

# The Sermon On The Mount

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

*(Matthew 5:3 ESV)*

*“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”*

*(Matthew 7:24–25 ESV)*

## **Blessed Are Those Who Mourn**

**June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Matthew 5:4**

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Good morning, everyone! It is good to be with you all this morning! If you have a Bible with you, would you please open it now to Matthew 5:4. We are continuing to work our way through the sermon on the mount. This leads us to the next beatitude in the list of blessings at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount and, as I mentioned last week, there is a logical progression within the Sermon on the Mount and within the beatitudes themselves. This week we are looking at the second beatitude, blessed are those who mourn, which builds upon the foundation laid by the first beatitude, blessed are the poor in spirit.

D.A. Carson highlights this connection well when he writes:

“This verse follows naturally from the one which precedes it. Mournfulness can be understood as the emotional counterpart to poverty of spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

There is a clear connection and progression here. Last week we saw that being poor in spirit means being humble and contrite. It means knowing who God is and knowing who we are. When

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), 19.

we understand God's holiness, his righteousness, and his perfection we realize how sinful, weak, and broken we are. This leads to humility, it leads to contrition, and it leads to mourning.

Remember, the Sermon on the Mount is not a message on how to get saved, it is telling us how saved people live. The beatitudes specifically are describing the heart and character of people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ. The beatitudes describe those who have found approval before God, those who are blessed and happy by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

The beatitudes are God saying this is who my children are, this is what they look like, and this is what they should expect to receive. With that reminder of what the sermon on the mount is, let's turn our attention to the passage before us this morning. I am going to read from the beginning of the chapter each week as we take a look at the beatitudes so that we can see the progression and flow of thought laid out.

Hear now the Word of the Lord,

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

<sup>2</sup> And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:1-4 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

This beatitude is seemingly simple on the surface, but there is an incredible amount of depth here to unpack. Blessed are those who mourn, for example, is a fascinating statement. As John Stott comments:

“One might almost translate this second beatitude ‘Happy are the unhappy’ in order to draw attention to the startling paradox it contains.”<sup>2</sup>

Happy are the unhappy. This is the kind of paradoxical statement that can only make sense within the kingdom of God. On the surface those things appear to be complete opposites. You can’t be both happy and unhappy at the same time. Yet here Jesus is saying that is exactly for the case for Christians.

Because we are not talking about unhappiness and mourning in the same sense the world does. We are not talking about sadness and self-pity. We are not talking merely about feeling bad about ourselves. Jesus isn’t saying that God blesses those who are merely sad. There is a distinction between merely feeling sad and mourning.

The Apostle Paul picks up on this distinction in 2 Corinthians 7 when he writes:

“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10 ESV)

It is clear to see that there is a kind of grief and mourning that leads to death, and there is a kind of grief and mourning that leads to life and salvation. This morning, we are going to spend some time unpacking Three questions. We are going to spend some time asking what it means to mourn in a Biblical way and then we are going to turn our attention to unpacking what comfort should those who mourn expect. This beatitude promises those who mourn that they will be comforted so we will end our time unpacking what that promised comfort looks like. Then we will end with figuring out any of this is remotely possible.

Our first question this morning is:

## **What Does It Mean To Mourn?**

<sup>2</sup> John R. W. Stott and John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 40.

There are two distinct aspect of Mourning that are being highlighted in this passage.

The First thing it means to mourn Biblically is:

## **1. To grieve the state of your soul**

This is the most straightforward aspect of mourning. It flows naturally out of everything we talked about last week. Coming to Christ requires being poor in Spirit. It requires recognizing the depth and totality of our sinfulness. It requires recognizing that we are COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY dependant on God's grace and mercy poured out through Christ.

Being poor in spirit means recognizing the wretched state of our souls. It inevitably leads to mourning and grieving our sorry state. It leads to us joining with the Apostle Paul in Romans 7 and declaring:

“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24 ESV)

Listen friends, it is not enough to simply recognize our sin. We need to be moved by it. Our sin should cause us sorrow. It should lead to weeping, grieving, mourning the pervasiveness of brokenness. This concept might seem obvious to some of us, but it is completely and utterly foreign to the world. The world is telling us that we should do EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER to avoid feeling this way.

In the world sadness is the enemy.

We are in the midst of a major mental health crisis in the world right now. More people than ever in human history are seeking out therapy and counselling. That's not entirely a bad thing. There is a lot of good that can come from counseling, but it is not the answer to every problem. Much of the counseling and therapy that is being done in the world is simply trying to eliminate feelings of sadness, sorrow, anxiety, and hopelessness. It is trying to make us feel good about ourselves.

Listen, there is no rescue down that road. There is no lasting joy, peace, or comfort to be found in running from these feelings or making peace with who we are. Down that road is only death.

The way to life is not to medicate yourself out of sadness. It is not to medicate away emotions that God may be using to lead us to do NECESSARY spiritual work. The way to life is not to avoid all feelings of sadness, guilt, and shame.

The way to life is to WORK THROUGH these emotions. The way to life is to face these feelings, deal with them, allow them to draw us to Christ.

It is to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. It is to recognize our shortcomings and failures, to acknowledge our sin and to mourn. Listen to how David prays in Psalm 51:

Have mercy on me,<sup>1a</sup> O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me. (Psalm 51:1-3 ESV)

For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. The answer to our brokenness is not to run away and distract ourselves, or to make peace with it. The answer is to face it, to have the brutal conversations with ourselves, to allow our sin and brokenness to bring us to sorrow and tears, and to REPENT. Godly grief leads to repentance. It doesn't avoid sin, it doesn't shrug it off, it doesn't make peace with it. It feels the brokenness deeply and turns to Christ as a result.

Biblical mourning means knowing our brokenness, feeling our brokenness, grieving our brokenness, and laying it all down at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, and less obviously Biblical mourning means:

## **2. To Grieve The State Of The World**

Mourning over the state of our own souls makes sense, it is the logical progression from what we heard last week about being poor in spirit. This aspect of biblical mourning is less obvious to us. Part of what it means to mourn in a Biblical sense is to mourn the sin IN us, but it also means to mourn the sin AROUND us. Llyod-Jones summarizes this well when he writes:

“The man who is truly Christian is a man who mourns also because of the sins of others. He does not stop at himself. He sees the same thing in others. He is concerned about the state of society, and the state of the world, and as he reads his newspaper he does not stop at what he sees or simply express disgust at it. He mourns because of it, because men can so spend their life in this world.”<sup>3</sup>

I want to leave this quote up on the screen for a moment. I love that he comments on our natural tendency to express disgust at the world around us.

Because that’s easier right? It is far easier to look out at the world, to see the rampant sin and debauchery present all around us and to respond with disgust. It is June, the world has dedicated this month to celebrating and rejoicing their blatant sin. It is easy to see the things going on in the world, the things being celebrated this month and to be disgusted by them.

Let me be clear, being disgusted by the sin in the world isn’t wrong.  
It’s not enough.

If we only feel disgust towards the sin of the world, it becomes easy to look down our noses at the sin we see all around us. It becomes easy to thank God that we are not like that... Doesn’t that sound familiar? Isn’t that exactly what the Pharisee said in the parable last week?

Are you seeing the connection here yet?

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<sup>3</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Second edition. (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 62–63.

This is why we start with mourning the sin inside of us, we start with being honest with ourselves about the state of our own souls, being humble and contrite before God, being humble and poor in spirit which leads to mourning the state of our own souls and it means mourning the state of the world. We don't respond to the world with only disgust and judgement. We also mourn.

We see things that break God's heart, and they break our hearts too.

We ought to look out at the world and weep over the brokenness that we see all around us. Unfortunately, our natural tendencies are to either react with only disgust and judgement, or they are not to be bothered by what we see. There are far too many Christians who are comfortable with the sin they see all around them in the world.

In Luke's recording of the beatitudes only includes 4 beatitudes and they are followed up by corresponding woes. In Luke 6:25 we read:

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” (Luke 6:25b ESV)

I think this warning is so necessary for us to hear today. I don't remember where I heard it but I remember hearing this line that has always stuck with me:

“Show me what you laugh at, and I will show you who you are.”

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Far too many of us are comfortable with the sin in the world around us. Far too many of us are comfortable allowing that sin into our lives. Through T.V. Shows and movies that we have no business watching to the music we listen to and the conversations we are content to be a part of. We need to repent of this.

I am preaching to myself here as well. As I worked on this sermon this week I realized that I needed to repent for a lot of the shows I have watched in my life. One example that really pressed on me this week was the fact that I used to love Criminal Minds. It routinely described

truly horrific things that serial killers and other criminals would do to people, and I was entertained by that. I have repented of that. I am a little embarrassed of the fact that I found entertainment in such sinful content.

Yet so many of us continue to be entertained by sin. It is amazing that every new season of *Love is Blind*, *the Ultimatum*, and *Love Island* are consistently in the top ten most watched things on Netflix. So many Christians have no problem laughing at the ridiculousness of these kinds of shows meanwhile they are flagrantly celebrating and promoting sexual immorality. I could name hundreds of shows like this. We are so bombarded with sexual immorality that we become desensitized to it. We are far too comfortable consuming content that celebrates and promotes sin.

Far too many of us are entertained by the sin of the world.

Far too few of us are brought to tears by sin of the world.

Listen to how John Stott captures this idea:

“Jesus wept over the sins of others, over their bitter consequences in judgment and death, and over the impenitent city which would not receive him. We too should weep more over the evil in the world, as did the godly men of biblical times. ‘My eyes shed streams of tears,’ the psalmist could say to God, ‘because men do not keep thy law.’<sup>4</sup>”

We should weep more over the evil in the world. There is EVIL going on in the world. Pure Evil. There are people who are made in the image of God, worthy of all dignity and value, being bought and sold like cattle. There are people, teenagers and children being lured in and trapped by predators all over the world. There are over 200,000 babies aborted EVERY DAY.<sup>5</sup> If this doesn't cause you to weep, I don't know what will.

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<sup>4</sup> John R. W. Stott and John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 41.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>

There is a lot in the world that breaks the heart of God and it ought to break out hearts as well.

Belonging to Christ, being part of God's kingdom means looking out at the world with love and compassion. It means feeling deeply the brokenness of the world. It means weeping and mourning the state of the world.

Notice that Jesus doesn't connect this blessing to any particular action or response. He is not calling us to fix all the sins in the world. We are not being tasked with establishing Christian values and principles in society. The application in the later part of the Sermon on the Mount is about DISTINCTION and SEPERATION from the ways of the world. The blessing comes from separation and longing. From the mournful longing of a heart that sees the brokenness of the world and longs for Christ to come and make things right.

That is the people God is going to bless: He is going to bless those who mourn the sin in us and the sin around us. Those who feel the brokenness inside and all around them and who respond appropriately. Who repent of their sin, and who strive to be salt and light to the world around us.

That is what citizens of God's kingdom do. They are the ones who are blessed, and they are the ones who are comforted.

Which leads to the second question for this morning. What does it mean to be comforted. What kind of Comfort should those who mourn expect?

## **What Comfort Should Those Who Mourn Expect?**

There are two different forms of comfort that those who mourn can expect to receive. The first is:

### **1. Happiness Now**

This goes right back to the paradox of the beatitude. “Happy are the unhappy.” As we have already seen this morning, Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation. That is the source of our joy and comfort now. As Lloyd-Jones helpfully explains:

“Now this is something that follows as the night the day. If we truly mourn, we shall rejoice, we shall be made happy, we shall be comforted. For it is when a man sees himself in this unutterable hopelessness that the Holy Spirit reveals unto him the Lord Jesus Christ as his perfect satisfaction. Through the Spirit he sees that Christ has died for his sins and is standing as his advocate in the presence of God. He sees in Him the perfect provision that God has made and immediately he is comforted. That is the astounding thing about the Christian life. Your great sorrow leads to joy, and without the sorrow there is no joy.”<sup>6</sup>

I love that line, “Your great sorrow leads to joy, and without the sorrow there is no joy.” There is joy and happiness in mourning because our mourning leads to repentance. It isn’t until we recognize the depth of our need, are broken by it, and lead to repentance because of it that we can receive salvation that is freely offered to us. “Without the sorrow there is no joy.”

But BECAUSE OF THE SORROW, there is JOY EVERLASTING.

That’s the pattern. That is what Jesus did and it is how we come to him. Jesus Humbled himself to the point of death. He lowered himself, he died the death we deserve, he paid our sacrifice. Then he rose. He conquered death. He ascended into heaven. His name is the name at which every knee will bow.

It is down before up. It is cross before crown. It is sorrow before joy.

Remember that the beatitudes describe those WHO ARE ALREADY IN CHRIST. In Christ, mourning leads to joy because, as we are continually made aware of our sinfulness and brokenness, we are continually and constantly reminded of the SUFFICIENCY OF THE CROSS. Jesus paid it all.

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<sup>6</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Second edition. (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 64.

As a Christian I mourn over the sin that is in me. I weep and repent over my continual shortcomings and failures, but I also allow them to remind me of what is true.

My Mourning leads me to remember that:

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

(Romans 8:1 ESV)

And that:

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV)

That is the beauty of the gospel, friends. This is why we need to preach it to ourselves and to one another day after day.

Listen. We need to hear this. We often get this balance wrong. Either we are overly sad and gloomy, caught up in despair over our sin and failures, or we are superficially happy because we are ignoring our underlying sin, or we are sad and lost on the inside but we paint on a smile and a fake cheeriness to the world around us.

We need this reminder. We need to remember that there is Joy in Sorrow; happy are the unhappy. The Christian joy is a solemn, sober, and serious joy.

That is what we’re talking about. We’re talking about the serious joy that comes from knowing that you are a wretched sinner deserving hell and death and that you have been rescued from your just condemnation and been given an entirely free gift of eternal life with God and there is NOTHING IN HEAVEN OR HELL that can take that away.

That is serious joy. It is not trivial or fleeting.

It is the steadfast hope, peace, and joy that the Apostle Paul displays as he proclaims:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18 ESV)

There is unshakeable, unassailable, solemn, and serious Joy found in Christ.

And this leads to the next kind of comfort that those who Mourn should expect:

## **2. Eternal Joy**

This is the other side of the coin of the Apostle Paul's proclamation in Romans 8:18. We are able to have joy and peace and hope in the midst of our present sufferings because **THEY ARE NOT WORTH COMPARING TO THE GLORY THAT IS COMING.**

A significant part of the Christian's hope in this lifetime is the fact that we have been promised eternity with God forever. We have a promise of eternal joy and everlasting peace that's has been **GUARANTEED FOR US** in the blood of Jesus Christ. We have a promise that is unshakeable.

Listen to John's vision of the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21. Listen to this beautiful picture:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4 ESV)

There will be no more crying, no pain, no mourning. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. This is the promise for those who mourn, for those who see their sin, weep over it, and repent of it. Who mourn the brokenness inside them and in the world around them. This is the comfort they are promised.

A restored relationship with God. Forever. Listen to that again. "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man."

From the very beginning our sin has separated us from God. This is the GREATEST consequence of our sin. And the restoration of our relationship with God, our being welcomed back into his presence is the GREATEST gift we could ever receive. It is the source of ULTIMATE AND UNENDING JOY.

I think it is hard for us to truly comprehend what this will be like. Even the happiest and greatest moments in our lives are tainted by sin and the brokenness of the world. We truly do not have a category for the true uncompromised joy that we will feel when Christ comes again. That is, of course, if we have put our faith in Christ.

That is the heart of the matter. The second coming of Christ, the ushering in of the new heavens and new earth is a source of eternal and unending joy for those who have repented of their sin and put their faith in Jesus and for those who haven't it is a source of unending anguish and suffering. As Jesus says in Luke 6:

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” (Luke 6:25b ESV)

For the unbeliever there is laughter now and mourning and weeping to come. For the Christian there is happiness in mourning, and eternal joy to come. This leads naturally to our final question.

## **How Can We Do This?**

How is it possible to do any of this? How can we find comfort and joy and happiness in mourning and weeping?

Well to do this, we need to do three things.

1. Look In
2. Look Out
3. Look Up

First, we must look in. We need to look at ourselves, realize and acknowledge the sin within us. We must realize the depth of our sin and brokenness and allow that sin to draw us to Christ. We need to mourn our sin and let that grief lead to salvation that leads to repentance. We must remember the excellent truth that our sin is far greater than we know, and that we are more loved than we can ever comprehend. Looking in allows us to see and feel the weight of our sin and it reminds us of just how much we have been forgiven. In light of that we continue to mourn the sin that remains in us as we strive to become more like Christ.

Secondly, we must look out. We must ask God to help us see the world as he does. We must pray that God would break our hearts over the things that break his. When we do this, when God helps us see the world, to see others through his eyes we are able to not only look at wretched sin in the world with anger and disgust, but we will also mourn the sin of the world. We will weep for the lost, the suffering, and the broken. When we see the world as God does, we will not make peace with the world, we won't be entertained by sin. We will weep. We will Mourn.

Thirdly, and ultimately, we must look up. When we look in at our sin and look out at the sin of the world, we will not find comfort. There is no lasting comfort within us. We don't need to simply love ourselves more. And there is no comfort in the world. There is nothing that the world offers that can fix the brokenness around us. No Government, no institution, no social cause, can fix the situation. Our comfort is found in Christ and Christ alone.

He is the solution. So we look to Jesus. We see his perfection. We see our inadequacy. We see the massive gap between who he is and who we are and we mourn. We weep over our inability to represent him to the world as we should. We mourn that we discredit the name of God through our sin, and in that place, we are comforted by the knowledge that it WAS NEVER and WILL NEVER be about HOW GOOD WE ARE. It is about HOW GOOD HE IS. We are comforted by the cross. By Jesus taking our sin and brokenness upon himself. We are comforted by the promise of eternal everlasting comfort and the wiping away of every tear.

Happy are the unhappy. We who are broken and contrite in spirit, who mourn our sin and repent, will receive the solemn and serious joy that is found in Christ. Thanks be to God.

Let's pray together.