

"Blessed Are They That Mourn"

Introduction. As we look at Jesus' second beatitude, we again see a mark of distinction that immediately identifies it with the first beatitude and also marks the Christian as being quite unlike the world. Jesus did not suggest that everything be whitewashed and made to appear fine. He wanted sin purified and corrected from within. Therefore, His teachings were addressed to the inner man and dedicated to the task of perfecting the thoughts and intents of the heart. The one activity the world tries to shun is mourning. It is something that we are taught to avoid. So much money, energy, and enthusiasm is expended in entertaining people, and all of it is just an expression of the great aim of the world to get away from mourning.

But the gospel says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." What does this mean? Only the child of God has the true answer to this paradox. This beatitude is at complete variance with the world's logic. In all places and ages, men have deemed the prosperous and the merry to be the happy ones, but Christ says that those who are poor in spirit and who mourn are to be congratulated. God's people do not develop defense mechanisms against the reality of mourning. They face it confidently and expect to receive a blessing from it.

I. **"Blessed Are They That Mourn"**

- A. The Greek word for "mourn" is the strongest one in the Greek language. It is the word which is used for mourning for the dead, for the passionate lament for one who was loved. In the Septuagint, it is the word which is used of Jacob's grief when he believed that his son Joseph was dead (Genesis 37:34). It is defined as the kind of grief which takes such a hold on a man that it cannot be hid. It is not only the sorrow which brings an ache to the heart; it is the sorrow which brings unrestrained tears to the eyes.
- B. There are three types of mourning.
 1. Natural mourning. There are thousands of "mourners" who do not fall within the scope of Jesus' teaching. Many mourn over the loss of a loved one, financial disasters, dashed hopes, etc. Ahab was sorrowful because Naboth would not sell him his family's land (1 Kings 21:4). Alexander the Great mourned because he had no more worlds to conquer.
 2. Sinful mourning. This is an inordinate and inconsolable grief. This type of mourning refuses to be comforted. Judas demonstrated this type of mourning when he committed suicide (Matthew 27:1-5).
 3. Spiritual mourning. This is "godly sorrow" which produces the correct fruit (2 Corinthians 7:10). This mourning springs from a sense of sin, a guilty conscious, and a broken heart.

- a) As a Christian confronts the holiness of God and contemplates the life he was supposed to live, he sees his helplessness and hopelessness. This person will mourn for his sins (James 4:8-10; cf. Revelation 3:15-19). The elder son (Luke 15:21) and the publican (Luke 18:13) both felt their sins just like the men in Acts 2:38 when they were "pricked in their hearts."
 - (1) David committed a shameful sin when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. Sin leads to further sin, and so it was in the case of David.
 - (2) When Nathan confronted David, he acknowledged his sins and mourned for them (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:1; 55:6-8, 16, 22).
- b) A Christian who mourns for his sins also mourns for the sins of others. The humble Christian recognizes the worth of a person. He sees the state of society and of the world in the news. He sees the suffering of mankind and he knows it is because of sin. This causes the child of God to mourn.
- C. Jesus was a perfect example of mourning (Hebrews 4:14-15; 5:1-2). Because Jesus took the sins of mankind seriously and intensely mourned over them, He gave His life for their redemption. He had compassion (the strongest word for compassion in the Greek language) because of the sins of humanity (Matthew 9:36).
- D. Nowhere in scripture does it say that Jesus laughed. We are told that He was angry, sad, hungry, and thirsty, but we are never told that He laughed. Jesus wept over Lazarus in John 11:35, and was considered "a man of sorrows" and "acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He also saw the city of Jerusalem rejecting Him and bringing upon itself its own condemnation and He wept because of it (Luke 19:41). He mourned over the fact of sin itself, because it entered into life and introduced death into life.

II. ***"For They Shall Be Comforted"***

- A. The word "comforted" means "to call to one's side" (Acts 28:20), "to admonish, exhort" (Luke 3:18), "to console, encourage, and strengthen" (2 Corinthians 2:7), and "to refresh, to cheer" (Acts 20:12). This is a comfort that comes from God and its recipients are blessed because they turn to God and are elevated because of His immeasurable grace (Psalm 126:5-6; Isaiah 66:1-3).
- B. The paradox is that someone who mourns will be congratulated. The man or woman who truly mourns because of their sins is someone who is going to repent (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance is a natural fruit of mourning for sins. A person who sees their hopelessness is someone who is looking for a Savior and who will find it in Jesus (Romans 7:24).

One who sees himself in sin is one who will be comforted in the fact of salvation.

- C. Concrete effects of God's comfort in this life.
1. Closeness with Christ. There is great happiness in the life that strives to transform itself into the likeness of Christ (Philippians 2:1-5). Desiring the abundant life causes us to enter into His sufferings (John 10:10; Philippians 3:10).
 2. Comfort for others. Give and it will be given to you. Comfort others and they in turn will comfort you in your sorrows (2 Corinthians 9:12-14).
 3. Divine forgiveness. We are reconciled into the glorious redemption of our Lord (Psalm 32:1-2; Isaiah 6:5-7).
 4. Comfort of heaven. This is the fullest extent of comfort. Everything that brings grief will be gone forever (Psalm 30:5; Revelation 7:16-17; 21:3-4).
- D. The whole essence of the gospel says that a deep sense of sin must come before there can be the true joy of salvation. Your great sorrow leads to joy, and without the sorrow there is no joy. There must be conviction before conversion. Hopefully some people are intrigued about the joy of a Christian life. But before they can obtain that joy, they must be convicted of sin. The doctrine of sin is not well-liked. Those who are going to be converted and wish to be truly blessed are those who first of all mourn. The gospel promises no mercy except to those who forsake sin and come to Christ.

Conclusion. Our sins cause our Lord a lot of sorrow. When we are negligent and forget or refuse to live as Christians should or to assemble with the saints, the heart of Jesus is greatly grieved. We know how we ought to live and how we ought to have the proper priorities regarding worship (Hebrews 10:25). What is our attitude when we fail? Does our conscience trouble us?

What sort of person is the one who mourns? They are sorrowful, but not morose and miserable. They are serious, but not solemn. They are sober-minded, but not sullen. They are grave, but not cold or prohibitive. The Christian is not superficial in any sense, but is fundamentally serious and fundamentally happy, for the joy of the Christian is a holy joy produced from the knowledge that their sins are forgiven.

If you are here and need to be comforted, then come and do it the way the Bible says: in sorrow and repentance for your sins. Matthew 11:28 is a parallel to this beatitude. Come and experience a life of happiness in the fact that you are saved. Now you are free from the guilt of sin and the wretchedness of death. Come and partake of this today!