

Beatitudes—Blessing in Mourning?

(Week 2—Jan 20th)

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

-Matthew 5:4

Why is there so much mourning in this life? Why so much crying, suffering and hurt? Why are thousands of Haitian families grieving and hurting after over 200,000 people have died and countless left homeless? And how can it be a blessing to mourn? Let's think through this together...

Who are those who mourn that Jesus is referring to, and why are they mourning? Jesus could be referring to people who mourn over a number of things: natural tragedies, death, the loss of temporary things that we love... But this blessed mourning seems to be on account of **two things**:

1. Penitential (Broken) Mourning over Sin

This includes when we grieve in repentance over our own specific sins as well as over our sinful nature that we can feel so often rebelling against God. We might (and should) experience grief over our separation from God that we suffer on account of sin. It is also grief over the lack of honor that God ought to receive on account of the sins of others, which stems from our passion to see God glorified in all of life.

Being broken over sins committed is a blessed state because it involves a rejoicing and longing for the holiness and righteousness of God. This is a direct complement to being poor in spirit, as it is an emotional acknowledgement of our spiritual failure, ineptitude and need for God's transformational power in our lives.

2. Sympathizing Mourning of the Hurting of Others

When we cry and grieve shoulder to shoulder with those who suffer, we embody Christ in a small degree. We are called to weep with those who weep and to offer God's comfort to the hurting. This is a godly sorrow. Also, when we mourn with compassion for perishing souls, longing for their salvation and dreading their pending punishment, then we join in on the tears of Christ who wept over the stubborn blindness of His own people (the Jews who rejected Him).

Thus mourning and grieving over sin and over the wretched estate of those blinded in sin and bound for destruction is godly sorrow and mourning which will be met with God's perfect and satisfying comfort. We do receive and experience God's comfort here and now as He draws near to us in loving presence, as He covers our disgusting sin with His gracious, atoning forgiveness and fellowship. Yet our comfort will only be complete and final in heaven where every tear will be wiped from our eyes. This comfort will be most sweet and refreshing for those who have mourned and grieved in this life over the wretchedness of sin and its destructive consequences. For in heaven our dreaded foe (sin) will have been defeated and destroyed, and we won't have to bear the weight of its oppression any longer.

Questions

Have you cried recently or hurt deeply within? What was it over? Have you ever mourned because of your own sin or because of its devastating affects? When? Write about some specific instances.

Read Isaiah 61. What good news of comfort and joy does God promise to the afflicted and brokenhearted? How will God comfort those who mourn? How does this bring you hope in the midst of your personal pain?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 and Romans 12:15. What do these verses say about our experience of suffering and comfort?

Read John 16:16-22. Jesus is talking to His disciples about how He must leave them in order to fulfill His mission on the cross, but He assures them that they will see Him again even after His death. What does He mean that the world will rejoice but His followers will grieve, and then our grief will turn to joy that no one can take away from us?

Journal your thoughts about mourning over sin and the promise of inheriting God's Kingdom.