

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Call to Worship: Psalm 148

1st Scripture: Luke 6:12-26

2nd Scripture: Matthew 5:1-4

Hymn #105- *Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah*

Hymn Insert- *His Mercy is More*

Hymn #702- *Wonderful Grace of Jesus*

Introduction

Having worked through a general outline of our Lord's "Sermon on the Mount," last time, we started to work into the sermon, by considering the first of the several beatitudes listed here; "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This morning, we move on to the second beatitude, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

And again, as we consider this second beatitude, we must continue to keep in mind, both, that it is part of the whole of this list, and that all of these virtues are descriptive of those who are truly born again through the Gospel. The Christian heart, though imperfect, has been renewed unto exhibiting these kinds of attitudes, which begin in the inner man and make their way out into the outward actions, as a testimony to the life of Christ that now resides in them, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. True residents/subjects of the kingdom of heaven, sincerely exhibit these fruits, because they *are* new creatures in Christ, and not *to become* new creatures in Christ. Of course, they grow in these regards, but a true work of God in the soul; true conversion in Christ, must and will maintain and exhibit these "born again" attitudes.

As we did last time, once again, we will first consider the objects of the blessing (the first portion of the verse), before considering the way in which those objects are blessed (the second portion of the verse).

I. Blessed are those who Mourn

At first glance, this beatitude seems to present a contradiction to the very peace and joy which the rest of the Scriptures state, belong to those who have been redeemed in Christ. We might be tempted to ask such questions as: Does our Lord state that one mark of being a subject and resident of His kingdom is to wear a long face? Does He not command us to rejoice in many other texts of Scripture? Ought not the receiving of full pardon for sins, reconciliation with God

in Christ and every spiritual blessing that we are freely given in Christ, to naturally produce and promote a linear sense of unending joy and happiness in the soul of the redeemed? Ought we to lament our joy and feel ourselves unsaved when we do not mourn at any given time? Should we dredge up a spirit of continual mourning, so as, to fulfill this beatitude?

Let's carry this a step further. In Luke's account of the beatitudes, he reveals an antithetical statement to this blessing, which ought to serve to help us get a better grasp of our Lord's intended meaning here. Luke contrasts the blessing with this statement, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." This brings additional questions to the foreground, doesn't it? Is it sinful then to laugh? Is it wrong for brethren to experience and exhibit any kind of humor, laughter, fun, joy, levity...etc?

Of course, I don't believe that that is the Lord's point here, anymore than simply having material wealth does not necessarily exclude someone from His kingdom. That said, I believe that there are very important heart principles to be taken from this beatitude, which are supported by the rest of the Scriptures, and which get to the very bottom of our Lord's intended meaning here. This beatitude does address a critical distinguishing factor that exposes a major difference between true believers and unbelievers (and especially in this context, the difference between self-righteous pharisaical Judaism and authentic Christianity).

First, we begin with a critical prerequisite, which will serve to unfold the main principles that are to be taken out of this beatitude. And this critical prerequisite completely annihilates any notion that God somehow delights in "mourning, sadness or sorrow," in any natural sense, as if, God carry's some innate desire in His essential Being, to see His creatures suffer heartache and hardship. In other words, pre-creation, God didn't say, "You know, I want to design a creation full of creatures who will suffer, because I have this sadistic itch that I need to scratch. I just delight in mourning, sorrow, pain and suffering." The fact that heaven exists without the presence of such things, and the fact, that God delights in the joy that His people experience (especially in beholding His glory), destroys such a notion, altogether.

The prerequisite then, upon which this beatitude stands, is that we live in a fallen world. We live in a world that is in natural rebellion against God. We live in a world that is ungodly and given over to all manner of sin and corruption. And as long as we live in such a world, as those

who are redeemed; as those who are born again and bear more and more of the image of Christ throughout the progression of our sanctification, we must and will experience sorrow, hardship and mourning, until we get to heaven. It's a must. When we get to heaven, this beatitude will no longer be relevant, because the context of the fall, within which we now live (and which still affects us personally and inwardly), will no longer exist. And while mourning is a must for everyone in some sense (after all, all human beings experience suffering, sorrow and death), there is a conscious, sincere response to the corrupt and fallen condition of this world, which the people of God exhibit, and which the unsaved do not. And this gets to the very heart of this beatitude.

In a general sense then, we can say that the reason why those who mourn (in the sense that Christ intends here) are blessed, is because those who are redeemed, now behold the corruption of the world (and all of the effects of it) in a way that is aligned with the heart of God. We now see as God sees (albeit, in an imperfect and limited sense), and we behold the wrong and the God-contrariness (we behold the revealed will of God; His moral will, continually compromised), and even though we look to the hope of the certain restoration of all things, what we see in the present, grieves us. Indeed, it contradicts our new nature. And so, in a general sense, within a fallen context, where we long for and look to the restoration of all things, the true children of God righteously and properly mourn. Now, let me carry this general principal over into two specific realities, with various examples that can help shape our understanding of these realities.

1) We mourn over the effects of sin that we see and experience everywhere *outside* of us. Praise the Lord for His divine intervention! Praise the Lord for the Gospel! Praise the Lord for the coming new heavens, new earth, and wholly sanctified us! Yes, praise the Lord for the eternal glory to come! But brethren, how can we not look around and see all that is happening around us; the reality of the effects of the fall on mankind and the world as a whole, and not mourn in the present? It's still real. People are still dying in their sins. Loved ones remain unsaved. Crimes are still committed. Governments are still corrupt. People are still suffering. The unborn are still being brutally murdered. Immorality of every kind is still rampant. Our nation is collapsing before our very eyes, on a conveyor belt to utter destruction. Cults exist. Churches

are compromising. Christians are warring over silly, trivial things. The Gospel is often shrouded by division and hobby horse doctrines. There's grief in the world. There's grief at work. There's grief at home. There's grief in the church. There's grief and sorrow everywhere, displayed in every shred of the infection of sin that permeates all that exists in this world.

And the Christian cannot simply conger up a wooden, heartless stoicism, in response to these things. These things are sad. They are sorrowful. They are disheartening. They are everything that is antithetical to the good and holy and righteous God, who has created and designed us for His own glory. They are a terrible distortion of the image of God in us. To think, there are people, who although they are really suppressing the truth in unrighteousness; there are people who actually deny the very existence of God, altogether! [Ill: At the pro-life rally in NYC, as Abby Johnson's fully developed baby was plastered live on huge screens, via 4D ultrasound (the lips and eyes and fingers and toes, the heartbeat pounding), a group of counter protesters were chanting "BS, BS, BS!]. The blindness, the hardness, the revelation of the reality of the effects of the fall, sincerely, though perhaps inconsistently and imperfectly, tear at the hearts of those who are true, born again, subjects of the kingdom of heaven. And they are blessed, because they evidence the reality of the living God; their reconciled Father, within them! They are blessed because, with Christ, although Jerusalem was to face certain and great destruction, they weep and cry aloud, "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem! So often I have sought to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" They are blessed because the heart of the "Man of sorrows, who was acquainted with grief," is now in tune with their own hearts. The reality of sin bothered Christ! It irked His soul! And it must and will irk the souls of all of His true brethren!

1) We mourn over the effects of remaining sin that we see and experience *inside* of us. Unlike our Lord Jesus, who bore the far greater weight of the guilt and punishment for our sins, in this lifetime, we still bear the remaining affects and residue of our sin nature, until we are made complete and perfect in glory. Following our regeneration and conversion, we enter into an ongoing process of sanctification, where God, by His Spirit and Word, labors to form more of Christ in us. And we cooperate in this process by seeking to put to death the deeds of the body, by the Spirit.

That said, while we rejoice in the work that is taking place, and while we rejoice in our free justification in Christ, and while we rejoice in knowing that when we see Christ, we will be as He is (without any residue of remaining sin), this process of sanctification does involve exposing and dealing with remaining sins in us, which inevitably brings sorrow and grief. Indeed, that very sorrow and grief, which comes about, especially because we contend with offenses which are contrary to God's nature, and for which Christ died, is what God uses to lead us to continual repentance, so that we might find grace and continual strength to conquer these very sins that still plague us. In this sense, our mourning is a blessing to us, because it is one of the very sanctifying tools which God uses to grant us repentance and victory over sin.

And so, we mourn, throughout the daily battle, because even though we are forgiven in Christ, and even though we will be ultimately rid of this flesh, sin is still a present reality. And as a present reality, it is ugly, it is shameful, it is anti-God, and it is that which has brought about the painful curse, which Christ became for us, when He died in our place. And furthermore, the fact that our sin still holds some level of attraction to us; the fact that it is a battle to be rid of it, even after all that God has done for us in Christ, brings grief and sorrow to the soul.

And so, those who mourn over their own sin, and over the present remaining affects of the fall, are blessed, and evidence that they are indeed in the kingdom of God, where the Holy Spirit is at work in them. This, in no way, contradicts the joy that we have in Christ, brethren, because Christians can (and do) contain within their souls, both, a sorrow over the present reality of sin and its effects in the world and in us, and a linear, explosive joy, in anticipation of the future hope of Christ's return, when He consummates His kingdom and brings about the completion of our salvation, and a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness alone dwells forever. Both joy and sorrow are mingled together. You see, this sorrow is not meant to be a hopeless sorrow, an angry sorrow, a self-righteous sorrow, or an anxious sorrow (although, in our frailty, it can morph into any or all of these), but rather, it is a righteous sorrow, which longs for the certain completion of all things. It is a sorrow that says, "Oh save, Lord," and "Come quickly, Lord Jesus," at the same time. It is a healthy sorrow, which shares in the righteous nature of our God and Heavenly Father, and longs to see His revealed will done on earth, even as it is presently done in heaven.

And again, what separates this kind of godly sorrow from the sorrow of the world, is that the primary motivation for this mourning, being derived from our relation to our God and Father, is in response to the consequences of the fall which surround us and remain in us. The world mourns over many things; lost loved ones, lost health, lost riches, pain, disease...etc, but all of the world's mourning begins and ends on how it is affected by the loss of temporal things. There is no true and living, personal "God" in the world's equation. The world could care less about how God views His creation, and His right and proper place as God. The world mourns for the personal consequences of its sins and how it suffers because of those consequences. Indeed, the world could care less about sin, if there were no consequences. The Christian mourns because now understanding the desire and will of God, seeing that which is contrary to the desire and will of God, is recognized for the utter evil and filthiness that it is, and it brings grief, especially as it yet remains in us.

Before we consider the specific blessing that is upon those who mourn in this way, let me leave you with a handful of Scriptures that further support what we have gone over in this first point. [See Ps. 119:136; Ecc. 7:3-4; Ezra 10:6; Jer. 13:15-17; Ezekiel 9:3-11; Dan. 9:20-23; 2 Pet. 2:4-10; 2 Pet. 1:6-9; Psalm 51:3-4, 17; Rom. 8:18-25; Rom. 12:15; 2 Cor. 7:10-11]

II. For they shall be Comforted

What is the specific blessing then, which belongs to those who mourn? Because the present mourning and the longing for the consummation of Christ's kingdom is genuine; because the people of God really desire to enter into the future glory of a righteous kingdom, where the effects of sin are forever eliminated (both on the outside and the inside), they will be comforted! They will find true peace. What they long for, will, indeed must, come to pass. Now, certainly, in a very real sense, we find comfort in the present, because of who we are in Christ, and because of what we anticipate on the road just up ahead; and every look to Christ gives us a renewed joy in the certain hope that He has won for us. However, I believe, of course, that the ultimate fulfillment of this blessing is found in the glory to come, where our salvation will be complete, where the war will be over, and where we will enjoy sweet, unhindered, realized and experienced fellowship and rest with Christ forever!

We mourn now, because sin is still a present reality that permeates every one of our senses, daily. We long for the completion of our salvation. And the blessing is, it is coming! It's on it's way! Brethren, we are going home, and when we get there, we will know nothing but the fullest measure of unending peace and joy, forevermore! Perhaps, the best description of this blessing can be found in Revelation 21:1-8 [Read now].

And so, what then are the implications of this blessing, brethren? We will live in perfect harmony and perfect peace, together, with Christ and all of His redeemed children, and with a host of angelic beings, without even the possibility of crime or defilement or corruption or evil or pain or sorrow or tears or death, or any other mournful reality, ever finding a definition there. [See Psalm 126:5-6; Isaiah 61:1-3; Micah 7:18-20; Luke 16:25; 2 Cor. 4:14-18; Rev. 7:14-17].

III. Closing Thoughts and Applications

1) While there is a place for humor and laughter, brethren, this text has brought me back to, once again, examine the type of humor that would be in keeping with the proper spirit of mourning, here described by our Lord. And, at the very least, I've determined to set up an extra guard, seeking to ensure that I am not making light of the very things that would grieve our Lord. In God's providence, as I was talking to a brother on the phone this past week, I caught myself saying something in jest, which I believe had crossed the line of what would be acceptable humor in the sight of our Lord. As Christians, we ought to be careful not to make light of matters which God takes serious. Jokes about being gay or transgender, or which, again, seek to bring levity to matters that provoke the wrath of God, should be laid aside. And so, for whatever it's worth, without condemning humor altogether, I do think that there is warrant here to drive us to reevaluate the types of things that we joke and laugh about. We don't want to become Pharisees in this area, but we ought to exercise sobriety to this end (at least, I ought to). There is a legitimate place to ask the question, "Is it right for me to joke around about this, particularly, if I am allegedly grieved about the reality of whatever it is that I am joking about, at the same time?" "Can I make gay and transgender jokes, when I ought to be grieved about these sins which permeate our modern day culture?"

2) Brethren, you who mourn now, be encouraged that you will soon be comforted, forever. Every barb that you have absorbed for the sake of the gospel, every hardship that you have endured, every wicked atrocity that you have witnessed under the sun, indeed, the remaining sins in your own heart that you still wrestle with, will soon be gone. The battle is almost over! Fight the good fight and finish the race! You will mourn now! But, joy is right around the corner!

3) Do you mourn the sinfulness of the world and the remaining sin that exists in you? Is that even a reality on your conscious radar? If not, then recognize that you are no friend of Christ and His Kingdom. But, the good news is that He can change you. You see, but your hope doesn't rest in your ability to mourn or not, or in your ability to recognize your own weakness or not. Lacks in those areas are just symptoms of a far worse disease. Your real problem is that you are presently alienated from your God, because of your sins. And until you are reconciled to God; until you are brought into a healthy relationship with God, having dealt with your sins and your sin nature, in a lawful way, you remain without any hope whatsoever. But, the good news is that God has done something about our sin problem. He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world, born of a virgin, to deliver His people from the power and penalty of their sins. He has sent His Son, to first reconcile sinners to Himself, and then to make us into the people that He has designed us to be, as described in these beatitudes.

He has accomplished all of this, in the perfect life, and sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on behalf of sinners. And He raised Him from the dead, as a confirmation of His acceptance of all who come to God through faith in this Christ, in truth! But, you must call upon Him yourself, and you must see Him as your only hope of salvation from sin and reconciliation to God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!"

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25