

Good MOURNING.....

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

This month we will focus on the second of eight beatitudes Jesus shared in Matthew 5 as part of the Sermon on the Mount. All of the Beatitudes begin with the word “blessed.” As we discussed last month, the word “blessed” refers to an outward feeling of happiness as a result of inner joy. In the first beatitude, we saw that the first step to blessing was the result of being poor in spirit, or being humble, realizing we don’t have all the answers and allowing God to sit on the throne of our lives and call the shots. In other words, dying to self. This month we learn that the second step to being blessed is mourning.

Although only ten words are contained in this second beatitude, it may prompt you, as it did me, to ask several questions. Let’s address these questions as we unpack this beatitude:

- (1) Who is Jesus addressing?** He is addressing His disciples, fellow believers who had put their faith in Him.
- (2) In what specific situation does He say believers will be blessed?** They will be blessed when they mourn.
- (3) What does it mean to mourn?** Mourning is defined as a feeling of grief, sadness, or sorrow.
- (4) What would cause a believer to mourn?** Three areas in which a believer may mourn are:

(A) *The Evil Seen in Our World or Nation* as evidenced by man’s inhumanity to man in the killing of innocent and defenseless babies, starvation, terror attacks, extermination, and debt. The most horrendous illustration of this was when the best life that was ever lived, Jesus the Son of God, was put to death on a cross. A similar scenario is being played out today in our homes, schools and all society as self-will asserts itself over God’s will. Jesus expressed His sorrow and mourned over Jerusalem. We read in *Luke 19:41-41*, ***When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.”*** He also gave people the solution to the darkness they experience when He said in *John 8:12*, ***“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*** To His own He said in *Galatians 5:16*, ***“So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.”***

(B) *The Human Sorrow Seen or Experienced by Ourselves, Family, or Friends* as a result of the loss of a parent, child, mate, pet, health, job, personal misfortune or rejection. Jesus expressed His sorrow and grief as He mourned over the death of His friend Lazarus when informed by Martha and Mary that their brother had died. We read in *John 11:33-35*, ***When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.***

(C) *The Personal Sin We See in Our lives* evidenced by our attitudes and actions in dealing with personal relationships, including our relationship with God. I’m afraid far too many of us express more sorrow over troubles and misfortunes of ourselves or others than we do over our own sin. As we celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ later this month, we must remember why He went to the cross----to pay the debt for our sin. David expressed mourning

over his sin when he said in *Psalms 51:4*, “**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.**” The prophet Isaiah, when he saw his Holy Lord in *Isaiah 6:5*, peered into his own heart and lamented, “**Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips.**” Peter mourned over his sin of denying he knew Jesus as we read in *Luke 22:62*, “**And he went outside and wept bitterly.**” Paul, when struggling with sin in his life, said in *Romans 7:24-25*, “**What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!**”

(5) To which of these three general areas of morning is Jesus referring? While the first two areas in which a believer may mourn focus on the physical or emotional parts of our lives, it is the spiritual condition of our hearts that Jesus is addressing. This type of mourning is not the result of a melancholy disposition, sorrow over temporal setbacks, adversity, disappointments, unrealized material expectations or hopes, but spiritual poverty. The Holy Spirit will bring comfort to all believers who mourn whether their mourning is the result of a physical, emotional, or spiritual situation. However, all the beatitudes focus on our spiritual condition, not the material aspects of our lives. Just as in the first beatitude we must be poor in spirit before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, this second beatitude tells us that we must have a real sense of our sin before we can experience the Lord’s comfort.

(6) How is a believer comforted when they mourn? When believers mourn over their sin, not just the consequences of their sin, they are not left with only godly sorrow. Whether our mourning is over sins of commission or omission the Lord, the God of all Comfort, rushes in to comfort us with the promise in *1 John 1:9*, “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**” In *Psalms 86:5* we read, “**You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.**” When we call upon the Lord, He will turn our mourning into blessing and comfort us. Not only in this present life, but He promises in *Revelation 21:4* that one day, “**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.**”

Sin brings us down and when the Holy Spirit produces a godly sorrow for our sin, we will be encouraged to turn from it and look to Him. When we do, our mourning will lead to repentance and our repentance will bring blessing and comfort as His peace and joy return to our hearts. I believe Pastor, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones expressed it best when he described the believer as one who is like the Lord Himself, groaning, weeping, and yet, ‘for the joy set before him’ enduring the cross, despising the shame. Dr. Jones said, “*That is the man who mourns. That is the type of Christian seen in the Church in ages past, when the doctrine of sin was preached and emphasized. A deep doctrine of sin, a high doctrine of joy, and the two together produce this blessed, happy man who mourns, and who at the same time is comforted.*” Dr. Jones goes on to tell us how to experience that in our own lives. He says, “*Read the Scriptures, study and meditate upon them, pray to God for His Spirit to reveal sin in us to ourselves, and then to reveal to us the Lord Jesus Christ in all His fullness.*”

When we mourn and shed tears of repentance over our sin, we will experience His joy and comfort (*Psalms 126:5; John 16:20*).

PERSONAL REFLECTION

When was the last time you mourned over your sin?

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His blessing and comfort are promised to those who do.

How will you bring glory to God once you have been comforted?

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