then we've gotten the point: We can't even approach the kingdom of God, let alone enter it, through our own efforts.

But those who look down and see the filth (and pre-salvation, our spiritual appearance is just that) are those who realize the need for God. And with that realization comes the increase of God in our lives and the decrease of self.

Intersecting Faith & Life: The beatitudes are much more than good ideas or suggestions. They crush preconceptions and expose us as we truly are. Each one reveals our need for God, our need for the work only He could do. When we're poor in spirit (that is, realizing our condition), we're rich in Him.

Further Reading:
Matthew 5
Luke 6



January 7 - Torrence Nickerson, Susan Chamblee, Jean Golden Branch, Randy Matthews

January 8 - Pearce Edwards, Charles Loflin, Ja'Kiya Ja'Liyah Watson, Jarneze Huntley, Christi Thornton Ramage, Hunter Burns

January 9 - Doyle Gilmore, Jr., Jeremy Hobson, Cody Holland

January 10 - Tina Pierce, Sterling Starns, Ashley Rowlen, Derek Dodd, Angelica Brown, Arthur Sumerall, Corey Garrett, Stacey Riley, Alexandria Rogers

January 11 - Lavell Thomas, Ricky Winstead, Ricky Winstead, Jr., Angela Spell, Patricia G. Gillespie, Janece Barron

January 12 - Jesse Gilbert, Daisy Malone, Ashley N. Wallace, Rayne Tate, Betty Byrd, Larkin Kirkwood, Daynie Parish, Velma L. Pate

January 13 - Dale McBride, Bra'kiaya Smart, Li Ables, Patrick Roberts, Dani Tate Ramsey, Dan

Loflin, Maddie Drennan, Chad Bishop, Kaley McGraw, Leslie Taylor Spell, Janet Hynum, Joetta Edwards, Danny Ingold, Joshua Morris



January 7 - Lance and Mary Katherine White

January 10 - John and Denise Grover

January 12 - Mike and Misty McBride

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My Father-in-Law

One of my favorite Christmas gifts I received was the new book written by Ree Drummond, *The Pioneer Woman*. She has a cooking show on the Food Network, has written many cookbooks, and has a line of baking and cookware. I have her other books, but this one was a little different. The book contains short stories about her life, rearing children, and living in the middle of nowhere on a cattle ranch. I love to read, but don't often have the time between cooking, writing, and teaching school. I always seem to feel that sitting down for hours reading a book is taking away from my other duties.

This book was different. I started reading on Christmas night after everyone had left our Christmas celebration that Steve and I hosted. I finished it the next day, waking up early with a cup of coffee and anxiously reading more of her wonderful stories. Many of her stories hit home with me. Especially the ones when she took her children to college and left them to come back to a very different home – been there, done that, but that is an entire article in itself.

Some of my favorite stories had to do with her in-laws, her father-in-law in particular. I began to reminisce about my own father-in-law, Henry Forrest Flemming. He passed away 13 years ago. He was a man who loved his friends and family. After a Christmas holiday of seeing all of his family members and dear friends, he went to sleep on a Saturday night and did not wake up. God was merciful in taking such a fine man without suffering as people often do.

Henry Forrest never introduced me as his daughter-in-law. I was another one of his daughters. He never missed any events that his children were involved in and that continued when each of his grandchildren were born. He did confess to me one time that he really preferred ball games over dance and piano recitals, but I needed to keep that to myself.

One year he invented a special holiday called "Daughter-in-Law Day."

At different times, he took each of us to spend the day together. He arranged a babysitter for our children and off we would go to spend the day together. He always picked the destination, the day's activity, lunch, and then he would take us shop-

ping for clothes.

I am thankful for many things in my life. One is the wonderful family I am fortunate to be a part of. Another at the very top of my list is my husband's parents and their rearing of the man I love. Henry Forrest was a wonderful role model for a son to live a life of seeing his father as a good man, husband, father, and friend.

One of the funniest things I ever heard him say came at the end of a Sunday afternoon when all five of his children and their spouses plus his ten grandchildren had been there for the day. It was wild – especially with grandchildren ranging from the ages of about 3 – 10. We were all getting ready to leave and it was taking forever. He said, "I ya'll are going to go, just please go!" He said there is no prettier sight in the world than tail-lights when ya'll leave the driveway!

Today I have a salad and lasagna recipe that came from *The Pioneer Woman*. They make a great meal with an addition of warm, crusty French bread. I often serve this for Christmas night supper. Doing the whole turkey and dressing thing so soon after Thanksgiving makes my head hurt. I hope you will give them a try. Thanks for reading.

MARINATED CHERRY TOMATO SALAD

- 1 pint red grape tomatoes
- 1 pint yellow grape tomatoes
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. minced fresh parsley
- 1 heaping Tbsp. jarred pesto
- ¼ tsp. sugar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and Pepper
- 1 head Iceberg lettuce, cut into chunks

Halve the tomatoes and add them to a large zipper bag along with the onions. Add the olive oil, vinegar, parsley, pesto, sugar, garlic, salt and pepper. Seal the bag, getting all the air out. Place in the refrigerator until ready to serve – at least 4 hours. Place the lettuce in a large bowl and pour the tomato mixture over; toss and serve.

*The original recipe calls for the chunks of Iceberg lettuce. I often serve with Romaine or a variety of different types of lettuce.

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- 1 ½ lbs. ground beef



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