



“Getting Help” (God wants to help—Trust Him!)

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

What does Jesus mean by “mourning?”

When Jesus taught the Beatitudes, he said that God blesses those who mourn. The word *mourn* is a very strong word. It means “to grieve with a grief that so takes possession of the entire person that it cannot be hid.” (Rienecker) It’s the kind of grieving that overwhelms you and floods you with a profound sense of sorrow and unhappiness. Paradoxically, Matthew 5:4 says, “Happy are the unhappy.”

Any old mourning won’t do

The question is, “Why?” What is this mourning about? Here’s what’s not about: (1) It’s not about grief over the death of a loved one; (2) It’s not about grief over a lost job opportunity; (3) It’s not about grief over the loss of a relationship. Such mourning is natural and necessary, but not the focus of Matthew 5:4. Furthermore, it’s not the diabolical mourning that Ammon had when he wanted to defile his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:2); nor the kind of evil grief Ahab had when he greedily mourned for Nabal’s vineyard (1 Kings 21:4). And in Exodus 14:5, it is not about Pharaoh’s mourning over letting God’s people go. That’s right after he let them go, he was sorry he let them go. He repented that he had repented. Finally, it’s not grief over getting caught. You remember what your mother used to ask, “Are you sorry? Or sorry you got caught?” Any old mourning won’t do!

Mourning in Matthew 5:4 is brokenness that God’s will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus is referring to Isaiah 61:1-3 where the Year of the Lord’s favor has come “to proclaim freedom from captives and release from darkness for the prisoners and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.” And why have they been mourning? God’s people have been under the iron fist of godless foreign oppressors.

The mourning occurs because the righteous suffer; God's own people are on the bottom and wicked on the top. Mourning is heard because good people hurt; because the wicked prosper; and because God has not yet acted to reverse the situation. The people of God have yet to see the kingdom of God in its fullness. They are still persecuted. They do not see the One who judges justly. The Son of man has not come in glory. (Dale C. Allison)

But why had they come under foreign oppression in the first place? For their sin! Rather than the mourning of a helpless victim; Jesus teaches that those who mourn do so because they have seen their own sin and are horrified by what they have done. Mourning is not just a perpetual state of blubbering. Jesus is not telling us that He blesses the blubberers.

To mourn means: (1) you get to the point of sorrow for your sins; (2) you get it that there is truly no other name that you can call on but Jesus; (3) you admit that you have no other option but to cast all your cares on Him. To mourn your sins is a natural outflow of poverty of spirit. The second beatitude should follow the first; but that's not always the case. Many deny their weakness. Many know they are wrong; yet pretend they are right. As a result, they never taste the exquisite sorrow of repentance. (Lucado)

Jesus promises His comfort to those who mourn over their sin!

To mourn is a strong word; and so is "comfort." It means to "call along side." It means to encourage and exhort. It means to console and strengthen. It means that God *himself* is doing the comforting.

In John Baker's [Life's Healing Choices](#), he wrote that "grief is God's pathway to comfort. We mourn over our past mistakes and we mourn over our loss of control. In the end, God leads us to His comfort, provided we trust Him." Biblical mourning is when I stop trying to play God and instead, recognize that God has the strength to help me. His strength was ultimately seen on the Cross, where He took on my sin so that I could receive His strength. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones saw in this verse a "deep doctrine of sin and a high doctrine of joy which produced a blessed happy man who mourns . . . and who at the same time is comforted."

"Earnestly believe that God exists; that I matter to Him; and that He has the power to help me recover" (Baker 2008, 24).