

Life Group Lesson

April 18th, 2010

Matthew 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.*

Tears are a part of human life. Sorrow is a part of human life and sorrow is a gift from God to release the pain of inward grief so that it doesn't poison us. Ecclesiastes 3 says, **"To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under heaven, a time to be born, a time to die, a time to weep."**

But, there is also an improper kind of sorrow. It is possible for humans to sorrow a foolish kind of sorrow. Amnon in 2 Samuel 13 mourned and become sick until he could express his lust toward his sister Tamar. This is a sick and perverted sorrow. Ahab, the same, Scripture says he mourned because he lusted for Naboth's vineyard. It says in 1 Kings 21:4 that he just went to his bed and he just lay down on his bed, turned away his face in mourning and wouldn't even eat. That's selfish mourning, mourning over the unfulfillment of your own lustful desires. Sorrow based on overwhelming selfishness, that's the depressing sorrow of one who has become the center of his whole world.

But we are to also mourn over sin. Some people have come to this beatitude (Matthew 5:4) and thought that that's it just talking about general sorrow. *"Blessed are you if you just are sorrowful."* And anybody who's sorrowful is going to get comforted. There's far more to this than just some generic kind of mourning and sorrow for which we can enjoy some comfort from somewhere. We're talking about another kind of sorrow here. We're talking about the kind of sorrow that Paul was referring to in 2 Corinthians 7:10-13. It is called **godly sorrow**.

Now what is godly sorrow? It is not the sorrow of the world. 2 Corinthians 7 says, "The sorrow of the world works death." Godly sorrow, according to 2 Corinthians 7, produces something different than death. It produces repentance. Verse 9 says, **"I now rejoice not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance."** Verse 10 says the sorrow of the world produces death, but this is godly sorrow produces repentance. And repentance brings blessing and comfort. We're talking here not about just generic sorrow in life, but about godly sorrow that is linked to repentance. The issue here is not mourning over our circumstances. It is mourning over sin. Godly sorrow leads to repentance. Worldly sorrow is when you get caught and are sorry you got caught. You may be sorry for the circumstances getting caught causes you, but not truly sorry (godly sorrow) over your sin. You are not being led to repent to a Holy God.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," means you are spiritually bankrupt and look at your life and can find nothing of value and nothing by which you should claim righteousness or be acceptable to God. You are bankrupt. You are poverty stricken. You look at yourself find absolutely nothing, a recognition you have nothing, you are nothing, and you have achieved nothing. You see yourself as nothing but crouching, cowering, shamed beggars who have no resource or no capacity to help yourself. You are absolutely destitute spiritually and can only beg for grace and mercy. This type of person is who He's talking about. This is the condition of a person who mourns over sin.

Questions:

Is there an area in your life where you are tempted to forget God's presence and act contrary to his ways or desires?

When you sin, do you truly mourn over your sin in a way that leads to repentance and a changed life?

What does mourning over sin look like? Read Psalm 51 and see how David mourned over his sins (i.e. adultery with Bathsheba, plotting Uriah's murder, no remorse over Uriah's death,

Do you struggle to see forgiveness over your sin? (Do you think you can be forgiven?)

Job said, **"I hate myself, I repent in dust and ashes,"** Job 42:6. Literally, this mourning over sin is a sorrow over death...a deep, lasting, inner mourning, not just some outer wailing as other words reflect, but a deep sadness on the inside.

It was that very sadness that came out of the heart of David when in Psalm 32, just a couple of verses, he says in verse 3, **"When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long."** In other words, he was in deep agony until he confessed his sin. His body was failing. **"Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer."** Vitality is literally in the Hebrew "life juices." Saliva, the fluid that works in the nervous system, his blood, all the flow of the life juices was constricted by the fact that he wouldn't repent of his sin and the consequent guilt was literally drying him up and his body was wasting away. Until, verse 5, **"I acknowledged my sin to Thee, my iniquity I did not hide, I said I'll confess my transgression to the Lord and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin."** David had to release that deep grief, that deep sadness over his sin. And when he did he enjoyed the freedom of forgiveness that comes from God.

In Psalm 51 you have the very same thing. He says, **"According to the greatness of Thy compassion, blot out my transgression, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin for I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me against Thee, Thee only I have sin and done what is evil in Thy sight."** In other words, he couldn't get rid of it. It's ever before him. He couldn't get it out of his mind. It was in his conscious mind all of the time and causing him such deep sorrow until he unloaded it in the confession and the repentance that is expressed there. And David then said, **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man under whom the Lord imputes not iniquity."**

Happy is the man who confesses his sin. Happy is the man who repents. That's the comfort he's talking about. It's the comfort that comes in forgiveness. When the sinner comes to the place of recognizing spiritual bankruptcy, when the sinner comes to the place of grief, deep grief, deep sorrow over sin, and comes before God in repentance and asks for mercy and grace, then he receives the comfort of forgiveness.

Questions:

Is your vitality drained away like David said in Psalm 51?

When did David start mourning over his sin?

Do you want the comfort that comes through forgiveness of sin?

What do you need to mourn over? What needs repented and confessed?

Psalm 38 verse 4 says, "My iniquities are gone over my head, they're a burden too heavy for me to bear." Is this true about how you view your sins?