

## Blessed - Sermon 3 - Those who Mourn

### Matthew 5:4

**INTRODUCTION:** We are in a series of sermons we are calling, “Blessed”.

Remember in our introduction to this series we said that the state of being blessed was a word that outside of scripture was only used in reference the Pantheon of Greek Gods and Goddesses...

We said that biblically it was a word used to denote the - Power, Presence, and Provision of God.

We also learned that the first word of the first sermon Jesus ever preached was, “Blessed”. God wants you to live the Blessed Life. And the beatitudes are a prescriptive for just that.

**LAST WEEK:** We saw that those who recognized their Spiritual Poverty were blessed of God. If you were not here, I strongly encourage you to go back and listen to last weeks sermon. This week we are in verse 4... let’s look at it together.

**TEXT: Matthew 5:4 (ESV)**

[4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”](#)

What a paradoxical statement - HAPPY are the SAD. It seems so contradictory. Yet it was among the first words Jesus spoke in an official capacity.

The word “Mourn” here in the Greek is the word “pentheō”. Pentheō is one of 9 Greek words that are translated into the English, “to mourn”.

Some of the words for mourning emphasize the mourning associated with frustration like the failure of one’s animal, perhaps a beast of burden like a cow or a horse. Others emphasize a particular kind of mourning like weeping or singing a funeral dirge.

But Pentheo is always associated with the mourning that follows **death**. Often it’s the death of a loved one:

- It is used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) for Jacob’s grief when he thought his son Joseph was killed by a wild animal (Gen. 37:34).
- It is used of the disciples’ mourning for Jesus before they knew He was raised from the dead (Mark 16:10).

But Pentheo is also used to describe the mourning that is associated with the death of a dream, or loss of hope.

- It is used of the mourning of world business leaders over the death of its commerce because of the destruction of the world system during the Tribulation (Rev. 18:11, 15).

The word carries the idea of deep inner agony, which may or may not be expressed by outward weeping, wailing, or lament.

Have you been there?

- I remember getting a letter from a University that I hoped to attend that said I wouldn't be able to attend there. You see all of my plans were based on the assumption that I attend that particular University. When I didn't get accepted, I mourned deeply.
- I remember when the girl I wanted to marry made it explicitly clear that it wasn't going to happen... I mourned.
- I remember when my wife miscarried. Together we mourned.
- At the death of my Father, I mourned.

One of my habits, after I have studied a text, done my work in the original languages, developed my outline is to go to the "Prince of Preacher" Charles Haddon Spurgeon to see what Dr. Spurgeon said about this text... but this is the one beatitude he never preached. He uncharacteristically skipped it entirely.

I choose not to skip it. Because I have found that those texts that seem to be the most enigmatic often hold the greatest of blessings.

I also believed that perhaps I am uniquely qualified to speak to this text. You see:

- I come from a very **large family**. My father was the youngest of 12 children. Our family stopped having reunions when we realized that we could count on a couple of funerals to bring us together each year.
- My mother owns a Florist in North Alabama. From a very young age I would deliver the arrangements she made to one of the local funeral homes. I saw death on a regular basis. More importantly, I saw those who mourned death.
- Beyond all of that I am a Pastor. My calling requires me to speak words of comfort to those who experience the most raw pain of loss.

How does MOURNING produce BLESSING?  
How does SADNESS precede HAPPINESS?

Three things we should consider:

Jesus is saying that if we are in a state of mourning following the loss of a loved one, we are in a unique state in which we are candidates for the manifestation of God's blessing.

Why? How? And, do we have to lose someone we care about before we can receive this blessing? No... let me try to explain.

## 1. Mourning Shocks us into Reality

We have a tendency to drift into fantasy and to avoid reality.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I remember going to a Church Conference in Las Vegas... first time I had ever been there. You know what I noticed? The massive lengths they went to in order to deliver us from reality.

Artificial scents were pumped into the room that smelled something like a new car. Music was blasting, bells were ringing, people were shouting. Lights were flashing all around us.

But you know what I didn't see in any of those casinos? A CLOCK. They wanted us to forget about time... you see if you remember time you remember that you have responsibilities, you also remember that time is limited, once its gone it can't be retrieved.

**ILLUSTRATION:** We Binge Watch: Julie and I love to get on Netflix or Amazon Prime and find our show and just hit play... as long as they can crank out episodes we are in. Currently its, "Designated Survivor". After our duties are done for the day we settle in and enjoy. But there's a problem, there are only 3 seasons and we are into number 3. I don't know what we will do when it's over... pray for us.

Nothing is wrong with settling into a good book, a good show, loosing yourself in a hobby or a game.... BUT, learning how to live in the moment, to smell the scent of a flower, to feel the wind upon your skin, to listen to each bird, each frog, each insect and discern it's individual song. There is a joy that can only be found in the REAL.

What an **AED (Automated External Defibrillator)** is to the physical heart, Mourning is to the spiritual heart. Mourning is like an Electric Shock to the Soul.

**Death shocks us into reality.**

We can sing, *“This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through”*. But when someone we love dies... that poetic thought becomes real experience.

Scripture calls us strangers and aliens in this world system. Occasionally, it is healthy to get out your spiritual green card and look at it. Meditate on that reality.

Man began in Paradise, and those who lean on God’s Messiah will finish in paradise. But no matter how hard we try, this world as it is, is not paradise.

Every time someone you love faces death - God’s word is proven to be accurate.

The wages of sin is DEATH. It is appointed unto man once to DIE.

- 3 people die every second,
- 180 people die every minute,
- 11,000 people die every hour,
- 260,000 people die every day
- 95 million people die every year

**Billy Graham said**, *“The statistics on death are staggering 100% of those who have lived in the past two thousand years have died.”*

- Your parents will one day die.
- Your children will one day die.
- Your grandchildren will one day die.
- The people you depend on will die.
- The people you pray for most, will one day die.
- The people sitting beside you in Church this morning will die.
- And my dear friend - you will one day die. That’s reality.

*Mourning Shocks us into Reality...*

## **2. Mourning Shifts us into Eternity**

**In Ecclesiastes 7, Solomon, the wisest of all men said...**

<sup>2</sup> It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.

Really? It’s better to go to the funeral home than a Birthday party?

He is saying there is a radically different effect between a person taking a stroll through a baby ward and a graveyard. Why? It holds the potential of bringing a measure of sobriety to your soul.

<sup>4</sup> **The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,** but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

**ILLUSTRATION:** My first church was in Lancaster, KY. There is no running track in Lancaster, KY. There are no flat streets in Lancaster, KY. If you want to run or walk for exercise the best place you could go was the **city cemetery**. So I decided I would go for a jog around the cemetery. As I ran, I noticed the last names - they were the same as some of the people in my congregation. I noticed the epitaphs. I noticed the years, some represented long lives, some only days. I noticed hundreds of dashes... that represented that person's life.

It was very sobering to imagine that many of those people had sat in the pews of Lancaster Baptist Church, now their souls are eternally in one of two places. No sermon could help them, no prayers could help them. It was over. Then I thought... one day I'll be in a place like this. I will die and so will you. So you see how that has a sobering effect.

***When is the last time you took a long walk through Bosque Bello?***

Perhaps nothing would be better for the spiritual good of this congregation than if we took a walk through that place from time to time.

A familiar poem by **Robert Browning Hamilton** expresses the truth:

I walked a mile with Pleasure,  
 She chattered all the way,  
 But left me none the wiser  
 For all she had to say.  
 I walked a mile with Sorrow,  
 And ne'er a word said she,  
 But, oh, the things I learned from her  
 When Sorrow walked with me.

*Mourning Shocks us into Reality...Mourning Shifts us into Eternity....*

### **3. Mourning Shoves us into Humility**

I think this is the key to understanding this beatitude...

Nothing attracts the presence of God like humility.

**1 Peter 5:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Mourning humbles us. It reminds us of our total inability to fix things.

We are told in this beatitude that if we mourn properly we are blessed BECAUSE we shall be comforted.

**Comforted** is from *parakaleō*, the same word that, as a noun, is rendered Comforter, or Helper, in John 14:16, where we are told that Jesus was the first Helper, and the Holy Spirit is “another Helper.”

When we mourn before the Lord, the Holy Spirit ministers to us in a very special way.

That is why the **Psalmist**, *Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning.*

There is something about mourning that humbles us... it is sad to see a PROUD YOUNG MAN, but nothing is sadder than a PROUD OLD MAN.

Life has a way of humbling us if we let it.

Paul wrote 13 letters in the new testament.

- The First was Galatians – Paul, an apostle
- Seven years later he wrote first Cor. – 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, “I am the least of the Apostles and not fit to be called an apostle.
- Eight years later he wrote Ephesians. “Unto me who is the least of the least of the saints”
- I Timothy, “Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief”

The longer he lived the more humble he became...

Sorrow has a value all it's on.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Group of seasoned pastors said of a young preacher  
Young preach very strong, rough edge. “After he suffers a little he will be alright.”

- IN sorrow you discover the meaning of friendship and love.
- IN sorrow you discover if you faith is superficial or solid.
- In sorrow you truly discover your God.

The saddest thing in all the world is not a soul that sorrows, the saddest things is a heart so dull that it isn't capable of feeling grief at all.

To sorrow is to love. Morning is the deeper side of loving.

**ILLUSTRATION: Shell Shocked** - The year was 1990. I was 14 years old. A friend of our family took me dove hunting on some of his families land. It was a dream for a young hunter. The land consisted of 20 acres of a recently harvested corn crop. There were ponds on each end of the property. In the center was a corn mill with a pile of ground corn sitting exposed at least 15 feet tall. The dove were plentiful. Flocks of 20 birds would fly in regularly throughout the day. If you shot in the general vicinity you

were certain to take a bird. I had been given a new gun for Christmas by my father, and as any good dad would do, he went over the safety instructions with me thoroughly. The most important advice was, "leave the safety on until you are ready to shoot". The safety was located right in front of the trigger. You could know that it was activated by simply feeling the raised button under your forefinger. If there was any doubt, you could look at it, if the button was black, the safety was engaged. If it was red, the safety was off and it was ready to fire.

My friend Dan took me on the hunt that day. Dan, again went over all of the safety measures associated with the responsible use of a firearm. As I sat in the field beside Dan waiting on the birds to fly in, I rested my finger on the trigger wondering if I had remembered to turn on my safety. Rather than turning to look at it, rather than feeling the safety to see if right side of the button was pronounced... I figured one sure fire way to verify that the safety was off was to pull the trigger. So calmly sitting beside my friend Dan, I gently pulled the trigger to the gun, with the barrel pointed direction in the air above me.

The safety was not engaged. 12 gauge gun fired. My face went pale. Dan's face turned red. Needless to say, that was my last hunting trip with Dan.

However, that trip had a great effect on me. It was probably the best mistake I had made up to that point in my life. I learned the importance of safety.