

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Matthew 5:4

INTRO – The world cannot understand this because it will not submit to it. Just as difficult is our flesh, which will always battle this from many directions. We must remember the context of this blessing in order to understand and apply it. This *spiritual* blessing follows the blessing of those who are poor *in spirit*, and so must be for those who are *spiritually* mourning.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”. First, notice that we are to have sensations, and cultivate them. Second, Jesus is teaching us to live outside of our sensations. Though we mourn, the comfort of God is a future promise. Our Comforter (John 15:26) is a seal guaranteeing our coming and complete joy.

Not New Words – A good sermon isn’t original. Jesus is not saying things the writers of the Old Testament hadn’t already said (Psalm 126:5-6, Isaiah 66:10-13). Even the order of these first two Beatitudes can be found in Isaiah 61:1-3.

Unspiritual Mourning – There are many counterfeits. We must guard ourselves against the sorrow of the world (2 Cor 7:10). There is much mourning that is simply more sin. We must not be like:

- 1) Ammon, who mourned over Tamar (2 Sam 13:2), or Ahab, who could not have a vineyard (1 Kings 21:4).
- 2) Pharaoh, who mourned after doing right (Ex 14:5).
- 3) Judas, whose mourning was full of despair (Matt 27:3)
- 4) The hypocrites, who love to be seen mourning (Matt 6:16)
- 5) Cain, who mourned over the punishment, and not the sin (Gen 4:13), or the merchants of Revelation, who mourned over their losses (Rev 18:19).

We must also guard ourselves against a lack of mourning. There is a presumption of mercy which is wicked (Rom 6:1). The ease with which we sin should bring believers great grief (James 4:9). It is not true that we should always be ‘Happy all the day’.

Spiritual Mourning – We know there is a godly grieving, because God grieves (Is 63:10, Eph 4:30). What are the traits of spiritual mourning?

- 1) Godly sorrow is over the sin, not the consequences (Luke 15:18, 21).
- 2) Godly sorrow is over particular sins (1 John 1:9, Psalm 51:4).
- 3) Mourning can come even after forgiveness; a godly loathing of our past sins (Ez 20:41-44).
- 4) Godly sorrow mourns over the price of sin (Zech 12:10), and yet this sorrow sends the soul to God (Luke 15:18).
- 5) Godly sorrow is efficacious (Matt 5:4, Psalm 30:5) and the fruit lasts forever. When He temporarily and sovereignly withholds comfort, it is only to raise the value of His grace, to keep us from the idolatry of mourning, to correct us in our discontent, or to keep us heavenly-minded.

Our mourning must include sorrow over our own sins, and the sins of the church corporately (Ez 9:4, Is 6:5). There should be sorrow over the sin of the land as well (Psalm 119:136, 2 Pet 2:7-8).

Where is the Mourning?

Fair Warnings - We react against the fleshly pietism of the previous century, when to be religious meant to be miserable. We also react against the over-emotional pentacostalism and tear-stained TV evangelists. And we should. But we must be aware of our own temptations. There are warnings about not mourning at the appropriate times (Is 22:12-14). We are numbed by entertainment and music, when we should have a godly discontent over our own sanctification (Rom 7:24).

Defective Sense of the Horror of Sin – We think our sin is a little thing, and that it doesn’t bother God all that much. But rich and deep comfort only comes from deep repentance.

Evangelistic Mourning – There is a false teaching that we must be attractive, upbeat and jovial if we are going to reach the world. We should repent of our man-centered ‘schmoozing’. We should cry out with Rachel “give me children or I die”, for the church is barren. We are not seeing the Great Harvests promised, nor the great influence upon cultures and nations. Is this because we have not sown the land with our tears?

Dave Hatcher – July 25, 1999