

Good Mourning

Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 3

HBC 6/21/20

Matthew 5:4

We learned last week that this passage (The Beatitudes) is all at once the **definition** of a Christian, the **blueprint** of God's plan for shaping your character, and the **outline** of the attitudes required for entrance into Heaven. This one describes the kind of mourner who is blessed by God.

I. Who Is Blessed?

Matthew 5:4: ***Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.***

Mourn is the key word. The Greek language at that time had **nine** verbs to describe grief in various ways, so the shade of meaning in this word is significant.

It describes **intense mourning**—perhaps the most intense of all nine verbs. This one is the most intense of the words for mourning. It also carries the nuance of **self-restraint**. It is in **inner grief**. Simply put, **mourning is the Christian's response to his own sin.**

There is a logical connection between the first two beatitudes. Those who are **poor in spirit** recognize that they are without hope apart from God's grace. When you come to that recognition, it's only natural to be sensitive to sin and quick to mourn over it.

This is sorrow over sin itself, not merely for the consequences of sin.

2 Corinthians 7:6–9: *But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your **mourning**, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.*

Here's the general principle:

2 Corinthians 7:10: *For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

The difference between what Paul calls the **sorrow of the world** and **sorrow according to God** is the difference between being **sorry you got in trouble** and **sorry for your sin**.

Psalm 51:3–4: *For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.
Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.*

Psalm 19:12: *Who can discern his errors?
Acquit me of hidden faults.*

Apologizing for specific incidents is important for keeping good relationships healthy, but it is not the same as recognizing the sin that resides in your heart. Don't fall into the ditch of thinking that since Jesus died for all our sins, and you stand in His grace, that all you need to do is check off the box of "I'm sorry, please forgive me," and move on without dealing with the depth of the sin which all originates from your heart. **Mourn** is a present tense participle, which means that this mourning **goes on constantly**. There is no time in your life on this earth when repentance and contrition over your sin become unwarranted.

1 John 1:8–10: *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

II. What Does The Blessing Include?

Matthew 5:4: *Blessed are those who mourn, for **they shall be comforted**.*

They is again **emphatic**, as was **theirs** in the first beatitude. It means **they and they alone**.

Psalm 71:20–21: *You who have shown me many troubles and distresses Will revive me again, And will bring me up again from the depths of the earth. May You increase my greatness **And turn to comfort me.***

Matthew 5:4: *Blessed are those who mourn, for **they shall be comforted.***

The word **comfort** implies that the comforting is **accomplished by God Himself**—His presence with believers. The form of the word is **passive voice**. The one who is comforted **cannot do it for himself**.

Put a couple of scriptures together, and you see that this is a ministry of God to every believer, made into a present reality by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4: ***Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all **comfort**; who **comforts** us in all our affliction so that we may be able to **comfort** those who are in any affliction with the **comfort** with which we ourselves are **comforted** by God.*

John 14:16–17: *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper** [noun form of **comfort**], that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”*

To help you make the appropriate application, let's circle back to what we read earlier. It is one of the most profound descriptions of a Christian in all of the Bible.

1 John 1:8–10: *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

We means that John is describing all believers, including himself. **Unbelievers** (liars and heretics included) **deny** they have a problem with sin. Believers **confess** their sins.

Confess is a crucial word. It means **to say the same thing**. To confess your sins is to agree with God by calling them just what they are—**sins**. They are violations of God's eternal and unchangeable standards of right and wrong. They are not **mistakes** or **weaknesses** or **tendencies** or **problems**, they are **SINS**. We all face problems, and we certainly have tendencies in the wrong directions, and we're all weak in certain things, but **the core problem is our sinfulness**.

To **confess our sins** in specific situations is what any person who constantly **mourns** over his or her inborn sinfulness does. If you love Jesus Christ, you will love what He loves (righteousness) and you will hate what He hates (sin).

Confess has another important nuance to it. It is also *present tense*. This means that confession is an on-going, every day, repeated habit of the Christian. With the right attitude, ***you will be comforted!***

Sins is *plural*, implying that we confess specific, individual sins, not just saying in general that we understand we are sinners. When you violate God's standards, admit it to Him—specifically and immediately.

He is faithful means that He ***comes through every single time***. **And righteous** means that God doesn't just overlook our sins. He did the only thing that would actually take care of them. He sent His Son to die for us.

To forgive us our sins means exactly what it says. When you have Christ in you by faith, and you are honest with God about your sins, He ***forgives*** you. **Forgive** means literally ***to let go***. God forgives your sin, not by winking at it or pretending it never happened; He forgives because Jesus paid the full penalty for it.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness is the practical result of **confession** and **forgiveness**. You don't need to live in the spiritual muck of your sins. Christ isn't crucified afresh for you every day, but you can experience the wonderful joy of knowing you are forgiven every time we confess your sins.

And how is it that God can be completely holy and perfectly righteous, and still forgive and receive sinners?

1 John 2:1–2: *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

Romans 3:26b: . . . ***so that He would be just***
and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.