

## Blessed are Those Who Mourn

The Beatitudes #3

Matthew 5:4

*For the Lord is near to the brokenhearted. The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit. Evil will slay the wicked and the foes of the righteous will be condemned. But the Lord will rescue his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.*

Have you ever heard of the story of the Dyerville Giant? It's much different than the story of Jack and the Bean Stalk, or Paul Bunyan and his blue ox named Babe. In fact, it's a giant story unlike any giant story that you've ever heard because the Dyerville Giant was, in fact, a real giant. It was one of the oldest and largest Redwood trees in California. It was 362 feet tall, the height of a 30-story building. It had a diameter of 17 feet and a circumference of 53 feet. Experts estimated its weight at over 1 million pounds. They also estimated its age at 2000 years old.

But on March 24, 1991, the Dyerville Giant went from present tense to the past tense when it crashed to the ground in an instant and at a moment's notice. When it did, people living a mile away from the scene of the tragedy said it sounded like a train wreck. The vibrations were even felt from 10 miles away. There was no joy in Dyerville, California on March 24, 1991. No sir. Not at all. There was only the feeling of a train wreck and a long, loud, and sorrowful vibration from the felling of the Dyerville Giant.

Dear friends, I want to suggest to you this morning that one of the most revolutionary and radical ideas this world has ever had the privilege of being exposed to comes to us in the form of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Beatitude. We don't associate the feelings of a train wreck and the vibrations that come from our Dyerville Giants falling with blessings. We associate those feelings with pain, suffering, sorrow, anguish, and mourning. However, Jesus uttered these words while on a mountain while sitting down: "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted."

You see, the reality of suffering, of death, of loss, of grief, of anguish of the spirit, and of mourning is real. It's real for the righteous. It's real for the unrighteous. It's real for the saint. And it's real for the sinner. For those issues are not issues that just plague those who call Jesus their Lord. They plague every person on the face of this earth. But for those who come into a saving relationship with the Jesus of the mountain via the poverty of spirit, they are offered an assurance of something by Jesus in this beatitude that the rest of mourners on this planet don't realize. It is this: the assurance of the comfort of God that follows their mourning.

As with all the beatitudes in The Beatitudes, "blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted," has application at the everyday life level and the how we enter the Kingdom of God level. And the best way to see how both of the levels relate to you is to consider today: (1) Why We Don't Mourn; (2) Why We Must; (3) What We Receive When We Do; and (4) Why It Matters. But before we do that, pray with me.

### 1. Why We Don't Mourn

- **Frankie Valli:** Told my girl we had to break up. Silly boy. Thought that she would call my bluff. Silly Boy. But then she said to my surprise: "Big girls don't cry."
- **Reason at a Life Level: Big Boys and Girls Don't Cry.** (1) We are taught from a very young age: (a) I have to be strong; (b) Big girls and boys don't cry; (c) Don't show weakness; (c) Stuck it up, buttercup. (2) When we do that, we begin to see ourselves much like Ezekiel. God told Ezekiel his wife was going to pass away. He permitted Ezekiel to mourn all he wanted in private. But God forbid him to mourn in front of others. We, however, aren't prophets God entrusted to speak to Israel in route to Babylonian captivity. (3) The truth is, for a NT people of God, our Lord's strength is manifested in our weakness. That's what the whole book of 2 Corinthians is about. "I will boast about my weakness," Paul says in 2 Cor. 12, for "he (Christ) said to me: 'my strength is manifested in your weakness.'" (4) At a practical level, who said you had to be strong? You might have. But Jesus sure didn't. He said the opposite.
- **Reason at an Entry to the Kingdom Level: Our Sins, In Our Minds, Are Not Great Enough to Mourn.** (1) I am of the firm opinion that 100% of problems, conflict, lukewarmness, self-righteousness, and lack of proper understanding of the Gospel stem from this. We mourn the sins of others, but not ours because they are not as big. (2). Jesus said precisely the opposite: "why do you remove the speck from your neighbor's eye while you have a log in your own? First remove your log, then you will see clear enough to address that speck." We don't mourn our sins the way the tax collector in Luke 18 did when he said "have mercy upon me a sinner." We treat them much like the contemptible King Saul and say: "Yes, Lord I sinned. Now bless me."
- **App** – (1) Entry Level: "The tax collector couldn't even look up to heaven" (blessed are the poor in spirit). He could only beat his chest and say: "have mercy upon me, Oh God" (blessed are those who mourn). (2) Life level: Who said you had to be strong? His strength is manifested in your weakness.

### 2. Why We Must

- **Can You Hear Me Now:** Remember that commercial from Verizon? I can't stand it. It was on every television channel and on every billboard, it seems. What made it truly abominable was every person in America started using the phrase. Now, no matter where I am on the planet,

whenever I get bad reception, the phrase from the commercial I loathe rolls off my tongue. Mourning is a human response to suffering that both the righteous and the unrighteous can hear.

- **Why We Must at a Life Level: No One Can Escape the Reality of Death, Loss, Grief, and Suffering:** (1) These realities effect the righteous: (a) Job is the oldest book in the Bible even though it's not the first book. There's a reason for that: it deals with the #1 question people have: "why do the righteous suffer?" (b) Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Potiphar's wife made false accusations against him. He was thrown into dungeons and nearly lost his life. Yet, we don't see a record of his sins the Bible. That's because his life points us in the direction of the One in the NT who was pierced for our transgressions but had done nothing wrong. (2) These realities effect the unrighteous – Pharaoh and the Plague of the First Born. Nebuchadnezzar reduced to eating grass and living in a hole. They suffered too. (3) And the appropriate human response is mourning. God has designed mourning as a way to heal and cope appropriately in the human experience, whether righteous or unrighteous.
- **Why We Must at an Entry Level: Mourning is a Sign of True Repentance.** (1) The word Jesus uses for mourning here means to grieve. When we think of this beatitude on the surface, we look at it from that life level of grief. That is true. But Jesus takes what is true at the life level and makes it true at a Kingdom level: "Blessed are those who mourn (grieve)" with regard to their sin. (a) It's true personally: Peter: Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Paul to Timothy: "Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the highest ranking one of all time. I am the chief." (b) It's true corporately: "If my people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray. And turn from their wicked ways. Then, I will hear from heaven and will heal their land."
- **App** – (1) Entry Level – There is a difference between feeling sorry for your sins and experiencing grief over them. You see, entry into the Kingdom is predicated on being poor in spirit. And the sign of being poor in spirit is grieving at sin, preferably yours. And the only way you can grieve at your sin, is when you see your sin exactly the way God sees it: that which makes him grieve. (2) Life Level – "God has not been trying an experiment on my faith or love in order to find out their quality. He knew it already. It was I who didn't. In this trial, he makes us occupy the dock, the witness box, and the bench all at once. He always knew my temple was a house of cards. His only way of making me realize that fact was to knock it down." -- *C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed.*

### 3. What We Receive When We Do

- **Mrs. Hill:** Mrs. Hill was my 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Mrs. Hill had many people in her class. Some were good students; others were not so good. Some were rule followers. Some were rule testers. Some went on to be successful. Some went to the state pen. Yet if anyone in the class received an A on a test, they received a Tootsie Roll Tootsie Pop in whatever color the preferred.
- **The General Comfort of God: Is the Comfort God Gives to All** (1) By all, I mean every person in His creation that has ever been and ever will be. By comfort, I mean to come along side of and give aid in a time of need. He gives comfort to those in need because He is love, and He is good. (2) Christians and non-Christians who have lost everything in natural disasters get on the receiving end of entertaining angels unaware via those God mobilizes to comfort them. (3) He causes the sun to rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous (Mt 5:45)
- **The Special Comfort of God: Is the Comfort God Gives to Those In His Kingdom:** (1) God comforts all because He is Love. But not everyone in this world on the receiving in of God's general comfort has the Holy Spirit living inside of them. You have to come into the kingdom poor in spirit and ask God for to be your savior for that to happen. That's what Jesus means here most of all. (2) When you are poor in spirit, you mourn over your sin. And when you mourn over your sin, God is there to comfort you spiritually through His Spirit. The world doesn't get that. You do! The word "comfort" here is the verb *paracetas* (to give comfort and aid in a time of need). The noun form of the word is *paraclete* (the One who gives comfort and aid in a time of need). The *paraclete* is the Holy Spirit who gives the *paracetas*. (3) You see, when you say "Jesus, I repent of my sin and broken up over it. Have mercy upon me, Oh God, a sinner. I invite you into my life," the Holy Spirit comes into your soul at that moment to give you comfort and aid in a time of need, comfort that only comes by being poor in spirit first.
- **App:** Peter was poor in spirit and mourned his sin on the Mt. of Transfiguration. God the Father had just spoken to him from a cloud and told him to be quiet as Jesus was being transfigured in all his glory. "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man," he probably thought again to himself. But he looked up and he saw no one but Jesus. That's what "they shall be comforted" is all about.

### 4. Why It Matters

- **Finger Paintings:** You'll never see a finger painting in a home trash can, a public trash can, or in a landfill. Do you know why? Finger paintings aren't made in Picasso's Art Gallery. They are made by your Picasso. That's why finger paintings are priceless to their owners.
- **A Broken and Contrite Heart is a Gift to God. He Will Never Despise Them.** "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Oh God, you will not despise them" (Ps 51:17).
- **Grief Before Glory. Glory After Grief.** "Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name" (Phil 2:8-9).