

“Nuggets” For Today (Study Notes on Pastor’s Sermon for today)

SERIES: “BLESSED: A REFLECTION ON THE BEATITUDES” Sermon 2: “BLESSED are those who Mourn”

TEXT: MATTHEW 5:1-10

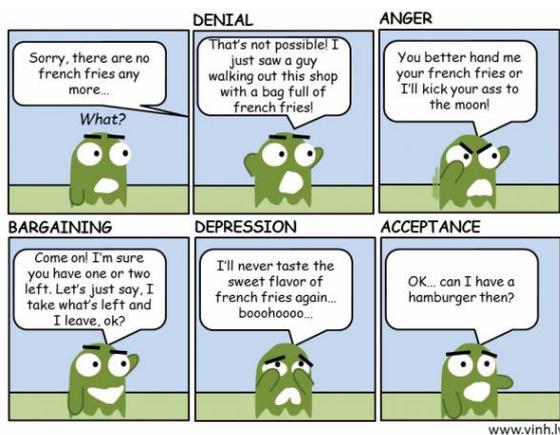
Pastor Wayne George
30th July 2017

*Blessed are
those who
mourn...*

Matthew 5:4

I. THE PREVALENCE OF MOURNING

We live in world where mourning, sorrow, and brokenness are not very far off. We flick on our TV screens and there we see scenes of devastation in news reports of earthquakes; floods; wars; terrorist attacks, etc.



Every one of us seated here this morning have at some point or another in our lives experienced, to some degree, what it means to mourn. Perhaps crying ill it seems the well of tears have dried up.

Now, friends, the obvious place we encounter mourning is around the grave of a loved one, who has passed on. But of course, mourning can take place in other settings as well. In fact wherever there's a

loss of something, there is a potential for grief or mourning.

Mourning and loss go hand in hand. When one is made redundant at work, there could be mourning, because there's a loss of job or income. When there's a divorce – there may be mourning, because there's a loss of a relationship that may well have been very close at some stage. When there's a sickbed – this may be difficult to accept and there may be grief or mourning due to loss of health, and perhaps independence.



Can you think of other examples of loss that can result in mourning?

There's another aspect of mourning which needs to be mentioned, which we may not actually think about too often. We said that mourning is linked to a loss of some sorts.



What happens when we sin? Is something is lost. Does something take strain? (Clue: Isaiah 59:2). _____

A ruined relationship with God is indeed something to lament and to mourn.



The world today doesn't identify sin for what it is - as that which separates from God. That which destroys. Instead, sin is accommodated, entertained and justified. For example, pornography is seen as adult "entertainment"; dodgy dealing in business circles – is justified as "clever business tactics"

Can you think of some other ways in which sin is "softened" or "justified"?

Well, Friends, as long as sin is accommodated, entertained and justified; as long as it is not seen the way that God sees it, you will agree we will never be in the place where we can mourn/lament it. But when one sees sin and its devastating consequences truly for what it is, one cannot but be filled with mournful remorse and sorrow.

II. MOURNING IN THE BIBLE

Now mourning in the Bible, and even today in some cultures, is very demonstrative. It's a very visible and public expression.

In fact, in the Bible and even in some cultures today, one would actually get professional mourners, also called "*moirologists*", who are compensated to lament or deliver a eulogy at a funeral. So if there's a concern that there would be too few people at a funeral, these "*moirologists*" would be called in and paid to cry. Interesting career!

In the Bible we catch a glimpse of mourning on various occasions:



- **What did Jacob do when he thought that Joseph was dead? (Genesis 37:34).** _____
- **How did Tamar display her sorrow at being raped (II Samuel 13:19)?**

What were other common practices associated with mourning in the Bible?

- » _____ (Leviticus 13:45).
- » _____ (Jeremiah 31:19; Ezekiel 21:12).
- » _____ (Luke 23:48).
- Jesus himself expressed grief and sorrow at the tomb of Lazarus, when he wept. John 11:35

Last week, when we looked at the first beatitude: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven*" we said there are two main words for "poor" in the NT, indicating two different "levels" of poverty. The one means you are have just enough to get by; just living on the breadline, although struggling to make ends meet. The other "poor" is a greater degree of poverty and means one has absolutely nothing. One's only possible hope of survival, is to throw oneself on the mercy of others.

If you remember, we said that it was this greater degree of poverty that Jesus used when he said "blessed are the poor in spirit". In other words, blessed are those who realise their only hope of salvation is to throw themselves on the mercy of God.

Just as there are different degrees of the word “poor” in the original Greek language, so too are there different degrees of meaning for the word “mourn”. And Jesus, here is using the strongest possible meaning of the word.

Mourn = πενθέω = pentheō

Commentator, William Barclay says; *“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 the unrestrainable tears to the eyes.”*

III. THE PROMISE ATTACHED TO MOURNING

While mourning is not strange to us – there’s something in this text that is. The fact that Jesus in this teaching, puts two words together that from a human point of view really have no place being in the same sentence, because the one seems to cancel the other out.

Jesus says: **Blessed** are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.

Now what did we say the word “blessed” means?

blessed = makarios = happy / favoured / honoured

How can “blessed” and “mourn” co-exist in same sentence? Are they not opposed to each other? Happy are the sad! Happy are the unhappy! This doesn’t make sense does it? Well friends, that’s exactly what Jesus is saying here.

How can that be? Well, you see, the blessing/the happiness/the favour of God, doesn’t lie in the mourning – none of us chase after sorrow or heartache, do we. Could it be that what Jesus is saying here, is NOT that the blessing lies in the mourning or sorrow, but rather in the promise attached to the mourning and the sorrow; **the promise of comfort**. The promise that one possesses as a child of God, as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, is that when one mourns, divine comfort is promised.



Read the following Psalms of comfort: Psalm 34:18; Psalm 23:4

The Holy Spirit Himself is referred to as the Comforter. (Read **John 14:16**)

At my graduations ceremony in 2011, somebody in passing made two statements: **“Do not underestimate your journey!! “God will not waste your experience!”** You see, in the valley, you may not be able to comprehend the “whys” and the “wherefores”; but when you get to the other side of your pain and your hurtful experiences, you will have in your possession, the means to help others going through the same pain and hurtful experiences. God can use that which you have been through to bring hope, life and comfort to others who may be going through the same thing.



Read II Corinthians 1:4. Paul uses the same word for comfort here that Jesus uses in Matthew 5:4. You see, friends, nobody understands a broken heart, like someone who’s had a broken heart themselves. No one understands cancer like someone who has been through it. No one understands divorce like a person who’s been through it. No one understands the pain of a miscarriage like a

mother who has lost her child. No one knows the pain of being made redundant like someone who has lost his job.

There are people sitting in these pews this morning who perhaps without even knowing it, are qualified to minister to others. Folk who have been through some stuff in life, who have been through the valley of the shadow of death and have come out on the other side. You would have died in the valley, if it were not for the grace and faithfulness of God. And now you can speak into the life of a brother or a sister who is growing weary of running the race. You can speak confidently and unreservedly of God's faithfulness and mercy, because you have drunk from that cup of faithfulness and mercy yourself.

Somebody put it this way *"Some have earned their degree in the School of Suffering and now they are qualified to minister to others who enrolled after they graduated"*.

When one sees sin and its devastating consequences truly for what it is, one cannot but be filled with mournful remorse and sorrow. At such times, we hear the voice of Jesus speaking through our tears of guilt and shame, and declaring to us: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted!"*

With genuine repentance, there is full forgiveness, and one can move forward in victory and freedom.

With all the comfort promised for this life, viz the comfort of God's presence and His Spirit as we travel through the dark valleys of sorrow; the comfort of His Word spoken into our hurts and our hollowness; the comfort of His forgiveness, when we are filled with sorrow for our sin, there is another comfort that probably outweighs all others. That is the comforting promise of eternal life. The promise that when the labours of this life are over, and we are welcomed forever to our heavenly home. **Read Revelation 21:4.**



Mourning/sorrow/grief is not something we seek after; not something we chase. We don't look for it, but it certainly finds us at different seasons in our lives. But, on this Sunday, 30th July 2017, we are reminded that when grief/sorrow and mourning indeed overtake us as God's children, we are declared blessed, because it is there at the point of grief, that our loving Saviour meets us to comfort us our Saviour Who, himself was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Our loving Saviour Who extends to us the promise of comfort that exists not only for this life, but indeed extends to eternity.

Amen

God bless as you walk with Jesus this week.

Pastor Wayne

