

Session 2: Matthew 5:4

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: God draws near to comfort us when we mourn and enables us to comfort others in their times of need.

Head Change: To know that God will meet our mourning with kindness and comfort.

Heart Change: To feel free to grieve our sin and the brokenness of the world without shame.

Life Change: To take our grief directly to God so that we can be comforted by him.

OPEN

**What do you typically do when you are feeling down?
What helps you get through a tough day?**

There's nothing wrong with taking a nap or watching TV when we feel overwhelmed, but our simple coping strategies can become lifestyles of avoidance. We live in a culture that doesn't like the idea of sadness. We often seek to avoid the pain of mourning by suppressing our grief or distracting ourselves from our feelings. The idea of embracing our sadness is unusual, even unwanted.

In this session, we'll see that mourning is not something to avoid, but a pathway to blessing. And when we mourn, we can be sure that will be comforted by God himself.

READ

Read Matthew 5:1–12.

Note: Because you'll be reading this passage weekly for the remainder of this series, consider making your study of the Beatitudes an occasion to memorize these verses of Scripture.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Matt Chandler's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

Why is it important to know the Beatitudes highlight eight characteristics of the same person?

What are the three reasons mourning is a sign of the kingdom?

How does mourning help us develop compassion?

Show Session 2: *Matthew 5:4* (13 minutes).

DISCUSS

Matt opened this session saying that Jesus didn't just show up looking for the "blessed" people. Instead, Jesus shapes us ordinary people into these sorts of people.

How is the idea that Jesus is looking for "blessed" people different from the idea that he shapes us into "blessed" people? Why is it good news that Jesus shapes us into the kinds of people described in the Beatitudes?

Why do you think the second Beatitude is so significant for us today?

We all regularly encounter pain and heartbreak because we live in a world fractured by sin. To protect ourselves from pain, grief, and sadness we develop coping mechanisms. But coping can prevent us from dealing with reality and distract us from our emotions. **What are some of the coping mechanisms you have used to protect yourself? In what ways have your coping mechanisms been ineffective long-term solutions?**

One of the dangers of running to our coping mechanisms instead of grieving is that we end up having nowhere to take our disappointments. So, instead of mourning, we "drink a little bit too much or watch a little bit too much Netflix," and never deal with our sadness. **When we consistently try to avoid feelings of pain instead of properly mourning, what two emotions did Matt say most often emerge?**

In a culture that often pursues happiness at all costs, Matt's claim that "mourning is a sign of the kingdom" may seem backward. But he listed three reasons why mourning reveals God is at work: our mourning of personal sin, our mourning over the brokenness of the world, and our growth in compassion in response to both. **Which of these three "kingdom qualities" do you tend to avoid or suppress? What things can you do to practice these kingdom qualities?**

As we grow closer to Jesus, we become more aware of our sin. As we grow more aware of our sin, we grow more prone to lamenting our sin, or to mourning. **Has personal sin ever caused you to feel grief? In that situation, how did you respond to that feeling? Did your conviction of sin cause you to run to Christ or did it lead to shame?**

The common understanding of conviction is that it is a negative experience, meant to heap guilt or shame on ourselves. But Matt described conviction as “an invitation to a better life.” God uses mourning to turn us from sin to his grace and comfort. **In the future, how could you remind yourself that conviction, though uncomfortable, is an invitation to draw near to God?**

*[Note: For further study on the connection Matt Chandler makes here with John 3:17, see **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this session.]*

The world is full of brokenness. Our typical reaction to the injustice, moral failure, and corruption around us is unrighteous anger. **Where in our culture do you see unrighteous anger toward the world’s brokenness? Where, and in what ways, does anger over the world’s brokenness present itself in your own life?**

Instead of anger, how does the second Beatitude cause us to respond to the brokenness of the world?

Kingdom mourning has an outward movement to it. We first mourn our sin, then mourn the sin and brokenness around us. As God comforts us through our sadness, he develops compassion in us so that we can go out and be a comfort to others. **Have you ever considered that godly mourning creates compassion? In what way does mourning with others fulfill Jesus’s promise that those who mourn “will be comforted”?**

To what extent do you prioritize comforting others as a response to the brokenness of the world?

*[Note: For further study on comforting others who are mourning, see **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this session.]*

It is not good to grieve in isolation. We must be willing to be comforted by the people God puts in our lives to not only participate in the act of comforting others but to be a recipient of that comfort ourselves. **What steps can you take today to welcome others into the sadness, lament, and mourning that you have experienced so that you can be comforted by them?**

LAST WORD

In our culture, mourning is not seen as something to embrace. Instead, it is viewed as something to distance ourselves from or avoid altogether. But when we mourn, by Jesus's own assurance, we can be certain that we will be comforted.

God often takes us *through* mourning, not around it. You don't have to grieve alone. God himself wants you to come to him so that he can comfort you. He has given you a community to support and mourn with you. And, through mourning, we grow in compassion. As he said, "Blessed are those who mourn," for in our mourning there is comfort.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where the following segment could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use this section as a short devotional to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider reading this section to deepen your study of the Beatitudes.

1. *Conviction Is not Condemnation*

The mourning Jesus describes in the Beatitudes includes our mourning over personal sin. Often, though, the conviction that prompts us to mourn over personal sin can be seen as God's condemnation rather than God's kindness. The Scriptures, and Jesus himself, paint a different picture for us.

Read John 3:16–18.

Why did God send Jesus into the world? What does Jesus expressly say God *did not* send him into the world to do? In what ways do we sometimes think of his mission backward, assuming he came to condemn?

While John 3:16 is among the most well-known passages in the Bible, the following verses are often overlooked. In this passage, Jesus insists that God sent him to save the world, not condemn it. **Have you ever experienced conviction that felt like condemnation? What was that season like? How long did it last or is it still ongoing?**

In what ways might John 3:16–18 change the way we interpret the feeling of conviction?

When we experience the “conviction of sin” we are made aware of our wrongdoing so that we might change. But if we forget Jesus's words in John 3:16–18, we may mistake our conviction for condemnation, thinking that our actions disqualify us from God's love and grace. **How might you respond differently to conviction if you thought of it more as an opportunity for growth rather than a condemnation?**

Read Romans 8:1.

If you are “in Christ Jesus” what assurance does this passage give to you today?

When we experience conviction, it is not wrong to remember the consequences of sin. But we must remember the penalty for our sin has been laid on Jesus. Because we believe in him, we are recipients of forgiveness and mercy. Paul’s glorious claim in Romans 8:1 should change the way we understand and respond to conviction. **In what ways does knowing that you aren’t condemned by God encourage you to confess your sin to God? In what way does it encourage you to bring your sin and mourning to other Christians?**

Even though we are forgiven, we will continue to sin. But we should not be troubled by the conviction we experience as a result of our sin. In fact, our ongoing conviction is a sure sign that God’s Spirit lives in us and is at work in our lives. **In what ways has God used conviction to show that he is at work in your life?**

What could you do to be open to God’s conviction in the future? What would it look like to respond to that feeling in a God-honoring way when you feel it next?

2. *Comforting Those Who Mourn*

Mourning is an inescapable reality. In the world today, our headlines are littered with tragedy and heartbreak, and many around us find themselves mourning and in need of comfort. We have an opportunity to comfort them, but many times the ways we try to comfort people encourage them to ignore their grief. **Who are the people God has used to comfort you? In what specific ways did they minister to you and give you comfort?**

So how do we comfort people in pain while helping them mourn appropriately? Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–4.

There are three parts to this passage, each of which can help us think through what it means to offer comfort to those who are mourning. First, God comforts us in all our affliction. **What “afflictions” have you experienced in the past? How did God comfort you in all those afflictions?**

What would it look like to point mourners to God's comfort first and foremost?

Second, God tells us why he comforts us: so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction.

How do you think experiencing affliction helps us to comfort others? How has receiving God's comfort prepared you to comfort others?

Finally, we should comfort others in the same way God, the Father of mercies, comforts us. We have all experienced circumstances that have caused us to mourn. But as often as we've been afflicted, we have also been comforted by God. **Who around you needs to be comforted? In what tangible ways can you show mercy or compassion to that person?**

If you do not know someone who is struggling and needs comfort, pray for an opportunity to offer tangible comfort. Think of the ways you have been supported by others when you were mourning—what comforted you and some actions that may not have been as helpful as intended.

What sorts of things can you be prepared to do to help you be compassionate, merciful, and comforting whenever people need you to show them God's comfort?