

TITLE: BROKEN to be WHOLE

SERIES: The End of Me (1 of 4)

Text: Matthew 5:3

Balboa Community Church

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INTRO

Today we begin a new 4-part series called “The End of Me.” What do we mean by “The End of Me?” I can probably sum up this entire series in one sentence.

When you come to the end of yourself, real life begins.

It usually doesn’t feel that way, though. In fact, it will probably *never* feel that way. It’s like saying, “When you come to the end of the trail, then you’re ready to start hiking.”

Or... when the football game is over, then you start playing.

Or ... when you’re finished eating, then you start cooking.

It doesn’t make sense. Everyone knows that it just doesn’t work that way. But in God’s kingdom, it’s the central premise that makes everything else work – when you understand that principle.,

When you come to the end of yourself, real life begins.

We see it over and over again in the Gospels—the first four books of the New Testament that record the ministry of Jesus when He was here on earth.

When anyone encountered Jesus, the things they thought were most important were put on the line. And if they were truly ready to accept the life of Jesus, then they would have to let go of their life as they knew it.

- **Zacchaeus** (Lk. 19) realizes that he may have status, privilege, and wealth, but he is spiritually bankrupt (poor in spirit). When he encountered Jesus, he came to the end of himself. He gave half of his possessions to the poor and paid back those he cheated four times as much. That’s when his real life began.
- **Mary and Martha** (Jn. 11) realize that, even though God didn’t spare them the pain of losing their brother, He taught them how to depend on Him in a deeper way. Their brother died and they were broken in spirit. And it was at that moment when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life again. That’s when real life began.
- **The woman at the well** (Jn. 4) realizes that her lifestyle is leaving her empty, and that hiding behind questions won’t satisfy her. She had been looking for happiness all her life, having married 5 times. But when she encountered Jesus, she came to the end of herself and that’s when her real life began.

Time and again, Jesus comes face to face with what we think we know about life and turns it upside down. Nowhere is this more clear than in the Sermon on the Mount.

In Matthew 5:3-12, Jesus starts His most famous sermon with some of His most famous statements called The Beatitudes. They each start with a blessing. These statements give us a glimpse into some of the core values of Jesus’ kingdom. Jesus lets us know how He expects His followers to live.

Each of the beatitudes has to do with coming to the end of

yourself. If you go through The Beatitudes and boil them down to the heart issue that Jesus is addressing, no one can get away without their toes being stepped on. The way Jesus does things in His kingdom is pretty upside-down.

The first thing Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount is,

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

Apart from the obvious fact that Jesus seems to be flat out wrong, He also seems foolish. Who would think to give their kingdom to those who are poor in spirit? That’s not a very smart move.

The poor in spirit would be those who seem like they don’t have anything to offer, don’t have any major influence, and don’t have anything worth noticing. They’re not the up and comers, the movers and shakers of this world.

These are people who are stuck, useless, and broken. The New Living Translation puts Matthew 5:3 this way:

Matthew 5:3 - God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him. NLT

That’s the beauty of what Jesus does when He calls us to the end of ourselves: He makes up the difference with *Himself*.

We think it’s about us - improving our lives, trying to be better people, achieving the American Dream.

But that’s not how God builds His kingdom. He’s looking for broken people - those who are poor in spirit. He takes broken people and makes them whole.

If we want to come to the end of ourselves, we need to begin again with Jesus. That’s when Jesus does His real work in us. He can’t if we’re filled with ourselves. We must be empty of ourselves to be filled with Him.

When Jesus chose His disciples, the “end of me” process began for them. As we follow their lives, we can see their journey as an example of what ours will look like if we choose to come to the end of ourselves...where *real* life begins.

1. The end of me is the beginning of TRUST

Think back to when Jesus called His disciples. Imagine what that must have been like. They came from different professions, different towns, different families. But all of them had to experience the end of themselves in order to follow Jesus.

Jesus called them to leave their jobs, their families, and their reputations... and to follow Him (Mt. 4:19-22). In order to do that, the disciples had to come to the end of themselves and learn to trust Jesus. They wouldn’t follow Him if they didn’t trust Him.

Imagine what the rest of their family would say. You’re going to leave your job and follow some teacher around and not know where you’re going? What about us? What about your future? How are you going to support yourself? What will happen when you retire and have no pension?

The disciples had to trust Jesus completely – trust that he knew what to do, that he could provide for them, that he spoke truth, that he knew where and when to go.

Jesus took them outside of their comfort zones – letting go of their pride, family and support – and asked them to simply trust Him. The only way they could do that was to come to the end of themselves. And that's when their real life began.

We don't know much about their lives before they decided to follow Jesus. But once they came to the end of themselves, they experienced an amazing journey with Christ. And God used them far beyond their own imaginations and expectations.

When they denied themselves... they trusted Jesus... and it changed their lives.

2. The end of me is the beginning of a NEW IDENTITY

As the disciples followed Jesus, they continued to come to the end of themselves. Following Jesus and learning from Him meant beginning to be different people altogether. They watched Jesus love people who were hard to love. They watched Him serve those who had great needs. They saw how He handled adversity and criticism.

They were becoming a new kind of person that Jesus describes in The Sermon on the Mount. They were finding their identity in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! NIV

Jesus takes the broken, the poor in spirit, and makes them new people.

Rachelle Starr founded a ministry called Scarlet Hope that reaches out and shows the love of Jesus to women in the sex industry. She talks about what began to happen in her as she served women who were "broken."

[Video - Sermonette 1]

When we come to the end of ourselves and see the poor in spirit the way Jesus does, we begin to realize that we are poor in spirit, too.

The identity of the disciples was beginning to change from people who watched Jesus care about those things and love those people... into people who took action themselves.

After Jesus left earth and went back to heaven, the disciples carried on the work of Jesus - just like he showed them. They were changed people.

It is impossible to have a new identity in Christ unless you come to the end of yourself. If you don't, then people will still see YOU and not Christ... you will accomplish things that YOU want to do and not necessarily what God wants. It is only when you come to the end of yourself that you will find your true identity in Jesus.

3. The end of me is the beginning of GOD'S POWER

It's all about God's power working through you.

As the disciples followed Jesus and came to the end of themselves, their brokenness was on display more and more. Just reading through the Gospels makes it pretty clear that the disciples were ordinary men and even kind of missed the point a lot of the time.

But still, as they trusted Jesus and let Him give them a new identity and a new purpose, the kingdom of heaven really did begin to expand and be entrusted to the broken people Jesus called and loved—just like He promised in Matthew 5:3.

The disciples became the people through whom the Church was founded because they came to the end of themselves and the power of God came to the forefront.

Through godly men and women the message of Christ was spread to the world and continues to this day – not through world leaders and charismatic personalities – but through people who were broken and came to the end of themselves so they could be filled with Jesus.

Like Rachelle said, no amount of brokenness is too much for God. In fact, He prefers those who are broken—that's really the only people He has to choose from.

And when we give our brokenness to the God who makes things whole, amazing things happen in us and through us.

Brokenness is not something to be ashamed of. It's something to be embraced. We don't have to pretend we have it all together. We just have to be honest with ourselves and God.

And when you empty yourself of yourself, that's when Jesus can fill you completely.

God wants to use you... to change you... to fill you. All He requires is an empty vessel.

When you come to the end of yourself, real life begins.