

Sermon: The Joyfulness of Mourning

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 January 2021

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] All right, if you've got your Bible, go to Matthew chapter 5.

Matthew chapter 5, continuing in our series through the Sermon on the Mount, which we started just a couple of weeks ago, we're focusing specifically on the Beatitudes. And two weeks ago, we gave kind of an introduction to the Beatitudes, and then we're just kind of taking one each week, one at a time, and really unpacking what it means to belong to the kingdom of God.

And of course, that contrast, what we see around us in the kingdom of man and the kingdom of the world. Hey, thanks so much for being here tonight. Anytime there's like snow in the forecast, I think there'll be three people there.

And so the fact that so many of you are here is such an encouragement to me, and thankful for those of you watching online who were not able to make it. So let's go. Matthew chapter 5, we're looking at the second Beatitude tonight, but we're going to read all of them together for our scripture reading.

And so if you're able to stand, would you please do so as we honor the reading of God's word, Matthew chapter 5 and verse 1. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain and he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[1 : 44] 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.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This is God's word. Pray with me and for me. Help us understand the meaning of the kingdom and what Jesus is teaching in these words. Let's pray. God, thank you for this time to be together tonight.

[2 : 46] Thank you for the privilege and grace to study your word. Thank you for what you're doing in our hearts and in our lives by studying the Beatitudes.

Your work has already begun as we've been talking together of just what you're showing us, what you're convicting us of, how you're conforming us into the image of Jesus.

Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, lead us now, I pray in Jesus' name. And God's people said, amen.

Amen. Please be seated. Have you ever seen a person cry so hard it made them throw up?

I have. Over the past 25 years of pastoring, I've seen many occasions of grief, particularly at funerals.

I've seen a lot of different situations, but I don't know that there's one that comes close to the opportunity that I was given one time to speak at the funeral of a teenage boy.

[3 : 50] Anyway, the young man and his brother had a landscaping business during the summer. They would mow yards and haul mulch and do things like that.

And on one day, these two boys were at the job site and they were trimming shrubs. And as they were trimming the shrubs, they got into like a hornet's nest.

And they just began to come after one of the boys. And he began to panic and became fearful as he was being stung. And he turned to the side as quickly as he could to throw the hedge clippers.

And when he did, it went into the side of the head of his brother. His brother didn't survive. When they had the funeral, the church was packed wall to wall with family and friends. And there on the front row was the mother of the two boys.

[4 : 58] I don't think anyone heard a word I said that day. The mom literally could not stop crying.

She was the definition of uncontrollable. It was so bad that someone, I'm not making this up, I'm not softening this in any way.

Someone literally had to bring out a trash can because the mom was crying and heaving so bad, she started to throw up. And I remember, as I'm up speaking, thinking, there is absolutely nothing I can say in this moment to give this family comfort in their grief.

Family, have you ever gone through a season of grieving? I mean real grieving.

The kind of grieving and mourning when there's nothing you can do to stop the pain. Nothing you can do to stop the tears. Nothing you can do to make the hurt go away. My guess is that there are many of you in this room right now and many of you watching online right now that know what that's like.

[6 : 21] You've lost the child or spouse or parent. You were served the divorce papers that you did not want. You were abandoned by your closest friends.

You lost everything in life you'd worked so hard to build. How many of you know what it's like to really grieve? If you've ever experienced real grief and deep mourning, you probably remember the symptoms.

The heavy breathing, the pain in your face, the tightness in your stomach, the replaying of events over and over in your mind, wanting to be alone yet afraid to be alone.

It doesn't matter what you do. You can't make the pain stop. And you have absolutely no idea in that moment how you're ever going to get through. Do you know what that's like?

Have you ever experienced that kind of grieving? My guess is that many of you here, to some degree, know what it's like to mourn. But I know this as well.

[7 : 28] Nobody enjoyed that experience. Nobody. Nobody. Like, none of you here wake up in the morning saying, man, Lord, I hope I suffer today deeply.

Bring the suffering on. No. If you were given a choice between a day of uncontrollable laughter or a day of uncontrollable grief, you'd pick laughter every time.

Amen? Of course you would. That's why when pain does come into your life, you do anything to make it go away as fast as possible. You watch a movie to distract your mind.

You pop a pill so you can go to sleep. You eat a tub of ice cream so you can feel better. Every one of us would say, the good life, the blessed life, the joyful life is the life of happiness, of a life absent of grieving.

We would never in a million years ever say that the good life, the blessed life, the joyful life, the life that's really satisfied is the life of mourning and grieving.

[8 : 40] That's insane. It makes no sense at all. And yet, that's exactly what Jesus is teaching in this second beatitude. Look at it. Verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn.

Now, be honest. On the surface, that's ridiculous. In fact, if it weren't Jesus saying this, we would dismiss it immediately.

Think about this, Faith family. How many of you, in your moment of grief, say, man, I'm so blessed right now? You don't feel that way at all. You don't tell the girl at the checkout line, have a sorrowful day today.

You don't do that. No, what we would say is, blessed are those who get to bypass mourning and sorrow and go straight to the comfort.

I mean, after all, isn't this the life we want? Now, there's to come a day when you can't open your mouth without a song jump right out of it.

[9 : 53] Zip, ba-dee-doo-dah Zip, ba-dee-doo-dah My, my what a wonderful day Plenty of sunshine in my way Zip, ba-dee-doo-dah Zip, ba-dee-doo-dah Don't worry Be happy Don't worry, be happy Are you crying?

No. Are you crying? Are you crying? There's no crying! There's no crying in baseball! Oh! Baby girl They don't cry They don't cry Who said They don't cry If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant If you're pregnant I mean, I gave you all those cultural examples because this culture would say, that's the good life, that's the blessed life.

It's not crying. There's no crying in baseball. We want the zippity-doo-dah kind of day. So what in the world does Jesus mean when he says the blessed ones are the sad ones?

Those that mourn. That's countercultural. So let's understand what he means.

First of all, notice here the necessity of mourning. In other words, what I mean here in this first point is Jesus is saying you must mourn.

[12:08] If you want the comfort, you must mourn. It's not an option. And so by necessity, what I want to say is that if you don't mourn the way Jesus is teaching us to mourn, you're not a Christian.

If you don't mourn, if what he's about to describe has never been true in your life, you're not in the kingdom of God.

We should pay attention. Amen? So what is this mourning? Remember, the Beatitudes are a unit. I've told you this for a couple weeks. They go together. Look again at verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And then if you go down to verse 10, the last one, because remember verse 11 and 12, just supplement verse 10, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs, same statement, is the kingdom of heaven.

They're bookends. The Beatitudes are a unit. They're not describing different types of people, but a single kind of person, namely the kind of person that experiences the radical grace of God, the kind of person who gets in the kingdom.

[13:28] This is not a take it or leave it buffet of Christian virtues. So Jesus here is teaching, and this is so important, that this mourning, this sadness, this sorrow, is central to the Christian experience.

And of course, this is not the only place where this is seen. We see it elsewhere in Scripture. John 16, verse 20 says, It's very much like what Jesus is teaching here in the second Beatitude.

James chapter 4, verse 9, In other words, there is a good type of grieving.

And that's what Jesus is talking about. So the first point that I'm trying to get across is this. This mourning isn't optional. This kind of sorrow and sadness isn't something you get to bypass if you want the good life.

Are you with me? Say amen. You don't get to bypass this. It is central to the Christian experience and those that experience the grace of God. So does this mean we're supposed to be Eeyores all day?

[14:55] Like this is the Christian outlook? We just walk around just bust through the sad. That's what Jesus said, right? And I know some of you are like, that doesn't seem to describe the Christian experience at all.

Well, let's take another step, point two. Not just the necessity of mourning, but secondly, is the nature of mourning. What I mean by this is, what kind of mourning is he talking about?

What kind of sadness is Jesus describing? Well, the Greek word that's used here is *pentheo*. *Pentheo*. It's a very, very strong word.

In fact, there are nine different Greek words to describe mourning. And they range from a little bit of sorrow to kind of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth type of sorrow.

Well, *pentheo* is on the high end. In fact, this Greek word is normally used, listen, in the context of someone grieving a death.

[15:59] The loss of a loved one. So is Jesus teaching that the only people that get the kingdom, the only people that experience the grace of God, are those that have some kind of tragedy in life?

Is that what he's saying? No. Why? Because Jesus is not talking about grieving a physical death. He's talking about grieving a spiritual death.

Well, how do you know that, Mr. Pastor? Well, because, number one, we saw that the Beatitudes is a unit. They go together. And you're going to see this as we go through each one.

And the very first one was poverty of, talk to me, spirit. So Jesus has just been teaching us that we do not have a spiritual penny to our name.

That we are spiritual beggars in need of grace. That was last week's sermon. So are you ready now to understand what mourning Jesus is talking about?

[16:58] The kind of sorrow he's talking about. Here it is. Notice it on the screen. I'm getting excited. I can feel it. Mourning is the emotional response of those who have accepted their poverty of spirit.

Mourning, sadness, the sorrow that he's talking about. It's the emotional response of those that have come to accept the first Beatitude.

Namely, I don't have a spiritual penny to my name. In other words, you are mourning a funeral. Namely, your own.

Mourning. Because you have come to realize your own spiritual deadness. You have come to realize your spiritual inability to save yourself.

And as soon as you realize you can't save yourself because you don't have a spiritual penny to your name. Mourning is what happens when you realize that reality.

[18:00] When you accept that that is your spiritual condition before God. It's like when my grandfather, who many of you know. I've talked about him so many times throughout my ministry.

I loved him dearly. He was like a best friend. He passed when I was a senior in high school. I will never forget on that Wednesday night when the phone rang. And the voice on the other side said he's gone.

Nobody had to tell me in that moment. Wes, cry. Mourn. Be sad. No one had to say that. Why? Listen, faith family. The moment I knew there was nothing I could do to bring my grandfather back. I mourned. Likewise, the moment you realize there's nothing you can do to save yourself.

You mourn the death of your own self-righteousness. When you realize the spiritual condition you are in before God because of your sin.

[19:06] The only response you have is one of deep spiritual sorrow. Because you can't get yourself out of the situation that you're in.

And in addition to that, and some of you are like, can we get to the second part of the verse, right? Just hold on. But not only do we mourn the spiritual condition that we're in, but I need you to listen to me, faith family.

Let me take this one step further. It's not only that I mourn the death of my self-righteousness. That I am poor in spirit. That I am a beggar in need of God's grace. That I am in a situation and I cannot save myself.

But listen, listen, listen. The reality of that is what killed Jesus. Do you understand what I'm saying? That it's my sin that put Christ on the cross. So my mourning, my sadness goes even deeper. Because not only do I realize that I am poor in spirit and I can't do anything to save myself.

[20:08] But the only thing that could save me is namely the death of the most perfect, holy, righteous one that we have ever known. And when we begin to realize not only our condition, but what our condition caused, we mourn.

Acts chapter 2 verse 36. Look at it. Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ. This Jesus whom you crucified.

Now when they heard this, they were katanuso in the Greek. They were stabbed to the heart.

In other words, not only am I spiritually dead, but my spiritual death killed Jesus. My spiritual death was why the death of Jesus was required.

Now we sing about this. It was my sin that nailed him there until it was accomplished. This is the kind of spiritual mourning and sorrow Jesus is referring to.

[21:17] But let me take it one step further. Not only is there mourning that comes from accepting my spiritual reality before God. Not only is there mourning the fact that that spiritual reality is what crucified Jesus.

But then we, are you with me? Y'all with me tonight? Then we look at the deadness in our world. Remember I mentioned this last week. Isaiah sees God and his immediate response is, I am unclean.

I am undone. And, and I live amongst the people that are unclean. In other words, when I start accepting the reality of myself, I also start seeing the reality of the world in which I live.

Look at Jeremiah 8 verse 22. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

Oh, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Well, Jeremiah looks at the condition of his people, of his culture of that time, and his head is of waters and his eyes of fountain.

[22:30] I don't have a lot of time, but let me just say, most of you that know me, you know that I'm not a sky is falling type, and I don't get caught up much in too many conspiracy theories. But there's a lot to grieve in our world right now.

Amen? Amen? I'm not on a political agenda, if that's what you think. I'm just saying, all you have to do is look around at your world, at the culture that God has placed you, and there's plenty of reason

to be sad.

To have a real spiritual sorrow because of all the spiritual deadness that is everywhere. It's why people are reacting the way they react, because they have no life in God.

It's what I love about the Christian faith, is it approaches life with a wide-eyed realism. It does not ignore that there is real evil and suffering in the world. It acknowledges it, sees it, and calls it what it is, but then takes it a step further and actually mourns for the condition of our land.

Anybody with me? So who gets the kingdom? Who gets the kingdom? Who gets the kingdom of God?

[23 : 48] Answer, those who are poor in spirit and mourn that reality. Those who are poor in spirit and mourn that reality. Now, while most of you, I won't speak for all of you, but most of you at this point are agreeing with me, there are still something within you saying, but isn't the Christian life supposed to be a life of joy?

Anybody want to ask that question? Anybody want to shout that out? Anybody want to say, can we get to the second part of the verse? Because it can't just be all mourning and sadness and sorrow. I'm not saying that the Christian life is all sadness and sorrow and mourning.

What I'm saying is, normal to the Christian experience, if you are a Christian and have the kingdom of God, you have experienced this kind of spiritual mourning. But look, look, look on the screen.

It's the path to gospel joy that runs through gospel grief. That's what Jesus is saying. If you want to get to the good life, if you want to get to the joyful life, you've got to experience the sadness of the death of self.

Preach, preacher. That will preach right there. If you really want to get the good life, the blessed life, the joyful life, you can have that. But it runs through the death of self.

[25 : 14] It's gospel grief that leads you to gospel joy. I didn't say that. Jesus did. Verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn. Why, Jesus?

Why? Why are the ones that mourn, the sad ones in the way that we have understood it here, why are they the ones who shall be comforted?

So the third point is the need for mourning. Why mourning leads to joy? Why gospel grief is good grief, Charlie Brown, right?

It's good. This is a good grief. This is a healthy grief. This is an important grief. Why? Because those that grieve this way get the comfort of Christ.

Christ. The people that come to the end of themselves get Jesus for themselves. This is the gospel.

[26 : 12] This is the gospel. It's those that feel the weight of sin that experience the relief of grace. Because I told you all of this is about the gospel of the kingdom back in chapter 4.

And the gospel of the kingdom is God's radical grace. And when you experience his radical grace, and by the way, you won't experience his radical grace until you realize your poverty of spirit and mourn it.

But when you realize you don't have a penny to your name spiritually, and you mourn that reality, then you experience the joy of Christ's comfort.

There is a joyful life. It's on the other side of the death of self and the mourning that comes with it. Let me illustrate it this way. Those of you watching online, I'm going to be gone for like not even 30 seconds.

See? I'm already back. All right? So think of it this way. Imagine that your spiritual condition, okay, your spiritual condition is freezing cold.

[27 : 14] I thought, what's an illustration that people from Minnesota would understand? Freezing cold. All right? Just came to me. It was of God. Your spiritual condition before God is freezing cold.

That is, you're poor of spirit. You're frozen. Dead frozen. But you have convinced yourself you're warm. That's your self-righteousness.

That's your pride. I'm not cold. I'm warm. Right? You deny your poverty of spirit to the point that you become so numb to the reality of your frozenness, your coldness.

So what happens? If that's you and I take this blanket, right, and I wrap it around you, you don't feel the thing. Because you have so denied your frozen condition and become numb to that reality that you don't even feel the comfort of the blanket.

Are you all with me? Yes, sir. But imagine, on the other hand, that you are freezing cold and you knew it, and you accepted it, and you acknowledged it so much so that you cried out, I can't keep myself warm.

[28 : 28] Help! I can't do anything to warm myself up. And then someone wrapped the blanket around you.

What would you immediately feel? Comfort! The joy of the blanket! The satisfaction of the grace of God.

Are you with me, faith family? This is what Jesus is saying, is when you come to the realization of your own spiritual condition, poverty of spirit, and you mourn that reality, blessed are those who mourn, then as the blanket of grace is wrapped around you, your mourning gets turned to joy, your sadness gets turned to a smile, your grieving turns into gratitude, and your crying is comforted in Christ.

This is the second beatitude. Blessed are those who mourn. Why? It's they that get the comfort. If you wanted to say it a different way, you could say it this way.

It's the sick that really feel the grace, and acknowledge they're sick, that feel the overwhelming grace of the physician when he heals them for free.

[29 : 48] It's the penniless, sick person who gets healed for free that feels the comfort of God's grace.

Let me give you an example. Luke 6, y'all ain't got anywhere to go. It's probably three feet outside, okay? So we'll just stay here until tomorrow. The Father's house can kick us out. We don't care. Luke 7.

Luke 7, Jesus is at the house of the Pharisee, and there's a woman that comes to Jesus, and she, you remember the story, she wipes her, takes her hair and her tears and wipes Jesus' feet and anoints him with her tears.

And of course, the Pharisees are like, how in the world could you let a woman like that touch you? Ooh. Why would you even want to be associated with a woman like her?

And Jesus tells a story. Here it is. Look at Luke 7, verse 41. Luke 7, 41. So this is the story Jesus tells in response to them.

[30 : 51] A certain moneylender who had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii, the other 50. One 500, one 50. When they could not pay, so both had poverty.

They couldn't pay their debt. He canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, the one I suppose of whom he canceled the larger debt.

And Jesus said to him, you have judged rightly. Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave me no water for my feet. She has given, she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

How beautiful is that? You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in, she's not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much. He who has forgiven little, loves little.

[32 : 07] Now you need to be careful that you don't come to a conclusion that that story is not meant to give. The point here is not that we have different debts, that some are worse sinners than others, like all of us are sinful before God.

Sin is equal in the sense that it is an offense to God. The point that Jesus is making is the comparison of one who thinks their debt is 50 versus 500.

In other words, the one who realizes the enormity of their debt loves, feels the comfort of being, having told to them, your sin, your debt is gone.

Are you serious? All of it? The 500 of it? But if you're the, you know, 50 is probably all my debt is. I'm okay. I'm not the best. I'm not perfect, but I'm not as bad as she is. I mean, look at her. Then you'll never feel the comfort of grace. You don't feel the joy of having Jesus look to you and say, your sins are gone.

[33 : 15] But if you really understand the sinner that you are, poverty of spirit, and mourn that reality, then the comfort of grace sets you forth to the greatest life of joy you could ever know.

Are you all with me? Think of it this way. As long as you think your sin is like this small backpack, you know, I've sinned and I probably have some unpaid parking tickets and, you know, I'm not perfect.

But if that's how you think of yourself, you're not going to experience the comfort of the second beatitude. But when you realize that your sin is overwhelming, that it's heavy, that you can't even move an inch because of the weight of it, that it was your sin that put Jesus on the cross, then when

He looks at you and says, your sins are gone.

They are forgiven. They are washed white as snow. Then you will know the comfort that you can only find in Jesus Christ. Amen?

Amen. One final point and we'll be done. I want to end by just saying this or asking this. How do we make sure with all this talk about gospel grief of the good, healthy grief that leads to enormous, incredible joy, how do we make sure that doesn't lead to despair?

[34 : 40] And so if you've zoned out, zoned back in, it's just going to take a minute or two to let me explain this. So we experience the mourning and the grief of our condition without Christ, our sinful condition, and we grieve that.

How do we not despair and instead experience joy? And here's the answer. Okay? The answer is this. The gospel itself. Let me explain.

Lean in so that you hear this. The way you make sure that grief always leads to joy and not despair is that you remember the very one you sinned against, Jesus, is always ready to receive you.

the way your grief never drifts into total despair but actually becomes the blessed life, the joyful life, is that in your grief you remind yourself of the gospel, namely the good news is that in God's grace he's always, always ready to receive me no matter my condition.

An example and then I'll close. Judas sinned against Jesus. Did he not? And he grieved his sin against Jesus.

[36 : 14] But his grief sent him to despair. So much despair that you remember Judas actually hung himself. Despair defeated him.

He mourned. He was sorrowful over his sin but he ended up in despair. Now this is such a beautiful picture. Please, please listen. Compare that response to Peter's.

Did Peter betray Jesus? Yes. Just as badly as Judas did? Yes. Three times publicly. In fact, look here at Matthew chapter 26 verse 75.

Notice this on the screen. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. Everybody say this next phrase. And he went out and wept bitterly.

Did Peter experience mourning, grief, sorrow? Absolutely. He experienced the sorrow of his sin. But Peter doesn't drift into despair and hopelessness.

[37 : 19] Peter experienced the blessed, joyful life. Because what did he know? I love this. I love this. After Jesus' resurrection, when the disciples are fishing, do you remember?

And Jesus appears out on the water and they don't know right away that it's Jesus. And he tells them to cast their nets on the other side because they're not catching anything. As soon as, as soon as Peter.

Now remember, last time Peter saw Jesus, right, remember, he had denied Jesus publicly three times in the rooster crowed. And he mourned and he wepted.

He wepted. He wept, right? That's how we say it in Tennessee. He was sorrowful. But notice how his response is different than that of Judas. Look at John 21, verse 7.

That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord. when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work and he threw himself into the sea.

[38 : 37] The other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from land but a hundred yards off. Here's the point. Peter, the man that denied Jesus three times and wept over it when he realizes that it's Jesus.

Even though he's only a hundred yards away from shore, even though the disciples are already pulling up the nets and they're going to go in, he can't wait to get to Jesus.

So much so he throws on his outer cloak and he is in the water, baby. And he is swimming. Why? Because he can't wait to get to the one he betrayed.

Why did Peter's grief not send him to despair? Because he knew the gospel of his Lord and Savior, namely, he's always, by his radical grace, ready to take you back and receive you in.

That's the comfort of the kingdom. God's wisdom. So, if you, if you have sinned against Christ and you know it and you weep over it, there's nothing tonight that should keep you out of the water.

[39 : 52] Jump on, don't even have to put on your outer cloak, just jump on in. You see, Peter knew what Judas didn't, and that's the good news of Jesus' radical grace.

Two betrayers, two men that mourned, one hung himself in despair, the other almost drowned trying to get to Jesus. Mourning crushed one mourner, the other mourner, found true comfort.

How? In the radical grace of Jesus Christ. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

I close with this. Back in 1974, in the midst of the Watergate scandal that brought down President Nixon, some of you have heard this name, you know this man, there was a man by the name of Chuck Colson.

He was the special counsel to the President. Through this scandal, Colson received Christ as his Savior. And here's how Colson describes his conversion.

[41 : 03] It images beautifully this beatitude. Colson said this, quote, That night when I sat alone at my car, my own sin, not just dirty politics, but the hatred and evil so deep within me was thrust before my eyes, forcefully and painfully.

Listen, for the first time in my life, I felt unclean, and worst of all, I couldn't escape. Poverty of spirit. I don't have a spiritual penny to my name. In those moments of clarity, I found myself driven sin, irresistibly into the arms of the living God.

Chuck Colson experienced what I pray we experience, namely, namely, the beautiful paradox of the kingdom. Here's the beautiful paradox of the kingdom. The very thing that causes us to mourn, namely, that our sin crucified Jesus, is the same thing that gives us comfort, for it's in his crucifixion that we find radical grace.

John Newton, the old hymn writer, summarizes this beautifully, and I close with this. Listen, listen to this. Thus, while his death, my sin displays for all the world to view, such is the mystery of grace, because it sealed my pardon, too.

[42 : 47] With pleasing grief and mournful joy, my spirit now is filled, that I should such a life destroy, yet live by him I killed.

That's the good news of the gospel. That's the joyfulness of mourning. That's the paradox of the kingdom, for blessed are those who mourn, because it's they who will be comforted.

And all God's people said, amen. Let's pray together. God, thank you. Thank you so much for your word. It is stripping back layers of what we think the good life is.

The path to gospel joy goes through gospel grief, realizing that we are poor in spirit and mourning that reality. And what do we get?

We get the very one our sin crucified. We get Jesus. Jesus. And there is no greater comfort than Christ.

[44 : 07] There's no greater comfort than Christ. Oh God, would you by your spirit wrap the blanket of grace around us tonight?

Reveal to us our cold, cold heart that we might experience the overwhelming joy and blessed it.