

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

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[0 : 00] If you would open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5, we started a series in the Beatitudes. It's on page 962 of your Pew Bible, and I'm going to read the Beatitudes right now.

We're going to focus on Matthew 5 verse 4 this morning. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, just like we're coming to him this morning.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[1 : 06] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. May God bless the hearing of God's words.

Amen. Any Charlie Brown fans in the room? Whoa, we got some amens? Good. We all know that Charlie Brown is a glutton for punishment.

And regularly what will happen when Charlie Brown is on the receiving end of something that doesn't work out, he will lament, and he will say, Good grief.

Good grief. And we all know what it's expressing. It's all, you know, he's expressing kind of like disappointment in his circumstances. But then when you look about, when you actually think about those two words, good grief, you're like, what?

This is like a contradiction in terms. It's an oxymoron. What grief is good? When we think about grief or mourning, we're thinking about a deep sadness over the loss of something good.

[2 : 26] Whether it's a job, or your health, or the strain of a relationship, or even the death of a loved one. When we think about mourning, we're thinking about the loss, sadness over the loss of something good.

Last week, we started this series in the Beatitudes, just to remind ourselves what it means to be a kingdom citizen living here in the fall of 2024.

And last week, I walked you through the Beatitudes, and one of the points I made is that all eight of these Beatitudes, they are, it's like a kingdom profile.

It's a character profile of someone who has been brought into the kingdom of heaven, into the kingdom of the beloved son. So all eight, we're to take as, to mark each of us, every Christian, is to be marked by these character traits.

And today, we're looking at the character trait of mourning. Blessed are those who mourn. This mourning is a godly grief.

[3 : 44] This mourning that Jesus is talking about is lamenting over sin. Sin against God.

When you're spiritually bankrupt, when you are poor in spirit, you will grieve sin.

Citizens of the kingdom, they grieve what grieves God. We have a whole new value system. Now, I don't know if you realized this when you became a Christian.

But when you became a Christian, you opened yourself up to a whole new kind of grief. A godly grief over sin.

Sin against God. Because your whole life has shifted from orbiting yourself to orbiting the living God. So this morning, as we look at this beatitude, we're going to see two parts of it.

[4 : 54] Our good grief, blessed are those who mourn, and God's promised comfort, for they shall be comforted.

The question before us this morning is, not if you mourn. We all mourn. We all grieve. We're living in a sin-riddled world.

The question is, do you grieve what grieves God? And is there anything in you today that is grieving, offending the living God?

Charlie Brown. Charlie Brown. Turns out there is a good grief. It's called godly grief. And let's look at it.

Blessed are those who mourn. That word blessed shows up a number of times in the Beatitudes, nine times all the way through verse 11.

[5 : 55] And it's Jesus announcing blessing on all those people who are demonstrating these character traits because they have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into his kingdom, the kingdom of the beloved son.

These are people who have received God's transforming grace and have been moved under the saving reign of Jesus. Jesus. These are graced people.

These blessings. This is God's goodness to these people who have received the new covenant blessing of being in Christ.

And so what I want you to help you understand is when we read blessed are those who mourn, this mourner in chapter 5 verse 4 is a kingdom citizen.

They are grieved over what grieves God. And what I want to try to convince you of this morning is this. For you, Christian, that's normal.

[7 : 13] It's normal for kingdom citizens to grieve that which grieves God. It's normal. So these blessed ones are those who've been graced by God, who've been brought into his kingdom, who share God's heart, particularly when it comes to sin.

Sin in them and sin outside of them. So what kind of mourning is this exactly? What are we talking about here? Well, last week we saw blessed are the poor in spirit and that poor in spirit, you're poor in spirit in relationship to God.

And it carries down into verse 4. That we are mourning something, we're grieving something, we're lamenting something in relationship to God.

This is a godly sorrow over sin. That word sin tends to take a bum rap in our culture today.

Dismissive. Biblically speaking, it means missing the mark. Imagine an Olympic archer pulling back the string, releasing an arrow at the target, and that arrow just missing the bullseye by two centimeters.

[8 : 35] That's missing the mark. If they miss the mark by two feet, it's missing the mark. What sin is, is missing the mark of God's character in His command.

It's not believing Him or obeying Him. And biblically speaking, everyone sins. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

For all have missed the mark and come up short of God's perfection. Sin is a human problem.

And I just want to remind you when talking about sin, that sin, just one, will condemn you to an eternal punishment apart from God. Because when we sin, we sin against an eternal, holy, and just God.

for the wages of sin is death, eternal death, God's wrath for eternity. Sin is serious business in God's sight.

[9 : 52] I want to ask you just to evaluate yourself. have you recently given thought to how offensive and grievous your sin is to God?

Let me point to a couple things that will help that. Think about sin's punishment, which I just referenced. in John 3, 36, we read this, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

When you think about the punishment of sin being God's eternal, just, tormenting wrath, it should make you think sin is serious business in God's sight.

But, and then when you think of sin's solution that God provided, John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him shall not experience the eternal wrath of God, but have eternal life.

When you think that what God did in order to rescue sinners from their sin against him, that he became a man, that he lived a perfect life, that he died on the cross and bore God's wrath for all of our sin, for anyone who would believe, so that there's no more wrath.

[11 : 29] And then he was raised from the dead. What is this that God would do such a thing for sinners? It's getting at the seriousness of sin. Let me try to push this home a little bit more.

Imagine with me. Do you know right now on the seventh floor of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, there is Van Gogh's *Starry Night*? Do you know what I'm talking about?

Do you know what the painting I'm talking about? It's a masterpiece worth millions. Let's say that the Museum of Modern Art calls up the Salvati's and they're like, hey, Mike and Jenny, do you want to hang *Starry Night* in your living room for a little bit?

And we're like, yeah, sure, okay, yeah. So they bring it on, we hang it in our living room and then I invite everybody from our church to come take a look at *Starry Night*. So you come over on a Saturday morning, but you stop off at Oliver's on your way here to our house and you pick up your favorite jelly donut with raspberry jelly.

You walk into our house, you walk up to *Starry Night* with your donut in hand, you're like, hmm, yes, yes, yes, it's just speaking to me, yes, yes, yes. You take a bite of your donut and it squirts raspberry jelly all over *Starry Night*.

[12 : 52] You're like, oops. You kind of sneak your way into the kitchen, you grab some paper towels, you come back to *Starry Night* and you proceed to wipe your raspberry jelly all into *Starry Night*.

Everybody in the room who knows *Starry Night*'s value, it's a masterpiece, they are mourning and grieving, right? Because you've just utterly defaced something of incredible worth and beauty.

What makes that act so grievous is not your jelly. It's the work of art.

When we sin against God, our little jelly squirts, we're sinning against the most glorious, treasured being in all of creation.

Listen. Brothers and sisters, our problem is not that we take sin too seriously.

[14 : 00] We don't take it seriously enough. And that has everything to do with how we think about God. We have a man-centered view of God, of our sin, a man-centered view of our sin.

And what we need is a God-centered view. He's the masterpiece, the treasure above all else. And when we see our sin against Him, we will grieve.

We will mourn. Because we're gaining His heart. We need a God-centered view of our sin.

One of my favorite preachers and writers is John Piper. And he gave a talk called, *What is Sin?* Listen to what he wrote. My definition of sinning is, sinning is any feeling or thought or speech or action that comes from a heart that does not treasure God over all things.

[15 : 20] In the bottom of sin, the root of all sinning is such a heart, a heart that prefers anything above God. A heart that does not treasure God over all persons and all other things.

What is sin? Sin is, follow this, the glory of God not honored, the holiness of God not revered, the greatness of God not admired, the power of God not praised, the truth of God not sought, the wisdom of God not esteemed, the beauty of God not treasured, the goodness of God not savored, the faithfulness of God not trusted, the promises of God not believed, the commandments of God not obeyed, the justice of God not respected, the wrath of God not feared, the grace of God not cherished, the presence of God not prized, the person of God not loved.

what John Piper does for us is he helps us think about our sin against God, the center of all things.

This is a biblical view of our sin. A God-centered view of our sin. But what about sin in you?

If you're a Christian in the room, according to Galatians 5, 16 and 17, when you were converted, things got interesting. Because now you have a conflict of interest within yourself.

[16 : 48] You have your flesh, the desires of your flesh, wanting to do sinful things, and you've got the Holy Spirit of God living in you, the desires of the Spirit, wanting to form, he wants to form in you good God-glorifying things.

And so there's this conflict within us did you know, Christian, that you are simultaneously justified and sinful at the same time?

Declared righteous in God's sight, and yet we have a sinful nature? You know what the question becomes? Here's the question. Do you have a godly sorrow over the pride in you presently?

Over the lust in you? Over the greed in you? The gossip? The hate? The lack of self-control? The question becomes, how does God see these things in you?

How does he feel about these things in you? Ephesians 4.30 says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit who has sealed you for the day of redemption.

[18 : 02] Do not grieve him by sinning. I don't know what's happening in you right now hearing this.

I hope it goes something like this. God, would you help me to see and feel about my sin in me the way that you see and feel about the sin in me?
 Would you show me? Would you grieve me? Would you burden me? Would you help me to see my utter bankruptcy in your sight so that I can mourn it?
 When God lovingly convicts his sons or daughters of their sins, you can say, I am a blessed child of God.
 You know why? Because God, your heavenly loving Father, is at work in you so that you can share in his blessed holiness.
 [19 : 19] It is a good thing that you grieve your sin. It's a good thing. And if you're new to the Christian faith, I want to help you set your expectations right.
 Because as you grow as a Christian, you don't grieve less. You grieve more.
 because you start seeing the utter effect of sin in your life.
 And as you get to know your God more and more, you start realizing, oh, this sin in me must be grievous in his sight. He's so holy and good and just.
 And so the reasoning goes, Christian, if you're maturing in Christ, you're not going to be less grievous of your sin. You're going to be more as you become more and more holy.
 [20 : 28] But what happens if you don't grieve your sin? What happens if you don't care? Well, that probably means you're not a kingdom. You're not in the kingdom of Jesus.
 And what you need to hear is that you need to cry out to God and say, oh God, would you burden me? Help me to see my sin. Take it seriously as you see it so I can run to Jesus.
 Or maybe you are a Christian not taking their sin seriously. We've seen that. We saw that in the book of Judges. God's people being canonized, becoming like the world.
 When you become like the world, you're not going to grieve what grieves God. You're going to do what's right in your own eyes. You're not going to seek to do what is right in God's eyes.
 And so if you're a Christian in the room and you're like, man, I'm not grieved. Well, is it because you've just been canonized? And that's something to repent of.
 [21 : 36] God, forgive me for living according to the world's values, not yours. Brothers and sisters, this is our good grief of being a kingdom citizen.
 We're sharing in God's heart towards sin in us and outside of us. This is normal, brothers and sisters. This is normal for those in the kingdom.
 But I want to move now from our good grief to God's comforting promise. Blessed are those who mourn, for theirs is the kingdom.
 Oops, for theirs, for they shall be comforted. Amen. Time out.
 I forgot something. And it's important. Before we move on to the promised comfort, which I think a lot of you want to move on to right now, I need you to help you think about something.
 [23 : 03] I want to introduce you to the idea of lament. C.S. Lewis has written a commentary on the Psalms.
 I was given this by a friend this past week. And C.S. Lewis writes, I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.
 It is its appointed consummation. So when we in the congregation are gathered and we're dwelling upon these glorious truths of God, we're just delighting it, we're enjoying it, that it's not complete until we sing his praises together.
 Then it's complete. You see my point? See what he's writing? Applied to mourning of sin. Applied to godly grief.
 The appointed consummation of godly grief when you're seeing sin in you or outside of you is what the Bible calls lament.
 [24 : 20] It brings closure. It brings expression. And it's always in the minor key. It's not always fun to sing.
 It's not always fun to speak because it's a sadness. In your Bibles there are different kinds of laments.
 There's personal lament. Psalm 13. Psalm 51. When David sins adultery with Bathsheba then kills her husband Uriah to cover it up.
 He writes Psalm 51 and in verse 4 he says in this lament to God against you God and you alone have I sinned.

That's a God centered view of his sin operating. And that's a personal lament. And so personal lament is giving expression to godly grief. It contains confession.

[25 : 21] But you're expressing your sorrow over your grief for what you've done in God's eyes. Not only is there personal lament there is corporate lament.

And just as a point of reference would you just write if you're taking notes Ezra chapter 9 and 10.

Take a look at that. God's people are intermarrying Ezra one of the leaders of God's people he actually prays a prayer of lament not for his sin but for the people's sin and then the people join in in chapter 10 and there's all this weeping going on do you know what that means?

It's corporate lament for their sin. And then there's the Jesus lament. in Luke 19 Jesus has just entered Jerusalem and we read this and when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it saying would that you even you had known on this day the things that make for peace but now they are hidden from your eyes the things that make for peace Jesus was referring to himself they didn't recognize him for the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground you and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation Jesus is lamenting over Jerusalem that he has come and they don't recognize him and now salvation is going to pass them by and judgment's going to come.

Jesus weeps and pronounces this lament how many don't show your hands but how many in this room have friends and family we love that at present have rejected Jesus they have not seen the time of his visitation as of yet and so God's wrath hangs over them my friends don't hate them grieve them grieve what is happening there's another lament in Psalm 119 136 where the psalmist says I cry streams of tears because this people does not obey your commandments so brothers and sisters when we become aware of the murdering of image bearers in the womb and we know the command thou shall not murder we grieve that because it grieves

God when we see men marrying men and women marrying women we grieve that because that's not God's design one man one woman for life under God when we see the confusion of biological men thinking that they're women and biological women thinking confused that they're men that's not God's will and design we grieve that confusion and chaos and cry out to God when a hurricane like Helena rips through our nation when tornadoes and floods and forest fires wreak havoc and bring death and we see sin's distorting effect on God's created order we grieve that it's not the way it's supposed to be

[29 : 14] God's sovereign over all these things we lament it oh God have mercy Thomas Watson Puritan said this till sin be bitter Christ will not be sweet and the way that you learn to grieve your sin is to grieve it in light of who God is and you learn to lament you learn to lament now to the promised comfort we fly blessed are those who mourn what a glorious promise for they shall be comforted glorious promise when you are grieving your sin when you are grieving the sins of those around you the sins of our culture the sin affected created order when we're grieving these things take heart be comforted there's a promise promise says don't you want to know this is a comfort from

God brothers and sisters in our grieving when we grieve what God grieves we are comforted by God's promise promise and I hope you see in this passage in verse 4 for they shall be comforted is a future promise let me aim you at this future promise in Revelation chapter 21 Zach made reference it this past week in the word of encouragement let me read it to you be encouraged grievous ones mourners of the kingdom be encouraged 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 and I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying what are you saying what's going to be said 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 he will wipe every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither there shall be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away we have a promise of a new heavens and a new earth and with the new heavens and the new earth comes a new reality there's no more mourning no more no more crying no more pain do you know why there's no more sin not even in you you'll have a new resurrected body none of that no more but that's not the best part it's like the gospel the goodness of the gospel is God look who it is it's God himself wiping away the tears from your face it's his presence when faith turns to sight we see him face to face we will be in his presence we will hear his audible voice we will smell him and be with

him are you mourning sin oh be comforted by that promise we're one day closer my friends do you know what that's called that's called hope hope is this forward looking faith in the future fulfillment of God's promise that's hope and when we are grieving our sin against God we need that kind of hope and he gives it that's a comfort from God that's a future promise friends that's the text let me give you a present promise Jesus at the end of the great commission says go make disciples and he closes it with a promise he says lo I am with you always even to the end of the age so not only is God's promised future his presence God's promise now is his presence and he manifests his presence to us right now not physically you don't smell him you don't hear him audibly you're not feeling he's kind of hand wiping away your tears he's manifested in us by his Holy Spirit but there's more if right now you are overwhelmed by your own sinfulness Christian you're like I have not been wanting to look at this sin trash in me because I don't want to deal with it and I certainly don't want to go to God with it if that's you oh I've got a promise for you God's word has a promise for you it's the promise of justification it's it's this promise that if you put your faith in Jesus Christ you have peace with God because he's declared you righteous in his sight all of your sin has been forgiven because all of God's wrath has been poured out on your sin so that there's no more wrath there's there's therefore now no condemnation no more wrath for those who are in Christ Jesus and not just that you have been imputed with the righteousness of Christ you stand before God righteous in his sight with Christ's righteousness and so you have hope that you can stand before the judge without being condemned because of the finished work of [36 : 02] Jesus he's declared you righteous in his sight receive that promise live in that promise it doesn't mean you don't own your sin it means you freely go to the throne of grace with your sin what's being promised in Matthew 5 4 is the future presence of our Lord Jesus in a new heavens in a new earth when there's no more sin but there's also the present presence present promise he's with us our sins are not over our heads anymore but there's coming a day my friends when there's no more hurricane helenas there's no more contentious presidential elections there's no more abortions there's no more sexual sins there's no more identity chaos there's no more threat from creation itself because it's all been completely done with so now we we lament with hope secure in these promises when we take sin seriously because God takes sin seriously we lament we give voice to that by lamenting it but we also stand upon these promises our good grief blessed are those who mourn

God's promise comfort for they shall be comforted as a Christian as a citizen of Christ's kingdom living in the sin riddled world you will mourn the devastation and offense of sin as you get to know your God and as you see your sin more accurately but you will do so with hope in God's promises and be blessed he's wiped away the penalty of your sin and he will wipe away every tear from your eye blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted this is no Charlie Brown good grief this is the grief the blessed grief of a citizen of the kingdom God in heaven Father God we come to you now and we come to you with honest hearts we come to you acknowledging the sin at work in us still we all have sinful natures still we grieve our pride we grieve our lust we grieve our words that we speak in anger we grieve these things

God we grieve the way that instead of loving one another we hate each other how we avoid each other we grieve these things God we grieve the American church and how the American church takes you so lightly how we are infrequently considering the glory of your name how we belittle you and how casual we are when it comes to you God we grieve this we grieve along the lines of Isaiah 520 our culture which is calling evil good and good evil we grieve that we we grieve those who put darkness for light and light for darkness who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter oh God we grieve this in our culture we grieve this in our city we grieve over the children who are traumatized in the neighborhoods around this building who are growing up in contexts that are just so difficult we grieve these things

God and we call upon you to bring about a gospel change in us in the American church in the neighborhoods surrounding this building the people in our lives oh God would you use us to bring hope God we acknowledge this promise of yours of a future comfort God would you press that in deep into our hearts we God take great hope in knowing Lord Jesus you are with us that we are justified would you press these things deep within our hearts as we see our own sin God we are your mourners and we are so thankful for your comfort and we pray this all in Jesus name Amen