



In the second beatitude, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). The poor are rich; happy are the sad. The first two beatitudes contradict all that we know about life! Once again, Jesus, in his inaugural address, points us beyond the temporal world as we know it and opens our eyes to reveal the unseen eternal perspective.

He is addressing people who have every reason to mourn in the earthly sense. Politically they are under the subjection of a colonial power, Rome. Economically, they have been forced to “render to Caesar” taxes that became a burden. They suffered social isolation due to their religion, but the religious leadership was largely corrupt and left them with little comfort. They were longing for something or someone to set them free, to give them hope. They were looking for a saviour, for the Messiah.

Of the nine different Greek words used in the New Testament to speak of sorrow, the one used here is the strongest. It is mourning so deep that it cannot be hidden. Jesus could be referring to mourning in the sense of:

1. *Death*. An Arab proverb says, “All sunshine makes a desert.” In other words, there are certain things which only the rains will produce; and certain benefits which only sorrow can bring, like the kindness of others, and the comfort and compassion of God.
2. *Suffering*, sorrow & needs of people, as when Jesus wept over Jerusalem or at the tomb of Lazarus.
3. *Sorrow over my own sin* and unworthiness. Recognition of my spiritual bankruptcy (poor in spirit) leads to mourning, a godly sorrow over that condition. It will cause us to focus not on ourselves, but on God.

Sadly some Christians can be too superficial when it comes to the gravity of the consequence of sin. We often minimize, rationalize and justify our attitude as acceptable when we should be responsible, remorseful, and repentant instead. But we can also be superficially happy, deliberately conveying brightness and joviality with the idea that this is what a Christian is supposed to act like. Neither reflects the truth about our Father’s holiness or the Spirit’s joy.

The result of godly mourning is comfort. They are blessed because they shall be comforted. There is forgiveness for those who truly mourn and confess their sin. We are consoled by God’s presence and reassured by His promises. Ultimately, according to Revelation 21:4, there is a new order coming and we can have the true hope that “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more mourning or crying or pain.”

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1. Read Isaiah 61:1-3a. Which words correspond to mourn? To comfort?
Recall a time when you mourned. What words describe your feelings or behaviors? How were you comforted?
 2. Read Luke 18:9-14. In what ways does this relate to mourning?
 3. What would be some personal benefits of godly sorrow? (2 Corinthians 7:1-10; James 4:8-10; 1 John 1:8-9)
 4. What are some sources of comfort in the midst of godly sorrow? (2 Thessalonians 2:16; Romans 15:4, John 14:16)
 5. You have been comforted and blessed. How can you be a blessing to others? (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)