

Blessed are the Brokenhearted

Matthew 5:d

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Stephen Davey

Some time ago I read about an airline pilot who was flying a commercial plane over a valley with a beautiful river running through it. He was peering out the window so intently that his co-pilot asked him, “What are you looking at?”

He replied, “Do you see that river down there? I used to live in one of those homes down there by the water. As a little boy, I used to sit on a log beside it and fish and every time an airplane flew over, I would look up and wish I was flying. And now, every time I fly over this area, I look down there and wish I was fishing.”



How do you find happiness? When something good happens to you, how does that make you feel?

That’s not a new question by the way.

The magazine, Psychology Today, sent a survey out to 52,000 of their subscribers asking them to respond by telling how they found happiness or how they believed they would find happiness.

Responses flooded in from all over the country.

Those on the poorer end of the economic scale dreamed of winning the lottery. In fact, that was the favorite dream that people mentioned. They truly believed that happiness was as close as a winning lottery ticket.

My guess is that those particular respondents never looked into the lives of lottery winners. I read about one winner recently who won a lottery of nearly 8 million dollars; within a year his wife left him, winning alimony and child support that would eventually cost him around a million dollars; his landlady

sued him for 30% of the winnings and won in court and then his own brother and sister in law were indicted and imprisoned for trying to hire someone to kill him in an attempt to get his money.

Now there's one happy man.

Those who responded to the magazine survey who were in the wealthy category complained that they did not have enough to be truly happy. Most of them complained of boredom.

The responses came from all different geographical regions of the country as well. You might expect people from Florida to be happier than people from North Dakota, but that wasn't the case at all.

People were mixed up, tired, bored, angry, disillusioned and confused.

In fact, one man responded by writing, "I have listed below the reason I think I'm happy . . . please confirm if I am."

As we learned together last Lord's Day, the word happiness is connected to the Middle English root hap – for happenings.

Happiness, defined by the human heart, is determined by what happens.

Which means, the average definition of happiness is all about:

- What's going to happen to me;
- What's going to occur in my life;

- What's going to happen to my health and my family;
- What's going to happen at my job;
- What's going to end up in my bank account;
- What's going to happen with my plans and my dreams?

We began, last Sunday, looking at the way Jesus Christ turned the definition of happiness upside down.

It's found in Matthew chapter 5.

Nine times in nine verses, Jesus uses the word makarios – which we can translate blessed, or fortunate, or happy.

And if you scan the first few verses of the Lord's sermon – you're left scratching your head:

- v. 3. Happy are the poverty stricken in spirit . . .
- v. 4. Happy are those who mourn . . .
- v. 10. Happy are those who are persecuted . . .



In your life, have you ever associated any of these conditions with happiness, or are they conditions you more often find yourself trying to avoid?

You must be kidding . . . these are the people who should be anything but happy.

By the way, when the Lord finished this sermon, notice the crowd's reaction:

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching. (Matthew 7:28)

They were amazed. they were literally shocked.

The verb has the idea of being hit, or struck. They were struck with astonishment.

And it wasn't just the content of what Jesus said that shocked them:

For He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:29)

During the Lord's generation, the scribes never quoted themselves. They quoted from other scribes and from other scholars; they would quote from tradition; they would expound on the words of famous Rabbis and from history.

Five times in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus used this phrase – "You have heard it said . . . but I say unto you." (Matthew 5:18, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 43)

In other words, He's not quoting somebody else, He's telling them to quote Him.

No wonder the crowd was stunned.

You've heard all these other people and scholars and traditions that are supposed to define happiness for you – but let me tell you what brings true happiness.

And the first thing the Lord said that would bring true happiness was an ongoing sense of our spiritual bankruptcy – we're spiritual beggars. We're totally and utterly dependent on the grace and mercy of God.

Now the Lord provides another definition of happy people.

Blessed are the Brokenhearted

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

How's that for backwards? "Happy are the brokenhearted."

Now that's a new approach!

The Bible describes all kinds of mourning or sorrow. In fact, there are 9 different verbs in the Greek language which express the idea of grief and sorrow. That's a pretty good indication that God fully expects humanity to be involved in sorrow and grieving.

Christ Himself was called the Man of Sorrows – literally a Man of Pains,

thoroughly acquainted with grief.
(Isaiah 53:3)

Four Kinds of Mourning

Mourning the loss of a loved one

In Genesis 23:2, we're told that Abraham mourned for Sarah and wept.

For those who think it is unspiritual to grieve the loss of a loved one need take note of this giant of the faith.

They also overlook the example of our Lord who shed tears at the gravesite of Lazarus. (John 11:35)

Mourning for greater communion with God.

These are tears of spiritual longing for the Lord to do a work in our hearts and lives.

David wrote a song about these kinds of tears, in Psalm 42.

As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God? My tears have been my food day and night. (Psalm 42:1-3a)

Tears for other believers and for greater spiritual fruit

These are the tears of Paul, longing for the growth and protection of the Ephesian church.

I did not cease . . . to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up. (Acts 20:31-32)

Mourning over the issues and challenges of life

A father with a sick child came to Christ crying tears of anguish over his child's condition (Mark 9:23)

There were tears of gratitude and devotion from the woman who came to wash the feet of Jesus with her tears (Luke 7:38).

There are the tears in praying for healing from sickness where Hezekiah is told by the prophet, God has seen your tears and will heal you." (2 Kings 20:5)

Esther cried before the King with tears, asking for him to change the edict which would annihilate the Jewish people. (Esther 8:3)

Job cried in his physical suffering and said, "My eyes pour out tears before God" (Job 16:20)

There are the tears of the oppressed who suffer injustice. (Ecclesiastes 4:1)

And that's just the beginning.

The truth is, growing older in Christ doesn't mean you will cry less, it might mean you cry more. But it redefines what you cry about.

Warren Wiersbe records in his commentary about a terrible train accident that killed a number of passengers. In one of the train cars was a mother, still holding a little child in her lap. The mother was dead but the child unharmed. When the rescuers took the child away from her mother, the little girl laughed and played. When the rescue worker noticed that the candy was dirty, he gently took it from her and only then did she begin to cry. She didn't know anything about death, but she knew about candy.¹

What grieves your heart and causes you to weep and mourn at age 50 is different than at age 5.



How has mourning changed for you over the years? What situations caused you grief in the past, but no longer do? What do you mourn over now that didn't bother you in the past?

Some people at age 50 still cry over candy. They cry over their own way. They cry over their toys. They will weep over a loss in the stock market, but not over a lost marriage or relationship.

They will cry over a lost promotion, but not a lost testimony for Christ.

We have all these different kinds of scenarios in scripture of mourning and lamenting. What's the context here for this beatitude?

The letter from James picks up the context here and provides a clue for us. Jesus and James used the same word to describe those who are mourning.

Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you. (James 4:9)

This refers to living with a sense of the bankruptcy of your heart and the need for God's mercy and grace that you never outgrow.

That perspective leads you to mourn over sin, rather than hide it – or manage it – or play with it. This is mourning over sin, primarily, and finding forgiveness in Christ.

Christ is talking about mourning and weeping over sin.

Here's the promise –

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

And here's the point: Mourners discover true happiness because they are the only ones who are grieving over their sin

¹ Warren Wiersbe, *Live Like a King* (Moody Press, 1975), p. 45

and their sinfulness and come to the Savior for forgiveness.

Listen to what John the Apostle wrote to Christians. I John 1:7 tells us that as *we confess our sins the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.*

I'm always struck by the tense of the verb which means that the cleansing blood of Christ is ongoing – it is continual and never ending.²

What that means is that the blood of Christ didn't just cleanse you as a sinner – which is your status; He cleanses you in an ongoing, daily experience.

The blood of Christ continually cleanses us from all sin.

There's that great hymn text:

*There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stain.*

*Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood,
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.*³

What a great truth: until we reach heaven and are given our perfected,

² Fritz Rienecker/Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Regency, 1976), p. 785

³ Praise Hymnal, William Cowper, *There is a Fountain*

glorified bodies never to sin again, the fountain is never turned off.

We have been forgiven, and we are daily forgiven as we mourn over our sin.

I remember witnessing to a Hindu some time ago who was cheerful and kind, polite and well mannered. We were at the mall waiting for our daughters – which is the universal language for Dads. We struck up a conversation. I already knew the basic tenets of his religion and that he was on an endless cycle of self-improvement, but I still asked him questions about what he believed.

It was only when I told him that the difference between Christianity and Hinduism could be best summed up by the fact that he was hoping to have his sins somehow forgiven and I knew that my God forgave my sins – only then did his drop down and his face turn sad and pained. He admitted to me that his religion could never provide that kind of confidence.



Do you know people who lack confidence in their eternal security? How can you share with them the security that you have been graciously given by God?

Jesus Christ said, “Do you want to know true happiness?”

Happy are the brokenhearted, for they will receive comfort.

The word the Lord uses here in His sermon for comfort is the same word which forms the ministry of the Holy Spirit who is called our Comforter – same root word. It has the idea of infusing with strength and courage.

It’s more than sympathizing. To sympathize means to feel with another; but to comfort means to infuse courage into another.

Mourners are not happy because they are mourning. There isn’t happiness in mourning. Mourners are happy because they find forgiveness. Happiness does not come from mourning, it comes from God’s response to it – which is comfort.

Jesus didn’t say here in Matthew 5:4, Blessed are those who mourn – period! No, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

And again, this verb tense tells us that as we continuously confess our sin, God continuously infuses us with courage.

How does God comfort us?

We are comforted by God’s word

Paul wrote about the fact that through the encouragement of the scriptures we might find hope. (Romans 15:4)

We are comforted by God’s Spirit

Christ promised His disciples that God the Father would send another Comforter to them (John 14:16) He is a permanent infuser of strength and courage and hope.

We are comforted by God and His people.

Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth of our responsibility to others:

The 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. (2 Corinthians 1:4)

We are comforted by God’s promise of our future

One day God will wipe every tear of sorrow and mourning over sin and suffering and loss. He will wipe all these tears from our eyes. (Revelation 21:4).

In heaven all those tears will be gone. But let me tell you something about Hell. Jesus said that in hell, there will

be weeping and gnashing of teeth forever. (Matthew 8:12)

One of the tragedies about Hell is that it is a place where weeping will never end.

Your Turn



Jesus says, “You wanna know who the truly happy people are? They are the ones who bring their sin to me; they are the moment by moment confessors – they continually bring their me-attitudes of sin and I give them this Beatitude;

“Blessed are the brokenhearted, for they shall be comforted.”

Not only now, but one day completely; and then, forever!

How does this eternal perspective change your happiness on earth?

What temporary things of earth consume your emotions?

How can you change your focus to the eternal blessings awaiting believers one day in heaven?

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