

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Text: Matthew 5:4

INTRODUCTION: There seems to be a paradox *“a statement or proposition that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory.”* Cf. Psalms 55:5-8, and it's a cry for freedom, free from suffering, trial, pain and fear. This is a cry for escape, a plea to be free from attacks.

We wish we could escape the troubles of life. We escape a thunderstorm by going inside, but it's just not that easy with trials and troubles. The whole idea of this beatitude seems paradox to human thinking. How can the sad be happy? Jesus said in Luke 6:25 *“Woe to you who are well-fed (full) now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.”* Jesus turned the world's principals upside down and reversed the path to true happiness.

POINT 1 - THE MEANING OF MOURNING. Certain kinds of sorrow are common to man. There are also times of improper mourning. Amnon was grief stricken, mourning because of unfulfilled lust with his sister, 1 Samuel 13:2. Ahab grieved and mourned over not getting a plot of land from Naboth.

There are times of proper mourning. There are legitimate sorrows and griefs we all endure. To express sorrow and cry over them opens an escape valve that keeps our feelings and emotions from festering and poisoning our whole life. It provides a way of healing, as washing out a wound. That's God design, Abraham mourned at the death of Sarah. Jesus wept. Psalms 42:1-3 *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, While they say to me all day long, Where is your God?”* 2 Timothy 1:3-4 *“I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴ longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.”* Jeremiah mourned over the sins of Israel, *“Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!”* Paul mourned night and day for the Ephesians, Acts 20:31 *“remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”* A grief stricken father mourned over his demon possessed son, Mark 9:24 *“Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, I do believe; help my unbelief.”*

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POINT 2 - GODLY MOURNING. Jesus is concerned with the legitimate sorrows and griefs of His children. The kinds of sorrow we have discussed so far is not the sorrow we see here. Jesus is speaking of godly sorrow, mourning that only those who sincerely belong to Him can experience, cf. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. Godly sorrow is linked to repentance. The first beatitude is linked to “poor in spirit” the spiritual destitute state, now we see the mourning over the sin and disobedience to God. Romans 7:18 **“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh...”**.

Spiritual poverty (beatitude 1) leads to godly sorrow. It recognized total spiritual bankruptcy. Those who are poor in spirit become those who mourn. David expresses his sin before God in Psalms 51:3-4 **“For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.”** Even Job who was upright, righteous and blameless, a model believer no doubt, came to a place of mourning over sin, Job 42:6 **“Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.”**

Application: A morally upright life is blessed, but it's no substitution for a contrite spirit.

POINT 3 - THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION. There are nine Greek words for mourn that are used in the NT. Of the nine, the word used here is the strongest and most severe. It represents the deepest, most heartfelt grief, and generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one. It is used in Genesis 37:34 when Jacob mourned over Joseph who he thought was dead. In Mark 16:10 when the disciples thought Jesus was dead **“She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping.”** It carries the idea of deep agony and wailing. When David stopped hiding and began to mourn and confess, cf. Psalms 32:3-5.

Application: Happiness does not come at the beset of mourning, it comes when we confess and repent and God brings about joy in salvation and communion with Him. Only mourners over sin can be happy, because mourning over sin brings forgiveness.

Q - How do we do this? How do we mourn biblically? Cf. James 4:8-10, the great need in the church today is to mourn not laugh. The things that pass for worship and go on in the church today, should make us mourn. Many have no high view of God and His word.

The faithful child of God is constantly broken over his sinfulness, and the longer he lives the more aware he is of his weakness and tendency to sin. As we grow in the Lord, we see ourselves more clearly, but we also see the grace and mercy and long-suffering of God.

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Proverbs 2:14 "Who delight in doing evil, And rejoice in the perversity of evil" 2
Thessalonians 2:12 "who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

Application: We can deny our spiritual destitution and pretend we're spiritually rich. We can admit our spiritual condition, but try to change in our own power. We can try to escape to a remote place, drown them in drink and sorrows. Or we can be like the prodigal and admit where we're at and plead to return to the Father's house. Luke 15:17-19 "And when he came to himself (to his senses) I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'"

POINT 4 - THE RESULTS OF MOURNING. The emphatic pronoun for they indicates that only those who mourn over sin will be comforted. The word comfort can also be rendered helper, and indicates Jesus is our helper and comforter. When we see the word "shall be" indicates not a future, eternal comfort, but a present tense now in this life. We shall be comforted knowing God has forgiven our sin.

Q - How do we mourn? How can we become godly mourners? **First**, remove the hinderances that keep you from mourning. Do you still love your sin? Do you hold on to that which is contrary to God's word? Are you hiding your sin? You don't treat heart disease like you do a cold or the flu. Are you waiting for the right moment to get things right?

True repentance and mourning will bring comfort in knowing God will forgive, and He is merciful and graceful. **Secondly**, study the Scriptures to see what sin is and how it's an offense to God. Psalms 51:3-4 "For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak, And blameless when You judge." Isaiah 6:5 "Woe is me, for I am ruined (undone)! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips." Finally, we see our sin grieving God, not our reputation. Psalms 119:136 "My eyes shed streams of water, Because they do not keep Your law."