

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Matthew 5:1-4

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¹ *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.*

² *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:* ³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Jesus teaches us in this Beatitude that those who are happy and glad are those who mourn. They will be comforted.

Here is a literal translation of verse four: *“Happy are the brokenhearted, for they shall be called next to God”*

You are happy when you mourn? How?

Before we unpack this beatitude, last week we began with the first beatitude. A beatitude is a happy saying. Jesus begins his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount by teaching the first foundational quality of a disciple. Humility. God is far from the proud but with humble he is close. Humble people are happy people. But this world by and large tells us that being happy means having stuff, material possessions. Some buzz words we hear today are positivity or doing things to feel good or look good. If you go to a book store, no doubt you will see a book with the title, “Ten steps to happiness”.

Whole industries are built just for this purpose. Forgot your troubles. Just be happy. Achieve your dreams. Follow the money. Pursue pleasure. Run after fame and acclaim and then you will be happy. John D Rockefeller is quoted to have said, “I have made millions but they brought me no happiness”. And yet we see so many chasing after happiness and never finding it.

The reality of human life is much different. Before we look at our Lord’s teaching on mourning, let’s consider some of the ways we mourn.

1. Growing up I saw the mother of my brother’s friend grieve in a way I have never seen before. My brother and his friends all went to the beach one day. And one of them who was top of the class did not make it. The ocean waves pulled him inside. And that day they returned with a dead

body. And the mother's grief knew no bounds or limits. This is the way of human life. There are days of sorrow, pain and crying. This is legitimate and reasonable mourning. But there are some who think crying is beneath them. A lack of proper grief is not proper either. Jesus cried. He had compassion for Lazarus and his sister and cried. Jesus was a man of sorrows. It is our human mechanism to mourn when a loss occurs or is going to happen. But this is *not* the kind of mourning Jesus was teaching in this Beatitude.

2. We see in the book of Esther when Mordecai hears about the announcement that his people were going to be destroyed. He cries out loudly and bitterly. In Luke chapter 19 verse 41 Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem because he saw their unrepentant hearts and foresaw that the city would be destroyed. Yes, this is legitimate mourning as well but this is *not* the kind of mourning Jesus was teaching.
3. Another category of mourning to consider is *insincere grief*. You are probably familiar with the phrase "crocodile tears". Its crying only for that moment. It is like crying with an onion, having enough tears for external losses only. This is *not* the kind of mourning Jesus was teaching.
4. There is also a sorrow or mourning that can happen when you cannot *let go* of some material possession. In the Gospels we see the story of a rich young man who comes to Jesus. He said he had been following all the commandments and yet felt lacking something. So, Jesus tells the rich young man. Go, sell your possessions, give to the poor and come and follow me. *What was the response of this man?* He went away *sorrowful*. The thought of giving up his possessions made him *very sad*. The NASB tells us that this rich young man "went away grieving" (Matthew 19:22). This is *not* the kind of mourning Jesus was teaching.
5. There are times when mourning can be *unreasonable*. For example, as believers and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we grieve and mourn as everybody else but we are not to grieve as if we don't have hope. The Christian hope is that when a believer dies or passes on, they go to God. But even this is *not* the kind of mourning Jesus was teaching.

So what kind of mourning Jesus was teaching about?

A few years ago, I remember being invited to preach Sunday morning at a church in India. And my passage that Sunday was from the Gospel of Mark where Jesus heals a man living among the tombs. This man was hurting himself so bad that they had to bind him with chains. And when he meets Jesus,

he is healed and made completely well. So, I completed my sermon and one of the leaders in the church tried to summarize my sermon. And this was the summary – this man was a good man but he got possessed. He was hurting but he was a good man.

And I thought I had tried my best to present that we are sinners by nature and choice. But with one summary statement my message was misrepresented.

This is the lie we are told today. That lie is that you are *good*. Your sinful behavior is not because of your sin nature but some external influence.

We are good at giving credit to the devil. The devil made me do it. They made me do it.

If you are good, then how do you explain the words of Paul, “Wretched man that I am”. (Romans 7:24).

How do you explain Peter telling Jesus, “Depart from me, for I am sinful man” (Luke 5:8).

How do you explain the prayer of the tax collector who cried out to God saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner”. (Luke 18:13).

You see this mourning begins when you recognize or observe your own sin. The prodigal son’s restoration began when he “came to himself”. He saw his own sin. (Luke 15:17).

Then, he has sorrow for his sin.

The mourning Jesus taught is grieving and being heartbroken over your sin.

“Godly grief produces repentance that leads to salvation, and worldly grief produces death”. (2 Corinthians 7:10).

This mourning is for the sin that brings evil not for evil that sin brings.

Peter wept bitterly after he realized he had denied the Lord Jesus Christ. This is only kind of grief that results in heavenly joy and gladness.

*And those who mourn for their sin, it is they who will be comforted,
How are they be comforted? By whom?*

Look at the verse again:

Happy are the brokenhearted, for they shall be called next to God”

Surely, Jesus cares about comforting those suffering with human disease and pain. In the previous chapter, Jesus went about bringing comfort to those with physical sickness. So, yes he cares to bring comfort to those who are suffering BUT he cares even more to bring comfort to those with the spiritual disease that affects all human beings. SIN is the spiritual disease. Sin resides deep in the heart of man and what does it produce? The wages of sin is death.

Only those who mourn will receive comfort. Only those grieve will be called alongside God. The Bible says God is God of all Comfort. So to be beside God is the greatest comfort. Those are the happy ones. Those are the people truly blessed.

In the Luke chapter 23 verse 28 we see Jesus is on his way to be crucified and the women are mourning and crying for him. In spite of the terrible crucifixion Jesus is going to face, Jesus tells these women “..do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children”. (Luke 23:28).

Do you desire to be comforted by God?

1. Stop flattering yourself in your own eyes. *“Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.² For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.”* Psalm 36:1-2. *Self-flattery is self-deception.*

It seems Billy Graham was once going to be interviewed at his home by a tv station. So his wife took great pains cleaning up the home by vacuuming, dusting and cleaning. The tv crew arrived and turned their lights and cameras on. Suddenly they could see dust and cobwebs everywhere. His wife just could not see the dust in ordinary light. No matter how much we clean up and think we have them in order, in the light of God’s Word all the cobwebs show up.

2. Mourn for sin. For the believer there must be an ongoing hatred and mourning for your sin. It must never stop until your departure from this earth. *“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and tear your hearts and not your garments.”* Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster” Joel 2:12

If you have never mourned for your sin, there’s always a first time. The stain of sin cannot be erased by any human method – not self-help, not good deeds.

“Even when you wash yourself with much strong soap, the mark of your sin is still before Me,” says the Lord God” (Jeremiah 2:22). But those who mourn find true joy in God. Those who trust

in the Jesus Christ and his death as payment for your sin is the only way to be cleansed of your sin problem.

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy” Psalm 126:5-6

Those who mourn for their sin will receive God’s consolation. God’s mercy. God’s compassion. God’s comfort.

Happy are the heartbroken, for they shall be comforted.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Blessed are those who mourn. Matthew 5:1-4

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What is godly sorrow for sin or conviction of sin? Why is it essential prior to experiencing true and ongoing joy of salvation? Luke 19:8-9, Acts 16:29-34

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Knowing that you are a forgiven sinner, how do you view yourself? As someone with a growing sense of your sinfulness and in need of grace *or* someone who needs little grace? Why must there be a constant mourning for our sin? Romans 7:24, 1 John 1:8-10
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

1. For personal reflection: What habits do you need to develop or continue to grow in to mourn for sin?