

# I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY . . . .

A series by Andrea Kidd

## #2: Rich or Poor

She stood panting at the top of the stairs, wheezing, gasping, spent. Supporting herself on the wall she reached the bathroom, managed to accomplish necessary tasks and sank onto the bed. Now housebound, life had little appeal.

Her doctor offered oxygen, a small pack that would accompany her when she went out for coffee with a friend, to the shopping mall with her husband, to church to sing those familiar, comforting hymns.

*I'm not going to let people see me like this, and certainly not with an oxygen tank, like a dog on a leash! No way! They'll think I'm not long for this world!*

Life dragged on. Friends and family stopped by, but cheerless, lagging conversations are difficult to maintain.

Proud of her strong spirit, she still climbed those stairs unaided.

*I'm not giving in to this! No one can accuse me of being a wimp!*

"Would you like ...?" her husband ventured.

"No, I'm fine!" she cut in.

But her misery and staunch refusal for help permeated the household. Stiff in her dignity, she was unaware of the pain she inflicted on those who desired to help her cope with her weakening body. Her rejection increased her suffering and theirs. Her independence isolated her. Family members were helpless, worried; they talked about her amongst themselves. Her strong spirit prevented them from experiencing the blessing of being able to do anything, however small, to relieve or participate in her suffering.

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

Matthew 5:3

What is Jesus saying? Surely poverty, wherever it is found, is degrading. How can poverty bring joy, gladness, a deep sense of contentment and being right with the world?

When I leave my fortress of self sufficiency and recognise my limitations, I am spiritually poor. When I stop bolstering my defences, let down the drawbridge and walk out of

my castle, the prison of my pride that I have shut myself into, I am spiritually poor. When I recognise my strengths and my weaknesses, and know that I am human, not a god, I am spiritually poor.

Then, says Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is mine. I am blessed, glad, wealthy beyond measure. I receive treasure that satisfies, that no one can snatch away, that goes with me beyond the grave.

I am poor in my own spirit yet rich in the Spirit of God. The kingdom of heaven is mine!



Moyland Castle, Germany