

## Devotions with Matt

April 29, 2020

### THOSE WHO MOURN

I have done a number of funerals in my life and never once have I stood up and addressed the bereaving family and friends of the dead and told them they are blessed because of their pain and loss. I have never once looked to a parent who lost a child and thought how blessed they are. I have never counseled a couple going through the grief of a divorce and thought they are so lucky to have that deep grief. Their grief and sorrow brings grief and sorrow to my heart. Their mourning does not make me think of blessing.

But here we are in the second Beatitude (Blessing) from Jesus in Matthew chapter 5. He says, "Blessed are those who mourn." What? That flies in the face of everything I have ever been taught. I thought those who were happy and rich were the blessed ones. I thought those with great health plans and a big IRAs were the blessed ones. I picture someone on a yacht without a care in the world saying to themselves, looking over the ocean's expanse, "How blessed am I!" Every message of every commercial I have ever seen tells me that fun is good and mourning and sadness are bad. My gut instinct tells me that. But here is Jesus saying the opposite is true. He doesn't say blessed are those who are always joyful, fun loving and healthy. He says blessed are those who mourn.

Mourning in the Bible is an interesting term. It literally means to cut or beat the chest in grief. It means to have a godly sorrow that overwhelms a person. It not only brings pain to the heart, but also tears to the eyes. An early Church Father named John Chrysostom said that this kind of morning that Jesus is talking about is a special kind that goes beyond mere sadness to the point of intense grieving. Biblical mourning means to have a broken heart over both our own sins and the sins of the world. It is sin that birthed death in us and our loved ones. It is sin that has caused jealousy and anger and put a wedge in a marriage that was meant to be for a lifetime. It is sin that has caused all illness, suffering and pain in the world. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and that sin is where our mourning comes from.

So why would Jesus say we are blessed if mourn? Jesus hates sin. He came and died to free us of its power and bondage. How are we then blessed by something that has ruined the world? Because it is when we mourn all the things in this world that cause suffering pain and grief, it is when we mourn sin, we can be healed from it. It is when we acknowledge our own sins and the harm that they have done to us and the world, Jesus can speak to us. It is when we have a godly sorrow for our sins, we find our forgiveness. It is when we mourn that we have sinned against our Creator, we will find comfort. It is precisely at the point of our contrite and broken heart over sin that we find God's grace.

In the book 'The Problem of Pain' C.S. Lewis writes, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts to us in our pain." He shouts in our pain not to deepen it. He shouts in our pain not to intensify our guilt and shame. He shouts in our pain not to rub our noses in it. He shouts in our pain to heal us from it. He shouts in our pain so we can find forgiveness for the cause of it. He shouts in our pain to woo us to



Himself. It is in our pain that we find His grace. It is in our pain where we find His comfort. He shouts to us in it to remind us of His great love for us. He shouts to us in it to remind us that life was not supposed to be this way. He shouts to us in it to remind us that He is the remedy for our pain and that He has defeated it on the Cross. In our mourning God is reminding us that He is now making all things new again. He wants us to know that one day it will all be gone. We are blessed when we mourn because it is where we will find God.

**“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:18**

In Christ,

Matt