

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

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Matthew 5:4
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Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (ESV)

Sermon Theme: On this side of eternity, the sorrow we feel because of sin (the sin of others, our own sin, sin in the culture) and its consequences is not always easy to process or cope with. In this one single verse – our Lord Jesus provides divine perspective and encouragement intended to comfort every soul that grieves sin and its sad consequences.

Context

- The context of the beatitudes is the sermon on the Mount where a primary theme is life in the kingdom of God.
- In the Beatitudes, Jesus aims to help the original twelve and all disciples to understand what it truly means to live as citizens of the kingdom of Christ as distinct from the kingdom of this world.
- And our Lord does so, in part, by means of paradox.

Mourning for Sin

- Jesus says “blessed are those who mourn” or as some would prefer— “happy are those who mourn.”
- In seeking to understand the paradox, it helpful to realize first —Jesus isn’t referring to a positive feeling when he says “happy or blessed.”
- He is not saying those who feel mournful actually really feel quite happy.
- What Jesus is saying is that objectively speaking, in an ultimate sense and from a heavenly kingdom perspective, there is a kind of person who is in a happy, spiritually blessed, flourishing position and estate -- even though by all outward appearances it may not seem like it at all.
- That person is the disciple of the Lord Jesus who mourns sin—his sin and the sin of others. It is that person, who in reality, Jesus says is the blessed, the happy, the fortunate one.

The godly remnant of Jesus’ day weeps because of the humiliation of Israel, but they understand that it comes from personal and corporate sins. The psalmist testified, “Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed” (Ps 119:136; cf. Ezek 9:4).

-- DA Carson

- The godly, faithful remnant of Israelites living in the first century mourned that they were under foreign, under Roman – Gentile domination and rule. And they mourned for the sin and idolatry that got them there and how they themselves had participated in those sins.

- Remember, when John the Baptist came – he came proclaiming a Baptism of repentance. So people came to John mourning—mourning for their sin, mourning for their idolatry so that they would then be included in the incredible joy, blessing and comfort of the coming Messiah.
- From Jesus’ vantage point -- those who mourned in this repentant way were blessed—Not the rest of apostate Israel (like the self-righteous Pharisees) who also hated foreign rule, and yet failed to grieve the sin, idolatry and rebellion that got them there in the first place.
- Likewise, still today – in Jesus’ eyes the category of “blessed” is defined, in part, by poverty of spirit and mourning for sin.
- Are you aware of your sinfulness and sin? Do you mourn the sad consequences of your sin?” And do you grieve sin you see in family members, friends, co-workers....in the culture, in the world? If so -- Jesus calls you blessed.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. -- Psalm 51:17

Promised Blessing to Those Who Mourn

- Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Jesus’ language appears to be drawn from the words of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 61.

[1] The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
[2] to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
[3] to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. - Is. 61:1-3

- The comfort Jesus promises to those who mourn is the comprehensive comfort that comes through Jesus’ Christ, the Messiah King and His saving work.
- It is a robust comfort. A strong comfort. A true comfort that has been secured by the blood of the Lamb and is to be experienced by every believer in the Lord Jesus.
 - Jesus came to “bind up the broken hearted.”
 - He came to “comfort all who mourn.”
 - He came to give his people “the oil of gladness instead of mourning.”
- And He secured this comfort for us, through his life, death and resurrection.
- We experience this comfort in part now and will experience it in full at the return of the Lord.
- One day, when Christ returns – our comfort will be full, comprehensive and complete.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
-- Revelation 21:4

- God’s Word assures us — however far our pain goes, His comfort reaches even further. He will wipe away every tear.

Questions for Discussion/Application

- Re-read Matthew 5:1-4. Re-read also the sermon Recap. How would you summarize what Jesus is saying when He says, “*Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (ESV)”*”
- Why is important that we as believers mourn our own sin?
- When we keep the gospel in view, how can rightly mourning our sin actually lead to joy?
- How do we mourn the sin of others against us, rightly without becoming bitter? How does the gospel help us to do that?
- How does the Word of God comfort us with regards to sin we ourselves have committed and have repented of? What passages come to mind?
- How does the Word of God comfort us with respect to sin and the effects of sin that we grieve as it relates to others or in the culture?
- Consider reading Revelation 21:4. How can this promise encourage us and strengthen us with regards to all sorrow and suffering we as Christians experience?
- Consider taking time to pray, asking God to help us to both mourn and repent of our sin rightly and receive His comfort as well.