

THOSE WHO MOURN

Ecclesiastes 7:20 "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins."

When we hear the verse we are looking at today, *Matt 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*, we take it to places Jesus wouldn't have. We talk about hurt, loss, pain and Jesus comforting us in the midst of it. There are lots of verses that actually deal with that in the scriptures, and it is a reality that Jesus will wipe the tears from our eyes, but that is not what Jesus is dealing with in Matthew 5:4. Many people do not like to deal with the issue of sin, there is an old saying called "whistling past the graveyard," meaning that death is so close, it worries and freaks us out, so instead of looking at it we whistle past the graveyard acting like it doesn't bother us.

The best commentators will tell you that the mourning in Matthew 5:4 is for sin and wanting to see the Kingdom of God established. The godly remnant of Israel in Jesus' day weeps because of the humiliation of Israel, but they understand that it comes from personal and corporate sins. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:136, "Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed."

When Jesus preached, "The kingdom of heaven is near," he, like John the Baptist before him, expected not jubilation but humble tears. It is not enough to acknowledge personal spiritual bankruptcy (v. 3) with a cold heart, weeping for sins can be deeply moving in our souls.

In Isaiah 40:1 God says "Comfort, comfort my people" when they mourn over their sin. The first two beatitudes deliberately allude to the messianic blessing of Isaiah 61:1-3, which confirms them as "messianic." The Messiah comes to bestow "the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (Isaiah 61:3). But these blessings, already realized partially but fully only at the consummation (Revelation 7:17), depend on a Messiah who comes to save his people from their sins. Those who claim to experience all its joys without tears mistake the nature of the kingdom.



Charles Wesley's words:

He speaks, and listening to his voice
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

The Old Testament uses a dozen words in connection with mourning. In each case, these words are closely linked with mourning for the dead. In Hebrew culture such mourning began at death and lasted for at least seven days after interment. Those who shared the sense of loss joined with the family for this period of time, openly and emotionally expressing their feelings, often with wailing. The Prophets used the image of such grieving to link to God's coming judgments.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus uses the word, *pentheo* ("to experience grief, mourning, sadness") when He speaks of mourning. In context this phrase contrasted the values of His kingdom with those of the world. This world considers blessed, not those who mourn, but the hedonistic and pleasure-seeking, who find "happiness" in transitory experience. It is the one who is dissatisfied and pained by what this world has to offer who will find the comfort that is offered by a living relationship with God.

True mourning sees ourselves for what we are and what we have done, but also sees Jesus for who He is...our needed savior.

CONNECT PARTY

February 21st, 7pm *RSVP for Directions.*

BAPTISMS

April 6th, 1pm. Signup today if you would like to be baptized!

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