

MATTHEW 5:4: “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN...”

INTRO.:

1. On any given day in our area and throughout our nation, we can find people who are mourning.
2. These people may be mourning for various reasons:
 - a. Loss of physical possessions (home burns, car wreck, thief stole prized possession),
 - b. Because of a missed opportunity (to make some money, to take advantage of a certain deal, etc.)
 - c. Because of losing their youth (over 40; do not have vitality, health, etc. that they once had).
 - d. Because of losing their health.
 - e. Because of the loss of a loved one.
3. Thus, when we use the term “*mourning*” we do not see it as a very pleasant experience.
 - a. Mourning is something we usually associate with pain, loss, discomfort, and disappointments.
 - b. It is not something that we really look forward to.
 - c. And it is something that if we are mourning, it causes us to hope that the reason for that mourning will soon pass.
 - d. Simply, when we talk about mourning, we usually associate it with all kinds of negative thoughts.
4. Thus as we read Matt. 5:4, it seems that Christ was making a contradictory statement when He said: “*Blessed (happy) are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*”
 - a. In reading this beatitude, we are led to ask, “How can happiness, or blessedness, come through mourning?”
 - b. “What did Jesus mean here?”
5. To correctly answer these questions we must remember, as we pointed out in our first lesson, that here Christ is describing a radically new way of living.
 - a. He is talking about those who have changed their minds around.
 - b. He is talking about those who have chosen a totally new direction in life.
6. When we look at this beatitude with this thought in mind, it takes on a whole new meaning.
7. This AM let us look at what Christ had to say to us in the 2nd Beatitude.

LESSON:

- I. As we begin our study of this Beatitude, the first question we need to ask is, “What did Jesus mean when He used the term ‘*mourn*’?”
 - A. It is fair to say that there are different kinds of mourning.
 1. In saying, “Blessed are those who mourn...” Jesus was not referring to mourning over the things of this world.
 2. Jesus was not saying that those who approach the pains and losses of this world and mourn over them will be comforted.
 3. Paul put it this way in 2 Cor. 7:10: (Read).
 - a. Paul said that there are 2 types of sorrow (mourning) – worldly & Godly.
 - b. He also said that the only type that is worth anything is Godly sorrow.
 - B. To help us better understand what Godly sorrow is and what type of mourning Jesus was referring to; let us notice some worldly forms of mourning.
 1. The world mourns when they suffer afflictions, disappointments, thwarted ambitions, bereavements, financial reversals, etc.
 - a. This is not the type of mourning Jesus referred to in Matt. 5:4.
 - b. All men, whether a child of God or not, will suffer these things.

2. The world mourns over the loss of a loved one.
 - a. For example, in Gen. 23:2 when Sarah died Abraham mourned and wept for her.
 - b. But again this is not the type of mourning Christ was referring to.
 3. Further, many mourn when they have suffered unpleasant consequences because of their sins.
 - a. A thief may mourn because he got caught; but this will not stop him from committing the same crime again if he has the chance.
 - b. Judas mourned when he realized what he had done to Christ; but that did not bring him any comfort.
 - c. As someone once said: "Hell is full of mourners."
--I.E. It is full of people who are sorry that they did not obey God when they had the opportunity.
 - d. But even this is not the type of mourning Jesus referred to here.
 4. Finally, some people mourn over the wrong type of things, or have an unnatural mourning.
 - a. Such was the case with David over the loss of his son Absalom.
 - b. 2 Sam 18:33 says, "*And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"*"
 - c. David's grief over the death of Absalom was unnatural.
 - d. It was unnatural because it did not reflect either the rebellion of Absalom or the risk David's comrades had taken in fighting for him.
 - e. It was only after Joab approached him and reasoned with him that David changed.
 5. Simply, a lot of people mourn about a lot of things; but this never brings them to a richer, fuller relationship with God and the comfort He affords.
- C. What then was Christ referring to when He used the term, "*Mourn?*"
1. He was referring to a person who looks at his own sins and spiritual failures and does not just say, "Well, I did the wrong thing. I flubbed up, but it is O.K. because everybody does it."
 2. John Stott expressed it as the difference between confession and contrition:
 - a. Sometimes we may confess our sins, but not be contrite over them.
 - (1) We may say, "O.K. I did it. I'm guilty." - but yet have no deep sense of remorse for what we have done.
 - (2) Or, we may say, "O.K. You win." - but not really be sorry about it.
 - b. This beatitude calls for us not only to confess our sins, but also to have a broken and contrite heart over them.
 - c. It calls for us to have true sorrow over what our sins have done to God, others, and ourselves.
 3. The type of person Jesus was describing here is one who takes his sins seriously, and grieves each time he sins.
 - a. He is a person who is truly sensitive to his own sins.
 - b. He looks at sin and sees how deceitful it is and how tragic the results are.
 - c. He knows the pain his sins have caused God and others; and he mourns over that fact.
 4. The type of person that Jesus was describing here knows that when sin is in their life it affects not only God, but everyone else as well.
 - a. Let me use a simple illustration of this point with a very familiar passage.
 - b. In Heb. 10:25 we find the command not to forsake the assembly, and in vs. 23-24 we find that the reason for this is what goes on in the assembly.
 - c. In the assembly we are to spur one another on to love and good works.
 - (1) When I willfully choose to forsake the assembly to go fishing, camping, etc., not only am I sinning against God, but I am also sinning against my brethren and even my own family.
 - (2) It is impossible for me to stimulate or edify my brethren if I am absent, and it is impossible for them to stimulate me.
 - (3) And the influence of such actions on weaker or new Christians and on my family and children is not the type of Godly example God expects me to exhibit.
 - d. Thus when I willfully choose to forsake the assembly it is not a personal matter, as it does have an impact on many other people.

5. Thus, Christ was saying, “Blessed is the man who realizes what sin has done to his life, the lives of others, and to God; and grieves over it.”
6. In this beatitude Jesus is telling us right up front if there is sin in your life and you are not concerned about it you should be!
 - a. If you are a Christian and you have sinned and you feel guilty about it, and mourn over it, that is good!
 - b. If on the other hand you do not feel guilty about it, then it is time for you to be concerned!
 - c. When we feel guilty because we have done something wrong and grieve over it that is good!
 - d. That means the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us and He is doing His job and we are sensitive enough to listen.
7. The simple fact is that when we sin:
 - a. We ought to feel sorry about it.
 - b. We ought to feel guilty.
 - c. We ought to mourn over our sin.
 - d. And we ought to repent.
8. In fact, that is what this beatitude is all about – It is about repentance.
9. It is about coming to God and asking for forgiveness.

II. With this example in mind, let us look at some Biblical examples of mourning.

- A. In Jere. 6:13-15 we find a negative example: (Read).
1. In Jeremiah’s day the people of Israel did not take their sins seriously.
 - a. They just wanted to cover it over and call it by a different name.
 - b. I.E. Not covetousness, but thrift; not adultery, but a one night stand; not homosexuality, but an alternative lifestyle.
 2. While sin ruled in their lives they were saying, “*Peace, peace.*”
 - a. They acted as if nothing was wrong.
 - b. In fact, they were so hardened by sin that when they sinned it did not even phase them.
 - c. Jeremiah described their tragic state by saying, “*They had even forgotten how to blush.*”
 3. In reading about their sad spiritual condition, I am lead to wonder how many people today have also forgotten how to blush?
 - a. What about you? Have you forgotten how to blush?
 - b. Have you gotten to the point where you are so desensitized by your own sins that you can sin and it does not even bother you?
 - (1) What about when you receive back incorrect change?
 - (2) What about when something goes wrong and you lose your temper and say or do something that is unchristian?
 - (3) What about when you tell a lie?
 - c. Can you commit a sin and it does not even hurt anymore? It does not even prick your conscience anymore?
 - d. Do you find yourself committing the same sin over and over and really not being that concerned over it?
 4. Going back to Jeremiah, we further notice the problem the Israelites had was that they tried to deal with their sins superficially.
 - a. They thought that as long as they could keep it covered up with some external religious activity, all would be O.K., and they could say, “*Peace, peace.*”
 - b. But the problem is that we cannot deal with sin superficially – It simply will not work.
 - (1) Just keeping teenage girls from getting PG is not the answer.
 - (2) Just putting parental locks on the TV is not the answer.
 - c. Sin is just like cancer in our physical body.
 - (1) No doctor has ever gotten rid of cancer by some superficial, or glossed over means.
 - (a) I know that several of you here have had cancer.
 - (b) What if you had gone to the Dr. and he said we will just put a Band-Aid on it?
 - (c) What would have been your opinion of that Dr.?
 - (d) Would his solution have gotten rid of the problem?

- (2) To get rid of cancer it will take a strong (and usually very painful) treatment.
 - (a) To get rid of cancer the doctor has to cut the person open, dig deeply, and then cut out the cancer.
 - (b) To get rid of cancer you may have to endure months of suffering with chemo.
 - (c) To get rid of cancer it will cost you dearly.
 - d. And this is exactly what Christ calls for us to do with all the sins in our life in this 2nd Beatitude.
 5. Perhaps the real reason the Israelites had gotten into this sad state was that they never realized the tragic affects of sin.
 - a. When they sinned, they were never embarrassed about it, or humiliated by it.
 - b. As a result, they kept committing the same sins over and over again in their lives.
 6. QUESTION: What about you?
 - a. When you commit a sin, do you grieve over it, mourn about it, and realize how many people will be touched and hurt by it?
 - b. Does it make you sick when you realize you have sinned?
 - c. Can you commit the same sin over and over again without even batting an eye? (Lying).
 - d. NOTE: When there is no deep conviction regarding one's sins, we will never strive to get rid of it in our life.
 - e. If we see our sins as no big thing, it will not cause us to change our behavior.
 7. Only after one truly mourns over his sins (as Christ said), and becomes sick of it; will they strive to eliminate it from their life.
 8. A radical concept?
 - a. Yes, but that is what Jesus is calling for if we want to be His disciple.
 - b. If we are going to let God shine through us then we must mourn over our sins, and realize what they are doing to us.
- B. Now let us notice several positive examples of people who mourned over their sins.
1. David: Psa. 51:3-4: (Read).
 2. Isaiah.
 - a. When we first meet Isaiah, we find that he regards himself as a pretty good Jew and a prophet of God.
 - b. But Isaiah had a problem – He had never realized how terrible sins was, especially his own sins.
 - c. Thus in Isa. 6 Isaiah had a vision in which he was brought face to face with the reality of sin.
 - d. Notice his reaction: Vs. 5: (Read).
 - e. Finally, when Isaiah realized what sin had done to his life, and mourned over it until he was willing to change; then God was able to use him: Vs. 8: (Read).
 3. The woman who anointed the feet of Jesus: Luke 7:36-50: (Read).
 - a. Here was a woman who truly mourned over her sins.
 - b. And because of that she went away from Jesus comforted/forgiven.
 4. Peter: Luke 22:61-62: (Read).
 5. The church at Corinth.
 - a. When Paul first wrote to the Corinthians, things were not right in their lives.
 - (1) Sin was rampant both in the congregation, and in their personal lives.
 - (2) Thus, as Paul wrote to them, he did not try to gloss over their sins and say, “All is O.K.”
 - (3) He did not say, “*Peace, peace, where there is no peace.*”
 - b. Rather he wrote them a very pointed letter which caused them to sorrow over their sins (1 Cor.)
 - c. In 2 Cor. 7:5-11 Paul tells of their reaction: (Read).
 - (1) When they saw their sins and what it had done to both their own lives and the congregation, they mourned.
 - (2) Because of this fact, they determined to repent (change).
 - (3) And in vs. 10 the bottom line was that this type of mourning – “*Leaves no regrets.*” – They were comforted.

- d. Notice the implications of this verse in light of Matt. 5:4.
- (1) If you really love me and you see sin in my life, you will want to do in my life what Paul did in the life of the Corinthians.
 - (2) It will hurt you to have to say some hard things to me to bring me to the point of mourning, just as it hurt Paul to have to say the things he did.
 - (3) But when you do we will be thankful in the end.

III. This leads us to the third point of our lesson: That is, the promise Christ made to those who mourn over their sins – *“They shall be comforted.”*

A. This beatitude is not a gloomy one.

1. Jesus does not merely call for us to be sorrowful, and leave us there.
2. He does not preach gloom and doom and then just quit.
3. Rather He said that when our sorrow over sins leads us to God, then we will receive comfort.
4. God is a God of comfort (2 Cor. 1:3), and He will comfort all who fall upon Him.
5. But the road to this comfort is found only through mourning over our sins.

B. In Matt. 11:28-30 Jesus put it this way: (Read).

1. Jesus calls us to come to Him.
2. But to do so we must first see what sin has done in our life and determine to make the changes necessary.

CONC.:

1. When was the last time that you truly sorrowed over your own sin?
2. Or more specifically, as you look at your life this AM and there sin in it?
 - a. If so, how do you feel?
 - b. When you look at what your sins have done to you, others, and God; how does that effect you?
 - c. Does it make you sorry?
 - (1) Sorry that you got caught?
 - (2) Or, sorry for all the heartache and grief you have caused?
3. If the latter is the case, then Jesus is speaking to you in the 2nd Beatitude.
4. If you are willing to be broken in heart and grieve over your sins; then you can now come to Him, open up your heart to Him, and receive the joy of comfort and salvation from God.