

The Sermon on the Mount Study Blessed Are They That Mourn?

Introduction

Keeping in mind the inverted nature of the Beatitudes, the next blessing builds upon the last, but must lower itself to gain the blessing. Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached the same message. Matthew 3:1-2 records the summary of John's sermon. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus's sermon was the same in Matthew 4:17. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The first priority of the Kingdom was to bring men and women to repentance. Every Biblical definition of repentance indicates a change of one's mind; "to think differently afterwards."

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3340.htm>)

The purpose of John and Jesus's message was to help people to recognize their offense toward God so that they might turn away from the way they were and to think differently afterwards. This kind of change went beyond the surface level to the heart, mind, and soul.

The Sermon on the Mount continues this message. By recognizing that there is nothing of oneself to offer God, to recognize that the spirit is utterly impoverished and destitute of anything good, a person can see how his offenses have stacked up between himself and God. God, who is holy, compassionate, and merciful, accepts this recognition and offers His favor and blessings in return.

However, the truly repentant are not content with just recognizing or acknowledging their spiritual poverty. They also mourn over the many ways they have offended God. William Barclay comments that the Greek word used for "mourn" in this verse is the strongest one can use. It indicates the deepest grief one can feel toward one they love who is now gone. He also notes that this mourning can be literally understood as those who mourn the effects of sin, who grieve for loved ones lost, or who long for something better than this life offers. The context of the previous Beatitude and the message Jesus was preaching convey the main point of this mourning: one's own sinful state. It is also important to note that Jesus was not creating new thoughts but rather was reminding God's people of His Word throughout the Old Testament. So, let's dive in and see what it is to mourn and be comforted by God.

Questions

1. Read Joel 2:12-13. Who were God's people to turn toward in their fasting, weeping, and mourning? What does it mean to rend your hearts and not your garments?
2. Luke's summary of Jesus's sermon adds a contrast to this Beatitude. What does he say about those who laugh now instead of mourn in Luke 6:25?
3. The laughter Luke is warning against is the avoidance of mourning now. Whether mourning over sin or grieving losses, sometimes it seems easier to find distractions rather than allow for weeping and sorrow. What are some ways people avoid mourning? Will mourning and weeping eventually catch up with them?

4. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, the Apostle Paul contrasts godly sorrow with worldly sorrow. This idea correlates with Joel 2:12-13. What will godly sorrow produce? What does worldly sorrow produce?
5. Consider the difference between the outcome of godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. What did Jesus promise as the blessing for mourning in Matthew 5:3?
6. Isaiah 61:3-4 describes a beautiful picture of God's comfort for those who mourn. What does God exchange for the sincere brokenness we bring to Him?
7. Why is repentance the priority of Jesus' message? (Psalm 14:1-3, Romans 3:10, 23).
8. Sometimes the Sermon on the Mount is twisted to say that no change is needed when following Jesus, that everyone is welcome in His Kingdom. How does your study of the first two Beatitudes combat that idea? What does God require for those who want to come to Him?
9. Revelation 21:1-5 describes the ultimate comfort God gives to those who mourn. No one deserves to enter His Kingdom, and yet He made a way through Jesus to live with Him forever. How does God's comfort outweigh any suffering this earth offers?
10. Given your study of Matthew 5:3, how have your thoughts about mourning changed? What practical applications will come from "thinking differently afterwards?"